



# CLIMATE AND HEALTH ALLIANCE

October 2011 edition

## CLIMATE & HEALTH SCIENCE NEWS

### Children largely the victims of climate inaction

Australian children are already being adversely affected by climate change, according to researchers at the National Centre for Population Health and Epidemiology (NCEPH).

Extreme weather and economic strain, particularly in rural areas, are to blame, and this is having negative impacts on the well-being of children and young people, said researcher Dr Lyndall Strazdins. Greater health risks and exposure to trauma and disease is likely to leave young people less able to cope with the economic, social and cultural impacts of climate change. These conclusions come from the research study, [Weathering the future: Climate change, children and young people, and decision making](#), produced by NCEPH for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

The study identified that, despite being the most vulnerable and the most exposed to climate impacts, children and young people had little involvement in crucial policy decisions about their future.

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### CAHA News

#### Upcoming paper: Cutting emissions is good for health



The Climate and Health Alliance is currently preparing a paper on the health benefits of climate action, which will draw together the compelling evidence that actions to reduce emissions can also produce substantial health benefits *and* considerable economic savings.

Further, these benefits are available immediately – if policies to deliver changes in the energy, transport, agriculture and housing sectors are implemented.

The paper will be released later this year.

## Health to the rescue in global negotiations

It is time health had a central role in international climate talks as a key platform for negotiations, according to an international group of climate and health professionals.

Writing in the *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, doctors Walpole, Singh, and Watts from the UK, India, and New Zealand, say an effective global agreement requires that health to be “mainstreamed” in the plenary discussions at the next round of international climate negotiations in Durban in December.

“That health protection and promotion should be a central goal for policy is increasingly recognized by the international community,” say the authors. “There is no greater opportunity to protect and promote health than in the address of what has been termed by leading academics the “biggest health threat of the 21st century.”

The Climate and Health Alliance will partner with [Health Care Without Harm](#), the [Climate and Health Council](#), the [Health and Environment Alliance](#) and the [World Health Organisation](#) in the first ever *Global Climate and Health Summit* to be held in parallel with COP 17 in Durban in December in an effort to inject health into the climate discussions.

### A toxic legacy under melting ice

Melting ice in the Arctic is allowing the release of previously trapped dangerous pollutants, such as POPs and DDT, according to a recent study published in *Nature Climate Change*.

Widely used in the twentieth century as pesticides and insecticides, persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) have progressively regulated out of use due to their demonstrated toxicity to humans.

However higher temperatures are mobilising the chemicals that have been trapped in ice, snow and soil stores for decades, posing an ongoing risk to human and biological health, due to their resistance to degradation, ability to persist in the environment for decades, and potential to travel long distances.

## Announcing our CAHA Patron!



The Climate and Health Alliance is delighted to announce that Professor David De Kretser, former Governor of Victoria, has accepted the invitation of the Climate and Health Alliance to be the Patron of the Climate and Health Alliance.

Professor de Kretser had a distinguished career in reproductive biology, infertility and endocrinology before he became the 28th Governor of Victoria on April 7th, 2006. His term ended in April 2011, when he returned to Monash University to continue his research.

Professor de Kretser has been an outspoken advocate for action on climate change and has spoken publicly many times on climate change, sustainability and health.

### MEDIA

CAHA's recent media releases address national water policy, the health effects of coal and the indications that the Victorian government will walk away from its emissions reduction target:

- [Expansion of coal must stop, health groups say](#)
- [Health groups call on Baillieu to stick to emissions target](#)
- [Health groups prescribe science-based approach to water for the Murray](#)

Author Jordi Dachs writes: "If the mobility of these compounds is increased by climate change, it could have significant implications for ecosystems and human health."

## Climate in Australia will be brutal

The implications of a four degrees global average temperature rise will be brutal for Australia, according to Climate Commissioner and ANU climate scientist, Will Steffen.

Steffen's comments from the 'Four Degrees or More' conference in Melbourne in July were reported in last month's *Nature Climate Change*, where scientists explored the implication of the rise predicted by 2100 or earlier if emissions continue to rise unabated.

The average number of days above 35°C would dramatically increase in all major cities; agricultural production would be severely slashed by mid-century, forcing a reliance on imports; sea levels would rise by more than one metre; extreme fires would result; there would be a collapse of the marine ecosystem; and a halving of rainfall across the south, Steffen said.

## Australian media distortions exposed

The deluge of spin and misinformation of climate science by Murdoch-owned newspapers has been exposed by CAHA expert advisory committee member, Winthrop Professor Stephan Lewandowsky from the University of Western Australia.

Writing in *The Guardian* (UK), Professor Lewandowsky says that Australians are unwittingly participating in a social experiment – where a single media conglomerate, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, owns around 70% of the printed media market.

Along with other academics, Lewandowsky is starting to [catalogue](#) what he describes as "the excruciating and tortuous daily distortions of climate science by various papers, especially by the Australian, Murdoch's flagship publication". This analysis is available at [The Conversation](#), a daily paper written by academics with journalists.

## SUBMISSIONS



Picture credit: coolmelbourne

The Climate and Health Alliance submission '[Biodiversity: Our Health Depends on it](#)' provided to the House Environment Committee Inquiry into climate impacts on Australia's biodiversity is now available on the CAHA website.

## Donations sought!



Since its establishment just over a year ago, the Climate and Health Alliance has made a strong contribution to raising awareness about the health risks of climate change and the health benefits of climate action.

But we need your help! CAHA undertakes its work largely on the basis of pro bono and in-kind support. We are seeking donations to help support this important work.

You can contribute to CAHA by paying via direct deposit: BSB: 032 731 AC No: 117882 A/C Name: PHAA Inc. (Please use the reference 'CAHA' and your name)

## Clean energy future legislation in the House



The federal government's carbon price package was introduced to the Parliament last month, with voting in the House of Representatives expected in the second week of October. The Senate is expected to vote on the legislative package in November.

The legislation is comprised of 18 bills, which will establish a framework for an emissions trading scheme, create a new climate change authority, and establish initiatives to store carbon in the landscape and protect biodiversity.

## Carbon price in New Zealand boosts renewables and cut emissions

A report from the NZ government has found the country's emissions trading scheme has increased investment in renewable energy and reduced emissions in both of the last two years, *The Age* newspaper has reported.

Support for the scheme has increased markedly among NZ businesses, with 73% of businesses now in favour, compared to 68% opposed two years ago. Approvals for new renewable power generation in the last year was five times the previous annual average.

## GREEN HEALTHCARE NEWS

### [New medical building good for health and environment](#)



A new section of an existing medical centre in Adelaide has improved energy efficiency and water use with an environmentally sustainable design. The new wing will be 45% more energy efficient than the original building, through improved ventilation, insulation, shading and double glazing of windows. The installation of water tanks for flushing toilets, and new water meters will assist in cutting water consumption.

Green initiatives are also being implemented across the rest of the hospital, with huge financial savings expected. The installation of a 230 panel solar hot water system is expected to save \$400,000 per year and reduce emissions by 380 tonnes each year.

Energy efficient and natural ventilation systems and window design enhance views of the natural surroundings and contribute to the building's health-enhancing properties.

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