



CLIMATE^{AND}
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Report from *Our Climate is Our Health* Seminar 19th November 2015



The *Our Climate is Our Health* Seminar held by CAHA on 19th November attracted over 60 people and featured an innovative and thought provoking program.

The Seminar was held on the ground floor of the lovely 60L Building, one of Melbourne's most sustainable buildings, at 60 Leicester St Carlton, home to Australian Conservation Foundation, who kindly sponsored the Seminar by providing the venue.

Session 1: Leadership from the health sector

The program began with a session on **leadership on climate change in the health sector**, with presentations from:



Peter Tait, Convenor of the Ecology and Environment Special Interest Group of the Public Health Association of Australia on PHAA's advocacy on climate, energy and health policy, including the CAHA/ PHAA film *The Human Cost of Power*, and the Position Paper on *Health and Energy Choices* prepared with and on behalf of multiple health stakeholders;

Pip Carew, Assistant Secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian branch), on the work the ANMF has done to engage with nurses and midwives on environmental issues and climate change, with their now annual Environmental Health conference attracting over 300 nurses each year, their appointment of an Environmental Health Officer, and showcasing some of the extraordinary stories from nurses at the frontline of responding to climate impacts, including bushfires, floods and heatwaves;



John Iser, Chair of Doctors for the Environment, Australia, spoke about DEA's recent report on children and climate change, *No Time for Games*, their work on divestment, advocacy for policy, and lobbying politicians as a means of educating decision-makers;



Karen Kiang from the Health and Climate Change Working Group of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, about the RACP's recent campaign, Doctors for Climate Action; and their work on ending their organisation's investments in fossil fuels assets and projects, with RACP recently announcing divestment from all fossil fuel projects within its \$90 million investment portfolio;

Terrona Ramsay, CEO of Koowrup Regional Health Service, wowed the crowd with her stories of the ecological social model of health in operation at their regional health service, with the hospital's own organic vegetable garden providing healthy and nutritious produce for their kitchen, a six star eco house (converted from 1.5 stars) as an educational resource on energy efficiency and climate change adaptation, a men's shed, cooking classes, gardening activities with the local primary and high schools, and investment in renewable energy helping to offset energy costs as well as greenhouse gas emissions.



Session 2: An international Perspective

The following session focused on an international perspective, with presentations from Erwin Jackson, Deputy CEO of The Climate Institute, on what to expect from the Paris COP21 global climate talks, and Dr Peter Sainsbury, on the newly adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Erwin highlighted that expectations regarding the Paris 2015 COP 21 was more about building momentum than hoping for a momentous 'global deal'; that this new phase of global climate negotiations was really about national commitments in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Commitments or 'INDCs'; and that an agreed process for increasing national commitments over time (a 'ratchetting' mechanism) was a key outcome.

Australian targets are "not credible", Erwin said, however there is a number of key opportunities to increase the Australian commitment over the next few years. National interest is now starting to drive climate commitments globally, and among developed nations this is around national and global security, energy security, long-term competitiveness, and climate impacts, while for developing nations, their motivation is simple: survival.

All current targets are basically establishing a base (a 'floor') on which to build and by no means represent each country's last offer in terms of emissions reduction commitments, Erwin said. A Paris framework can reinforce global trend towards net zero emissions, but its success lies largely in the commitments that individual nations will put on the table. With 150 countries having already submitted their INDCs, the Paris talks start from a point that is unprecedented in that respect.

Overview: What does success in Paris look like

Paris framework a step, not an end point, that can reinforce global trend towards net zero emissions

What does success in Paris look like?

- + **Bankable**: Establishes ongoing system of ratchetting actions through time towards 2°C goal. Reinforces signal to business that net zero is inevitable
- + **Accountable**: Robust transparency system for all countries that builds trust and shares best practices
- + **Fair**: Adaptation, loss and damage and finance central to durable outcome



Peter Sainsbury provided an update on the adoption of 17 new Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations to replace the Millennium Development Goals. These are a set of new, universal goals, targets and indicators that UN member states (basically all nations) are expected to guide the development of their national policies over the next 15 years.

For the first time outside of the UNFCCC framework, there is a goal for climate action. And the goal of health (expressed as the attainment of good health and wellbeing - not just 'health') is a win for health advocates worldwide.



For more information, see <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Session 3: Imagining 2030 as a healthy low carbon world

This thought provoking session involved a panel of thought leaders, facilitated by science journalist Alexandra De Blas. Associate Professor Grant Blashki (Nossal Institute of Global Health), Dr Susie Burke (Australian Psychological Society), Monique Conheady (Moreland Energy Foundation and Flexicar founder), David Holmgren (co-founder of Permaculture concept), and Matthew Wright (Zero Emissions Australia) formed an insightful and inspiring panel who shared their reflections on the perspective of 2030, as they looked back at 2015, and the transition to a health low carbon world.



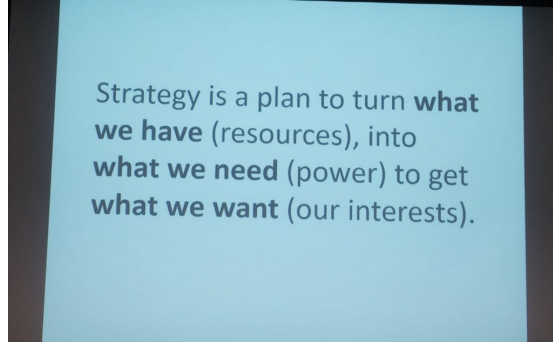
A short video and audio file from the session is coming soon!

Session 4: Fighting for the natural world (and ourselves): Lessons from the environmental and political movements

Speakers in this session were **Victoria McKenzie-McHarg** from the Australian Conservation Foundation on a new approach of community organising being adopted by the climate movement to build power and diversity in the movement, and **Holly Hammond** who provided some insights from history about the work and successes of social movements in achieving major societal change. Holly's succinct slide on what strategy *is* appears below:



Victoria McKenzie McHarg, ACF



Next Steps

An afternoon Strategy Session, facilitated by Holly Hammond, involved a discussion about a national advocacy campaign on climate change and health being planned for 2016-17. A Working Group has been established and a Discussion Paper is being drafted. For more information, contact CAHA Executive Director Fiona Armstrong fiona.armstrong@caha.org.au