



CLIMATE^{AND}
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Media release

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US leadership on climate and health highlights Australia's failure

New report details how climate change is making us sick

MEDIA RELEASE: Tuesday, April 5

The Climate and Health Alliance is calling for an urgent and detailed assessment of how climate change will impact the health of Australians, following the overnight release of more evidence that rising temperatures pose serious and multiple risks to public health.

After three years of research involving more than 100 health experts and climate scientists, the White House has released [*The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*](#) report.

The report finds rising temperatures will:

- Increase deaths and illnesses related to heat stress by tens of thousands
- Compromise water sources, increasing the risk of water-related illnesses
- Extend pollen seasons by up to a month, exacerbating the health of millions of Americans with allergies and asthma conditions
- Increase the exposure of food to certain pathogens and toxins
- Adversely impact mental health, noting that reactions to climate change range from minimal stress and distress symptoms to clinical disorders, such as anxiety and depression

CAHA president Dr Liz Hanna says the report demonstrates how some countries are taking steps to protect their citizens from the health impacts of climate change.

“This report serves to highlight the failure of the Australian Government, particularly the Health Minister, to exercise leadership and act on the real and present danger climate change poses to health of Australians,” Dr Hanna said.

“We urge the Australian Government to remove its blinkers,

acknowledge the problem and develop a national strategy on climate change and health.”

The US report warns that climate change not only changes the severity and frequency of health problems that already exist, but also creates unprecedented or unanticipated health threats.

Dr Hanna says Australia needs a national health assessment that details how climate change is and will impact communities across the country so health professionals are trained to respond appropriately.

“Australia is hotter than most countries, making us more vulnerable to the ravages of heat extremes, droughts, fires and cyclones fueled by warming oceans,” Dr Hanna said.

“The Climate and Health Alliance has been calling on the Federal Government to respond to this growing threat to the health and safety of Australian communities with [a national climate change and health plan](#) for several years.

“A strong response from the federal health ministry and health department to develop a national strategic response to this threat is urgently required. Our nation’s health is at stake. Nothing could be more important.”

Media inquiries: call Zoe Edwards on 0400 144 794

[Climate and Health Alliance](#) is a coalition of Australian health professionals and organisations that want to see climate change addressed through prompt policy action because of the grave risks it poses to our health.