

Climate change and population health: Implementation plan

Attachment A

13 April 2022

phn
CENTRAL AND
EASTERN SYDNEY
An Australian Government Initiative

CLIMATE CHANGE AND POPULATION HEALTH STATEMENT

The Central and Eastern Sydney PHN acknowledges the scientific evidence for human induced climate change. The consequences include deteriorating population health outcomes and widening inequalities in health, threatening our vision of better health and wellbeing for all.

As one organisation in a wider community acting in the service of humanity, honouring the long standing traditions of the health professions, we call ourselves to action to reduce the suffering caused by climate change, and to decarbonise our operations.

Our contributions will make a difference to the communities we serve and improve opportunities for health across the life-course. We pledge our best efforts to build physical, mental, social, and economic health and to grow resilience in our region, as we fully participate in the unified global effort to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

We are committed to:

- Raising awareness about the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.
- Collaborating to identify practical strategies to respond to the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.
- Participating in strategies that support our local ecosystems.
- Strengthening primary care providers' capacity to implement environmentally sustainable practice.
- Adopting environmentally sustainable practices to reduce CESPHNs carbon footprint.

Background

The Central and Eastern Sydney PHN (CESPHN) Board has endorsed the **Position Statement: Climate change and population health**.

This position statement:

- aligns with position statements and reports by other leading Australian health care organisations, demonstrating unity of purpose,
- reflects fairly the best scientific information known on this topic,
- is aspirational with a call to arms, yet captures CESPHN's goals as a regionally based health organisation committed to the best health outcomes for all,
- references the values of the health professions that CESPHN represents,
- acknowledges the very practical impacts that are likely to occur on human health because of climate change, and
- commits CESPHN to a set of actions for which it could be responsible and lead.

The project plan to implement this position statement and key actions is outlined below.

Project Aims

The Implementation plan:

- identifies proposed high value activities to achieve the key actions of the Position Statement: Climate Change and Population Health,
- facilitates stakeholder consultation and the identification of priorities, milestones, risk to achieve the key actions, and
- supports CESPHN to instigate prioritized activity and establish procedures for collection of key indicator data.

Rationale

There are five key actions identified in the position statement. These key actions are interdependent and collectively achieve the statement's intent. Implementation involves activities that help achieve several key actions simultaneously.

The key actions are to:

- raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation,
- collaborate to identify practical strategies to respond to the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation,
- strengthen primary care providers' capacity to implement environmentally sustainable practice,
- adopt environmentally sustainable practices to reduce CESPHNs carbon footprint, and
- participate in strategies that support our local ecosystems.

Governance and Management

The GM of Primary Care Improvement reporting to the Executive Management Team will chair an internal working group with external support and leadership sought as required.

Project timetable

Implementation activity will be underway by 28 March 2022.

Reporting

- The CEO and General Manager of Primary Care Improvement have overall strategic responsibility.
- A report will be prepared for the EIS Board every six-months by the Climate Change Advisory Group with the first board report due September 2022.

Key Actions

The key actions of the Climate Change Position Statement are presented below with thirteen activities to be achieved within the 2022-2024 strategic planning cycle.

Raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation

- **Conduct a CPD series** raising awareness of the impacts of climate change and the implications for sustainable primary care practice. This would involve upskilling for practice staff regarding the health consequences of climate change and practical strategies to decarbonise primary care practice.
- **Develop an information hub** on the CESPHN website on climate change and population health impacts, primary health audit and planning resources, and human-interest stories.

Collaborate to identify practical strategies to respond to the health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation

- **Facilitate interagency planning on emergency management plans** for climate events and how primary care practices can respond to population health and primary health considerations in local health plans.

Strengthen primary care providers' capacity to implement environmentally sustainable practice

- **Develop a Practice Self Audit:** Collaborate to develop an Australian primary health practice specific audit for estimating carbon footprint and practice waste. Raise awareness of the collective impact by promoting practice participation in the audit.
- **Undertake initiatives to reduce medical waste.** Initiate advocacy action with State and Federal governments to decarbonise primary health waste and develop recycling systems. Bring the extent of the waste stream to the attention of local practices. Assess the appetite for collective action with the aged care, allied health, tertiary, and hospital sectors.
- **Promote the development of a Climate Event Continuity Plan for Primary Health.** Such a plan when enacted will help ensure the health and safety of staff/patients where weather, fire or flood may impact electricity supply, transport, and communication systems etc.

Adopt environmentally sustainable practices to reduce CESPHNs carbon footprint

- **Audit CESPHN carbon emissions** and systematically reduce them. Instigate regular audits of CESPHN emissions.
- Engage staff in **adopting sustainable practices**.
- Facilitate **installation of a charging station** in Head Office carpark.
- Encourage CESPHN personnel to **reduce time and distance travelled in internal combustion engine vehicles**.
- **Review contracts** with CESPHN suppliers to promote environmentally sustainable strategies.

Participate in strategies that support our local ecosystems

- **Support local community groups** to undertake strategies to reduce the impact of climate change and support staff participation in these strategies.
- **Promote initiatives** that encourage good climate citizenship such as Clean up Australia Day or tree planting on National Tree Day.

Updating of the Implementation plan

This implementation plan will be updated annually or more frequently if more effective activities to support the key actions are identified.