



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

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CAHA NEWS

Growing membership

The Climate and Health Alliance now has twenty national stakeholder organisations as [members](#). The extent of the support within the health sector for the Alliance is very positive and CAHA hopes the Alliance will continue to grow as the word spreads of its work.

Meeting for members in Melbourne 9th February 2011

The Climate and Health Alliance will hold meeting for members in Melbourne on 9th February 2011 to discuss a proposal to become an incorporated association in order to limit its liability and enable the Alliance to apply for grants.

[CAHA calls for climate study to consider health costs](#)

The Climate and Health Alliance has urged the Australian Government to include consideration of the economic benefits arising from avoided ill health in the terms of reference for the Productivity Commission study into climate policy economics announced last month. Read the media release [here](#).

EVENTS

[Our living climate](#)

This show at the Planetarium at Melbourne's Scienceworks looks at the evolution of the Earth's climate including anthropogenic climate change in the context of changes throughout Earth's history. On daily until 6 Feb 2011.

COMMENT

[What's good for the planet](#) is also good for health: article in [Climate Spectator](#) on using the tools of climate denial to reframe the debate on climate as a positive narrative.

[Adios Cancun, hello climate action](#) in [New Matilda](#) tells why, in addition to communicating the risks indicated by current climate science, it is vital to also communicate the available solutions.

NEWS

[Health should be a key element of climate negotiations, experts say](#)

Some of the world's largest health and medical organisations have emphasised the risk of widespread suffering and death from a failure to act on climate change. Writing to negotiators at Cancun in Mexico in December, leading organisations Health Care Without Harm (HCWH), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and the Climate and Health Council (CHC) asked for both the positive and negative impacts of climate change mitigation to be included in the UN negotiating texts for a global agreement. In the Cancun Statement: *The Time to Act is Now*, the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, and Physicians for Social Responsibility joined other key organisations in calling on all

negotiators to recognise the significant health impacts as well the substantial health benefits of climate action – outlined in the recent [Acting Now for Better Health](#) report as worth €30 billion each year in Europe, and likely to be 250% higher if action takes place immediately. Read the statement [here](#).

These efforts were reinforced by [IAMP](#), a global network of world medical academies which released a statement highlighting the health co-benefits of policies to tackle climate change – read the statement [here](#).

[Pricing carbon: carbon tax simpler, cheaper and more efficient](#)

Policy experts from London, Chicago and Denmark consider the evidence in relation to the effectiveness of a carbon tax. This program on *Rear Vision*, on ABC Radio National, takes a look at the history of carbon taxes, how they work, where they've been introduced and how effective they have been. You can read the transcript or download audio [here](#).

[Health more popular than sport, but people confused on climate, poll says](#)

Australians are more interested in science than sport, according to a new poll, but feel ill informed about science. Confusion reigns in particular in relation to climate science - with four in 10 respondents to the Australian National University poll thinking most climate scientists disagree over whether the Earth has been warming. And one third think climate scientists disagree about the human causes of global warming. Read the report [here](#).

[Nurses to track climate related health impacts in Africa](#)

In a joint pilot project between Nurses Across the Borders, a Nigerian health NGO, and SeaTrust Institute, around 500 nurses will collect data throughout 2011 to help map the impact of global warming on malaria in Nigeria. By collecting data on the incidence of malaria, the initiative will also create awareness about the links between health and climate change within communities. The data will be fed into a climate model to help the country prepare health-related climate change, according to Dr Lynn Wilson from the SeaTrust Institute.

HEALTH SECTOR

[Going greener in health care](#)

The *Health Facilities Management* December 2010 issue has an article entitled “Going Greener” which reports on the big returns on investment possible for health care institutions by opting for environmentally sustainable operations. The greatest success many hospitals report is in the area of ‘green cleaning’ – using sustainable cleaning materials, chemicals and microfibre products. To read this article, you must sign up with an email address but the process is simple and it’s free – just click [here](#).

[Massachusetts buys green: for the future](#)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (which has a \$4 billion purchasing budget) has released a video on their active role in environmental purchasing to become more sustainable. Watch the video [here](#).

RESEARCH

[Anaesthetic gases equivalent to one million cars](#)

A new study published in the British Journal of Anaesthesia shows that one kilo of the anaesthetic gas Desflurane has the same global warming potential as 1,620 kilos of CO₂. Researchers at the University of Copenhagen and NASA, in collaboration with anaesthesiologists from the University of Michigan Medical School, found while emissions for each single surgical procedure is not high, the annual global emissions of anaesthetic gases affects the climate as much as one million cars. In addition, the cumulative impact of

these smaller contributors to climate forcing combines to become significant in the overall magnitude of the forcing of climate change, the researchers said.

Researchers call for greatly enhanced climate change communication efforts

The scientific community should urgently develop an initiative to actively share information about climate change risks and solutions, according to researchers writing in the journal *Science* in November 2010. “Because the potential consequences of climate change are so high,” the climate change communications experts say, concerted efforts must be made to “provide people, organisations and governments with critical information, address misconceptions and counter misinformation and deception”. This should be non-partisan, funded by philanthropists, and lead to improved understanding of climate risk and more informed decision-making and prevent further dangerous delays in action - at this potentially “critical moment for human civilization”, the authors said. Read the letter [here](#).

SCIENCE

Loss of Arctic ice and sea level rise to exceed predictions

An update on what is understood about climate science released by the Meteorological Office (MO) in the UK suggests the Arctic may become ice free during the summer earlier than predicted. Sea level rise may reach between 59cm and two metres by the end of the century, exceeding the most drastic of predictions of the fourth (and latest) IPCC report, the MO said. Other impacts now expected to be worse than previously predicted include the contribution of deforestation to climate change, increases in emissions from wetlands, and thawing of permafrost. Other findings include melting of Greenland and Antarctic ice-sheets. Read the summary report [here](#).

Reefs will soon be gone

Not just the Barrier Reef, but the Earth's coral reefs will be utterly destroyed within our children's lifetimes, unless we make dramatic changes to the way we live, according to Australian reef scientist Charlie Veron writes in *environment 360*, the publication of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies last month. Amid [reports of the fastest shift in oceanic chemistry in 65 million years](#), the former Chief Scientist at the Australian Institute of Marine Science and author of *A Reef in Time* says unless ocean acidification is halted urgently, it will lead to mass extinction not just reefs, but the entire ocean's ecosystems. “If coral reefs fail, the rest will follow in rapid succession, and the Sixth Mass Extinction will be upon us — and will be of our making”, Veron writes. Read more [here](#).