



Energy policy in need of intensive care: health groups

Media release

20 March 2012

Australia's energy policy is in need of intensive care, a national coalition of health care groups, the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), said today.

"Australia's current energy policy poses serious risks to human health," CAHA spokesperson Fiona Armstrong said.

CAHA's submission to the Australian Government's draft Energy White Paper raises concerns that the broader implications for energy policy, such as the adverse health effects of fossil fuels, were being ignored. There is an urgent need to transform Australia's energy systems to clean renewable sources to protect energy security and prevent national security risks, the alliance said.

"The draft Energy White Paper does not consider the perverse consequences of energy policy that lead to harm to human health and damage the Earth's biosphere, and put Australia's economic and national security at risk," Ms Armstrong said.

"Many countries around the world are developing national plans for their transition to zero emissions energy supply systems," Ms Armstrong said. "In the face of rapid warming from ever increasing emissions, it is an important risk management strategy to prepare to reduce national emissions as fast as possible."

A continued emphasis on coal and other fossil fuels in the Energy White Paper suggests the government is ignoring the clear evidence of harm to human health and the environment from mining, transportation and combustion of coal, oil and gas, Ms Armstrong said.

"This energy policy should be looking at mechanisms to rapidly transition towards an energy system based on clean safe renewable energy technologies," Ms Armstrong said.

"Instead it privileges fossil fuels, despite the well documented harm to human health and the Earth's biosphere. This national energy policy is in need of intensive care."

CAHA Members: Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW); Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM); Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS); Australian Hospitals and Healthcare Association (AHHA); Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA); Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI); Australian Research Alliance of Children and Youth (ARACY); Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN); Australian Nursing Federation (ANF); Australian Psychological Society (APS); Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN); CRAN*Aplus*; Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA); Doctors Reform Society; Friends of CAHA; Health Consumers' Network (Qld); Health Issues Centre (HIC); Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA); Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA); Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP); North Yarra Community Health (NYCH); Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH); Women's Health in the North; World Vision.

Contact: CAHA Convenor Fiona Armstrong convenor@caha.org.au or 0438 900 005.

www.caha.org.au