



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Media release

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Lives increasingly at risk from 'angry climate'

A new report on extreme weather events, *The Angry Summer*, from the Climate Commission demonstrates the health and wellbeing of Australians is increasingly at risk from extreme weather events that are being amplified by global warming.

The Climate and Health Alliance, a coalition of public health, medical, nursing, allied health professionals, health research institutions and service providers, said the Commission's report highlighted how extraordinary weather extremes were putting more lives at risk, particularly the latest summer with the entire Southern Hemisphere experiencing the hottest December and January ever.

Climate and Health Alliance Convenor Fiona Armstrong said the record breaking heatwave in which Australia recorded its first ever average maximum of 40.30°C on 7 January 2013 posed the most serious threat to health, but lives were also lost in recent bushfires and flooding following extreme rainfall.

"Extreme heat is not just unpleasant, it affects human health, animals and ecosystems, damages critical infrastructure and impacts human and agricultural productivity," Ms Armstrong said.

"Heat kills more Australians than any other extreme weather event."

Ms Armstrong said the report showed the world was moving into a 'new climate', the consequences for which could be devastating for all people everywhere and for the natural systems on which we rely.

"How much more evidence do we need before governments respond urgently to this serious threat to health and wellbeing and start making dramatic emissions reductions a national priority?" Ms Armstrong said.

"This is what would be happening if our state and federal governments were actually acting in the interests of the people of Australia. Instead we see governments captured by mining and fossil fuel interests, while people's lives are being put at risk. We cannot continue to sacrifice human health and wellbeing to support fossil fuel profits."

The Climate and Health Alliance is calling for a national plan on climate and health to respond to health risks from climate change, including from extreme weather events.

"Climate change is widely acknowledged as the biggest threat to public health globally. How is it that a wealthy democracy like Australia has no national strategy to respond?"

For media enquiries or to speak to experts regarding extreme weather and health, contact Fiona Armstrong convenor@caha.org.au