



CLIMATE AND
HEALTH
ALLIANCE

Climate disruption is underway: Australia's obstruction on policy putting lives at risk

Media release

3 December 2014

A series of new video reports from the World Meteorological Organisation highlights the risks from extreme weather linked to rising greenhouse gas emissions - weather that is putting millions of lives at risk, health groups warned today.

The WMO series of "[weather reports from the future](#)" point to catastrophic weather events in 2050, however the Australian Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), a national group of healthcare stakeholders, says these events are occurring already in Australia and around the world and the community and governments must prepare for their impacts and take steps to reduce the risks.

"Every year, the [WMO](#) and our own [Bureau of Meteorology](#) data paints a more distressing picture of advancing climate change," said Dr Liz Hanna, CAHA President and Australian National University heat researcher.

Global weather monitoring stations reveal year after year of record breaking temperatures and extreme weather events, and the cascading heat continues, as 2014 is set to break all previous records.

"What we are already seeing in Australia is consistent with what we expect from human-induced climate change - more intense heatwaves, starting earlier in the season and lasting for longer; coastal flooding from storm surges and sea level rise; heavier, more damaging, rains; along with more severe drought," Dr Hanna said. "Livelihoods are damaged, and lives are ruined," she added.

Too many countries are ignoring the human catastrophe of climate change, Dr Hanna said.

"Global emissions are not slowing, they are increasing. Australia is especially guilty - our greenhouse gas emissions increased by 31% between 1990 and 2012. Investment in renewable energies has dropped by 70%, leaving us one of only four nations who will not meet our very modest emissions reduction targets by 2020."

Australia must show fair and serious commitment at the COP20, Dr Hanna said.

"Australia's health sector calls on the Australian Government to show that it cares for its people, not just short term profits of the fossil fuel industry. People's lives and livelihoods are in real danger. Heat extremes are taking toll on human lives, of the young, the elderly and workers, and productivity drops significantly in the heat. Crops and stock suffer. The landscape dries and burns. In Lima and Paris, we expect Australia to stand tall, and commit to realistic emission targets and levels of funding to the Green Climate Fund that is commensurate with our per capita contribution to the problem."

Media contact: Fiona Armstrong 0438 900 005 convenor@caha.org.au