

Climate Health WA Inquiry

About your submission

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group?

No

Yes

If yes, please identify the organisation:

Your contact details

The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.

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Publication of submissions

Submissions will be published with the name of the submitter unless otherwise indicated below. Do you consent to be identified in the published submission?

Yes, I / my organisation agree to be identified

No, I / my organisation request to remain anonymous

Terms of Reference

You are encouraged to address at least ONE of the Terms of Reference as listed below. Please select which item/s you will address:

1. Establish current knowledge on the implications of climate change for health in Western Australia (WA) and recommend a framework for evaluating future implications.
2. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will protect the public from the harmful health impacts of climate change.
3. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will strengthen the preparedness and resilience of communities and health services against extreme weather events, with a focus on the most vulnerable in the community.

- 4. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will reduce the contribution of WA health services to climate change and other detrimental impacts.
- 5. Identify and recommend a program of work to manage the implications of climate change for health in WA, which will enable WA Health services to implement change, including energy efficiency, to a more sustainable model.
- 6. Evaluate the likely benefits (health and wellbeing, social and economic) arising from climate change mitigation strategies, with a focus on WA health services.
- 7. Define the role of the Department of Health in leading public policy on climate change and health.
- 8. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for undertaking a climate change vulnerability assessment for the health sector.
- 9. Recommend the Terms of Reference, scope and preferred methods for developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the health sector.

Submissions response field

Please type your response to the item(s) selected above into the field below. Alternatively you may provide your submission as a separate attachment (suggested maximum 5 pages).

We are farmers at Dandaragan and since 2012 we have been transitioning to regenerative farming. We farm 1700 hectares of a mixed farming operation of cropping, hay, wool and prime lambs. My husband has been farming since 1967.

There is a number of reasons for this decision, but the most compelling for me personally, is that I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 and I had concerns about the chemicals used in agricultural production.

My husband has made a list of people in our area who have either passed away with cancer or have been diagnosed and survived, like myself. My cancer was HER2Positive, stage 3 high. The list my husband has compiled is alarmingly high, in comparison to the population of our area. We are now also keeping a record of people diagnosed with auto-immune disorders in our area.

Another major reason for transition, our rainfall has not reached its annual record in many years. Hence the production of our farm has been effected, particularly with regards to the number of stock we are able to carry, our water storage capacity and the general worry of learning to manage in this evolving environment. Also input costs have risen dramatically in conventional farming and the net profit returns have been shrinking. This same trend is also happening in Canada according to scientist, Dr Christine Jones. Hence mental issues are rising in rural areas.

After my 2 year treatment programme, in my recovery, I used NeuroOptimal neurofeedback. Because of the positive effects for me personally, I decided to purchase a system and attended accreditation courses. Through learning about the balancing of the human central nervous system and offering this service to the general public, it inevitably lead me down the pathway to regenerative agriculture.

Regenerative agriculture is about improving soil health, which in turn improves plant/pasture nutrition in both animal and human health along with

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enhancing/protecting the environment.

Since starting down this new path way of working with nature on our farm, we have stopped using pickle on our seed, fungicide, insecticide and inorganic fertilizers (meaning fertilizers made from fossil fuel). We still use herbicides, however we are learning and preparing our management, to faze herbicides from our programme.

One example of contamination in our food chain is the high level of cadmium in the offal of adult sheep that have grazed on pastures spread with superphosphate. I recently learnt this through a Meat and Livestock seminar about traceability through tag identification of stock. It stated that the average level of cadmium in a West Australian adult sheep is 2.5%. In countries that Australia exports to, the acceptable level is .2%. They stated that it is safe to eat the offal of a prime lamb, however as the animal ages the cadmium level rises. Fortunately for our family we have not used superphosphate on our pastures for 6 years. But what it does answer, is why our adult daughter had a higher than average recording of cadmium in her blood tests.

On learning about epigenetics through the regenerative agricultural seminars I had attended and passing this information onto my daughter, she decided to get blood tests done and do a detox programme before becoming pregnant. Her blood test results were a surprise, as apart from the cadmium, she also had a higher than average level of lead. We now understand the cadmium would have been linked to superphosphate, as in our ignorance, we allowed our children to come in contact with superphosphate. It was recommended she no longer eat canned tuna or any large fish species because of the lead level.

Since the end of World War Two our agricultural sector has been hijacked by the Green Revolution that introduced inorganic fertilizers and then chemicals into the management of agriculture. The Neoliberalism economic policy developed in the same period has assisted this domination within our agriculture sector, commerce and out into the general population.

In the book about regenerative agriculture written by Charles Massy, "The Call of the Reed Warbler", released in 2018, he makes reference to 'hidden hunger' when talking about our modern food supply. By this, he means that the processed food people eat today, has calories, but no nutrition; hence the person eats more because the brain sends signals that it is not satisfied. Obesity is now becoming a major health issue in all developed countries.

By improving our soil health on our farm and managing the grazing of our sheep, we are noting a general improvement of health and behaviour in our animals. Dr Maarten Stapper, told us that by improving the nutrition of our pastures, our wool quality would improve, which it has. He also explained that we would notice our sheep would become calmer because of the increase of magnesium in their diet. I took a buyer out to a paddock which had wether hoggets grazing. He needed to inspect them to decide if we would get them in for a draft. When we drove into the paddock, the sheep were not far away. We stopped the vehicle, remained inside and slowly the whole mob walked towards us, curious by our presence and milled

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around the vehicle. Prior to changing our farming methods that would not have occurred. Our ultimate aim with our sheep is not to have to cull for cancerous growths, then we will know we have our nutrition and management right.

By telling this story, it is my way of saying, if we could improve the quality of food people eat, it would underpin the health of our nation.

I believe prevention is the key to the wellbeing of our nation. More energy should go into growing nutritionally dense food and educating people on eating a healthy balanced diet.

We here in Australia should adopt a Wellbeing Budget just as the New Zealand government has. The people and our environment should come before big profits of corporations.

"Small is Beautiful" by EF Schumacher, published early 1970s, an economy as if people mattered, a book still relevant today but ignored.

Why is there not a register of people diagnosed with cancer and auto-immune diseases? If there was such a register, I am certain our area would show a red flag, as there is also mineral sands mining in our area. To further bring anxiety to our community, we also have gas exploration licenses over most of our shire. Our community have formed Dandaragan Groundwater Protection to prevent fracking in our region and the state as a whole. Of a side note to fracking, a recent prospective buyer of a farm in our area, on learning about the threat of fracking, decided to look elsewhere to buy land.

As a community we have a right to live in an environment with clean air, soil and water.

We are totally dependant on surface water for our existence in our farming operation. With the reduction of our rainfall over a number of years we have been forced to put down 2 bores, one on each of our farming blocks, to sustain our sheep through the summer period.

As farmers we are committed to reducing our carbon footprint in our operation and to hydrating our landscape through improved management practises.

The health of our farm, our family, our community and the consumers of our products, that exist our farm gate, are paramount in our value system.

I urge that Charles Massy's book, "Call of the Reed Warbler" be read by your panel before laying the foundations of your recommendations. Scientists, such as Christine Jones, Maarten Stapper, Walter Jehne, also be consulted on their knowledge of regenerative agriculture and its benefits to humanity as a whole.

On finishing, when attending a regenerative agriculture seminar in the Jarrahdale area, we were advised that apples grown in WA had registered with high aluminium levels because of the health of the soil deterioration over the years. When asked why the public were not informed of this fact, it was because the authorities involved did not know what to do. They did not want to destroy the apple industry in WA. The advice to attendees, buy your apples grown in the east of Australia.

The other topic discussed was Round Up. The book "Whitewash", recently

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published, explains the history of glyphosate, Monsanto's cover ups and that it will be the next information bomb to go off here in Australia.

Australian farmers need education and support to prepare them to turn around climate change and to protect our food supply.

Please complete this sheet and submit with any attachments to: Climate Health WA Inquiry