

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.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

UV radiation research

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Australia with a prediction of 50,000 deaths being caused by cancer in 2019 alone (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). It is estimated that 450,000 Australian are diagnosed with skin cancer every year (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008). Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun was identified to cause more than 95% of the skin cancer in Australia (Armstrong, 2004). Increases in temperature, changes in weather patterns and UV levels may affect skin cancer incidence (Cancer Council, 2016). Hence, West Australians need to ever vigilant with proper sun protective measures to maintain good health. Understanding science behind UV radiation and proper sun protection measures is paramount for protecting the West Australian population and reducing their risk of developing skin cancer in later life.

However, there remains to be many misconceptions around UV and sun protection in the Australian population (Cancer Council, 2019). In an unknown future with changing climate, there is a need for greater research and intervention in this important health area. Dr Joseph Scott's research at Edith Cowan University focuses predominantly on educating Western Australian primary pre- and in-service teachers on the science behind UV; proper sun protective measures to reduce health risks; and effective strength-based sun education strategies for children. Primary teachers remain an important and influential community member that have the ability to affect change in this area. Keeping children active and protected from the sun's harmful UV's is an ongoing health issue in Western

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Australia. Dr Scott's research aims to empower individuals to protect themselves from harmful UV radiation and those around them, now, and into the future. With increases in temperature and potential UV radiation, it is important that our research at Edith Cowan continues to increase the skills of the public to protect themselves from the harmful impacts of climate change.

References:

- Armstrong, B. K. (2004). How sun exposure causes skin cancer: an epidemiological perspective. In Hill D., Elwood J.M., English D.R. (eds) *Prevention of Skin Cancer. Cancer Prevention - Cancer Causes* (Vol. 3). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2008). *Cancer Australia. Non-melanoma skin cancer: general practice consultations, hospitalisation and mortality*. Canberra: AIHW
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- Cancer Council. (2016). Climate change. Retrieved from https://wiki.cancer.org.au/skincancerstats/Climate_change
- Cancer Council. (2019). 10 myths about sun protection. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org.au/preventing-cancer/sun-protection/10-myths-about-sun-protection.html>

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