

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.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

Unhealthy eating and obesity remain significant issues for children and adults in Australia with immediate and long term health consequences. Healthy eating is critical to child development and we know that children start to develop attitudes and behaviours towards food patterns at an early age. Coupled with impacts on human health, food production, distribution and consumption is one of the largest environmental pressures on planetary health and climate change, due to land and water use, de-forestation and CO2 emissions.

Education from an early age about the role of food in human and planetary health will be critical to increasing awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills to act against food related climate change causes and consequences. Currently early years' education and care facilities and schools have a limited role in supporting nutrition education curriculum or healthy food environments, despite the engagement opportunities and potential positive influence of staff. Since 2014, the Refresh.ED program, developed at ECU and funded by WA DOH, has provided multiple opportunities for teachers of children K-10 to enhance food literacy and nutrition education through an online platform with age relevant support materials linked to the curriculum. These materials integrate principles of effective and appropriate pedagogy to promote improved teaching and learning in food and nutrition education and to build healthy food environments.

Along with online resources and social media, the program provides professional learning materials and pre-service teacher nutrition education training through three universities in WA and in-service training through government, Catholic

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Education and Independent schools sectors as well as teacher professional associations. In 2017, Refresh.ED formed the Action on Nutrition collaboration with Foodbank WA, the Canteen Association of WA, Cancer Council of WA and School Gardens Program, to provide co-ordinated education about healthy food and nutrition promotion in school communities. In addition, Refresh.ED has formed partnerships with Department of Education, Agriculture Education and TAFE to promote career paths in the food and nutrition sector through food and nutrition education.

By December 2018 more than 38,000 sessions and 171,000 page views were recorded by 20,000 Refresh.ED website users since its launch in 2014. Whilst Australians are the main users, Refresh.ED website has also been accessed by at least 50 users per country in 28 other countries.

Approximately 2000 Refresh.ED teaching units are downloaded per year. These units address food systems, influences on food choice, food handling and cooking, as well as health aspects of food, and can be taught in a range of learning areas, not just Health. Approximately one quarter of these units are downloaded by teachers in regional areas and one third by teachers with minimal experience in nutrition education. Evaluations conducted bi-annually with teachers registered to download materials found on average that 60% of respondents had used the materials in classroom teaching; of these 76% agreed that using Refresh.ED had increased classroom activities related to food whilst >70 % found that their confidence to encourage children's healthy eating had increased, improved content of food and nutrition lessons and increased classroom activities related to food choice. Positive impacts on student interest and actions related to healthy food choice and preparation was reported by 80% of respondents.

The primary beneficiaries of Refresh.ED are children and their families who access schools particularly in WA but also across Australia. Secondary beneficiaries include local and state government, peak education bodies such as, Home Economics Institute of Australia, Australian Council of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, HASS Teachers Association and Science Teachers Association of WA who promote the wider use of the platform to their end users to not only increase the reach of the resources but to showcase emerging curricular content.

Recommendations for the WA Department of Health

Work with other departments and the PRIMED project (Education and Agriculture) to invest further and expand the successful Refresh.ED platform to include more climate and agriculture content and its relation to the food system and health.

Promote the platform more broadly to increase use in WA to educate parents and community about the food system and impacts related to climate.

Provide co-funding with other departments to ECU to develop short courses to provide continued professional development for teachers (broadening public health

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change agents) relating to climate and agriculture content and its relation to the food system and health.

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