

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.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

### **Analysis of the food supply**

There is a growing trend for more consumers to be more interested in what is in their food, where it comes from and how it has been grown (Sambell et al., 2019). There is a perception that foods that are grown organically or through regenerative farming practices are more nutritious than those conventionally grown with engineered inputs (ie: synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, drenches, etc), however, there is little evidence in the literature to support this idea.

On the current food product market products grown regeneratively are not differentiated when processed, sold to wholesale or sold to the consumer. This in itself does not promote the adoption of more sustainable practices. To support the potential to differentiate a sustainably grown product, regenerative farmers are interested in food product testing for a range of nutrients and non-nutrients, to build evidence that supports their decision to farm ethically. This evidence would also build a more updated food composition database for a local context.

A greater understanding of the nutrient and phytochemical composition in plant sources will enable farmers to promote the competitive advantage of their produce to consumers with analysis verification and justify a move to an alternative farming philosophy that is in the best interests of the planet . This analysis will provide current evidence of nutrient and phytochemical composition of foods grown in a

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range of WA locations and can be compared with imported or conventionally grown counterparts.

Currently farmers send food products to the East Coast for analytical testing based on availability of commercial testing services. There is a market in WA to provide this testing to local farmers and as a fee for service.

ECU are working with Perth Natural Resources Management and others on a collaborative project - Healthy Soils Healthy Communities - that connects local regenerative farmers with consumers and other stakeholders in the food system. Since the start of the collaboration we have been asked to analyse food products from a range of growers. Both plant and animal requests have been received. The literature reports a range of analytes that have been tested in food products and it would be good to understand the complexities of testing for these and which is set is best as a marker of to human health (Barański et al, 2014; Dominika Średnicka-Tober et al., 2016).

#### **Recommendations for the WA Department of Health:**

ECU would like to propose that the Dept of Health collaborate with LHAAC to assemble a Farmers Testing Package that could include macro and micro nutrients, minerals, nitrates and phytochemicals from a range of plants grown locally. Similarly a range of macro and micro nutrients for livestock reared on different pastures. Further to, provide a letter of support encouraging LGA to include food products grown commercially or in a residential environment in their testing regime and to uploaded to a central database for monitoring. The market will benefit from test results that indicate nutrient and non-nutrient levels as well as a performance indicator/comparator of nutritional value for benchmarking and evaluating farming practice outcomes.

#### **References**

Barański et al., Higher antioxidant and lower cadmium concentrations and lower incidence of pesticide residues in organically grown crops: a systematic literature review and meta-analyses. *Br J Nutr.* 2014 Sep 14;112(5):794-811. doi: 10.1017/S0007114514001366. Epub 2014 Jun 26.

Dominika Średnicka-Tober et al., Composition differences between organic and conventional meat:a systematic literature review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Nutrition* (2016), 115, 994–1011. doi: 10.1017/S0007114515005073. Epub 2016 Feb 16.

Sambell, R., Andrew, L., Godrich, S., Wolfgang, J., Vandenbroeck, D., Stublely, K., Rose, N., Newman, L., Horwitz, P., Devine, A. (2019). Local Challenges and Successes Associated with Transitioning to Sustainable Food System Practices

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for a West Australian Context: Multi-Sector Stakeholder Perceptions. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2019, 16, 2051; doi:10.3390/ijerph16112051

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