

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.

First name	Emma
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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).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Climate Health WA Inquiry.

As a BSc Health Promotion student, the challenge of responding to climate change as a central public health issue in Western Australia is an area for which I am passionate about. I will be addressing Item 1 of the Terms of Reference, namely, to establish current knowledge on the implications of climate change for health in Western Australia (WA) and recommend a framework for evaluating future implications.

Climate change has a direct impact on health risks in WA arising from extreme weather events such as flooding, droughts, increased frequency and intensity of storms and severe heatwaves (Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), 2019; The State of Victoria, Department of Health (SoVDoH), 2012). For example, floods can cause illness, injury and/or death and heatwaves can cause thermal stress, cardiovascular failure and/or death (Global Health Alliance Australia (GHAA), 2019; SoVDoH, 2012; Watts et al., 2018). The current trajectory for climate change and the impacts, exposures and vulnerabilities upon the health of populations are of concern (Watts et al., 2018). In WA, this can mean respiratory illness from exposure to air pollution conditions and production of aeroallergens and increased mental disorders from droughts and the effect on loss of livelihoods (CAHA, 2019; SoVDoH, 2012). Other current and projected impacts of climate change on public health in WA can include increased range and prevalence of infectious diseases, food and water insecurity, adverse occupational health impacts and stress (CAHA, 2019). The impact of climate change has and will continue to have disproportionate adverse effects on vulnerable populations e.g. low socioeconomic status, the elderly and/or those living with pre-existing medical condition (CAHA, 2019).

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It is essential to monitor and track climate change and its effect on the health of the public in WA to predict future impacts, further identify vulnerable populations, develop priority actions and evaluate interventions (Watts et al., 2018). It is recommended to use the evaluation framework developed by the Lancet Countdown which, since 2017, has an established, global set of indicators linking climate change to public health (Watts et al., 2018). There are 41 indicators by the Lancet Countdown that track against five domains as described by Watts et al. (2018):

- 1) climate change impacts, exposures and vulnerabilities;
- 2) adaptation, planning and resilience for health;
- 3) mitigation actions and health co-benefits;
- 4) finance and economics; and
- 5) public and political engagement.

References:

Climate and Health Alliance. (2017). Framework for a National strategy for climate, health and well-being. Retrieved from:
https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/caha/pages/40/attachments/original/1498008324/CAHA_Framework_for_a_National_Strategy_on_Climate_Health_and_Well-being_

Global Health Alliance Australia. (2019). From Townsville to Tuvalu: Health and climate change in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. Retrieved from:
http://glham.org/wp-content/uploads/GLHAA_TownsvilleTuvalu-08.pdf

State of Victoria, Department of Health. (2012). Municipal public health and wellbeing planning: Having regard to climate change. Retrieved from:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/climate-change-and-public-health>

Watts, N., Amann, M., Arnell, N., Ayeb-Karlsson, S., Belesova, K., Berry, H., ... Costello, A. (2018). The 2018 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: Shaping the health of nations for centuries

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