

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The following information will not be published without your permission but enables the Inquiry to contact you about your submission if required.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

#### Heat wave adaptation (vulnerable people)

We have conducted a number of projects around climate change associated heat wave impacts and adaptation strategies of vulnerable populations of outdoor workers in Africa (Ghana and Zimbabwe). This work informed the development of a PhD project in the City of Victoria Park, Western Australia, where a survey has been conducted assessing temperatures and humidity in older residents homes across a whole summer season. Heat coping and adaptation strategies were explored by interviewing participants and various stages of this project and the research is currently being written up in a series of papers.

**Occupational heat stress** has been assessed in a number of locations in the resources sector, these include studies to;

- ascertain heat exposures of various occupational groups,
- levels of hydration,
- loss of acclimatisation status by FIFO workers where time at home is in a cool climate,
- ingestion of ice slurry to reduce core body temperature,
- impact of protective clothing (chemical suits) on heat exposure
- heat exposures of firefighters.

#### Communicable disease control

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Kerry Staples is developing a mathematical model that will be able to use various environmental inputs to determine when we can expect a plague of mosquitoes and this will assist agencies to control them more effectively as treatments will be more targeted to maximise effectiveness and reduce chemical inputs.

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

Work with ECU to ensure increased services for monitoring programs of heat stress to vulnerable groups including elderly.

Work with ECU to use research findings to predict potentially unknown vulnerable groups and monitoring accordingly.

Work with ECU to model different climate scenarios to determine the impact on Ross River virus rates, and numbers of mosquitoes generally.

With ECU apply the model to other geographic areas, within Western Australia, interstate or in the Pacific Islands, where Ross River virus rates exist, to predict impacts and manage and monitor accordingly.

DoH to provide an all of WA GIS platform or GIS dataset of best known Western Australian land contours and waterways to allow modelling research.

The Environmental Health Directorate to have a clear policy of supporting research into climate change impacts, and have an Officer or section, allocated to support the role and provide a liaison with researchers/industry.

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