



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).**

#### **Related to Terms of Reference 1, 2 and 7**

##### **Climate change, food production and Australian diets**

The world urgently needs to change the way it produces and consumes food. Agriculture creates a large environmental footprint – through land degradation, water scarcity and adverse impacts on climate change

([http://www.sustainablefoodfuture.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/WRR\\_Food\\_Full\\_Report\\_0.pdf](http://www.sustainablefoodfuture.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/WRR_Food_Full_Report_0.pdf)). Natural ecosystems critical to biodiversity and climate change mitigation must be protected. Agriculture and farming are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions – a recent report from New Zealand states that 49% of their greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture. This is heavily influenced by current dietary preferences

(<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/sustainability-and-health-sector>). This can potentially be mitigated through promoting plant-based diets, preventing net expansion of the area of agricultural land and reforestation of some agricultural land.

Promoting and encouraging changes in production and consumption patterns, including the reduction of food waste and reducing the demand for resource-intensive foods (such as beef), are important factors that can support changes in agriculture.

Current Australian diets and food systems contribute to global warming and environmental degradation leading to climate change, oil, water and nutrient scarcity,

### 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).**

land degradation, food insecurity, food waste and biodiversity loss. Food production is a large contributor to climate change. The current food systems contribute to environmental degradation and inequitable food distribution, overconsumption of foods in general (especially energy-dense nutrient-poor foods) and food waste. In contrast, diets that are consistent with recommendations for good health (i.e. encourage plant foods, limit animal foods and energy dense, nutrient poor foods and recommend energy balance) are also likely to have lower environmental impact and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable, nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy, while optimizing natural and human resources.

Climate change in turn impacts on the food system and people's health. Food security (access and availability) is an issue during extreme weather events, as well as being one of the most pressing climate-related issues, as food is going to become increasingly scarce and expensive. Those who experience socioeconomic disadvantage e.g. remote Indigenous Australians, the homeless, the elderly and those already living in poverty are likely to be the most vulnerable to effects of climate change. Availability and cost of some foods has already been affected by climate change induced extreme weather events. Future food production is likely to be challenged by shorter growing seasons, changing rainfall patterns, faster rates of land degradation, increasing ocean temperatures and rising sea levels and the quality of crops including fruits, vegetables and grains is likely to be reduced by heat and drought. These changes may also impact on the mental health and wellbeing of farmers, their families and local communities.

Creating healthy and sustainable food environments that facilitate healthy eating will contribute to the prevention and reduction in climate change impacts in Western Australia. The local food environment or food system includes all the processes involved in keeping us fed: from growing and harvesting food to processing, packaging, transportation, distribution, preparation, marketing, and its final consumption. It also includes the management of food, its packaging and waste; and ensuring food safety and quality within the region. Local governments are well-placed to influence local food environments through public policies and a rare opportunity currently exists to address this public health priority with the WA Public Health Act 2016 requiring all 139 WA Councils to develop local public health plans by 2023. Local governments are increasingly recognised as key stakeholders in effecting change in local food systems, but developing effective and strategic plans for action requires a purposeful approach to overcome barriers. ECU's *The Pathway to healthy food environments: a guide for local governments in Western Australia project*, a three year project funded by Healthway, aims to build the capacity of local governments to fulfil their expanded role in preventative health to address emergent issues such as food security, obesity and chronic disease prevention and climate change. This project can potentially provide the leadership and collaborative platform needed in the currently underdeveloped food policy environment in WA.

### 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).

#### Recommendations

- The WA Health's Climate Change response need to include objectives that to ensure the local food system is ecologically sustainable, healthy, and affordable. It needs to:
  - Recognise the relationship between climate change, obesity and malnutrition (see The Lancet's January 2019 Commission report <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/global-syndemic> and EAT-Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/eat-lancet-commission-summary-report/> ), and
  - Invest in public health strategies that aim to ensure that the local food system (production, transport, retail, consumption and waste management) is ecologically sustainable, healthy, and affordable, e.g. ECU Nutrition and Dietetics team's current pilot project with local government and in promoting the healthier food choices (with pricing, promotion, product and placement) through policies and public health planning support, as well as increasing food literacy (low cost menu planning, basic cooking skills, sourcing local produce) of local communities.
- Department of Health program of works to include the importance of training the future workforce to address the above. For example, support and invest in nutrition and dietetic teaching and research around food supply, food services, food and nutrient intake, vulnerable populations, sustainable diets, waste management, and food-related Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Related to Terms of Reference 5

Promoting and supporting nutritious, localised sustainable food systems, WA Health services can both reduce their own immediate footprint while supporting food access and nutrition, thereby helping to foster the prevention of disease, a reduction in the health sector's environmental health impacts and contributing to a longer-term reduction in the population's need for healthcare.

#### Recommendations

- WA Health services adopt and implement the Green Hospitals Program ([www.greenhospitals.net](http://www.greenhospitals.net) ) which includes implementing policies on purchasing and serving sustainably grown, healthy food; reduce hospitals' environmental footprint and food waste while fostering healthy eating habits in patients and staff; and support access to locally and sustainably sourced food in the community.

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