

- 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).

The potential impacts of climate change are well documented and Environmental Health Australia (WA) (EHA (WA)) support actions and policies at all levels of government and the private sector to address those impacts.

EHA (WA) endorses initiatives and ongoing actions in Climate Change mitigation and adaptation addressing issues such as sea level rise, heatwave (shade and tree canopy) extreme weather events, increasing saline contamination of ground water, global warming and increases in mean/ambient temperatures.

To achieve the above and associated actions, there is a need to be a system wide approach including education/qualifications, organisational accountability and allocating adequate resourcing at all levels.

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are the most suitably qualified officers to play a leading role in addressing climate change and health. They already work across sectors, located throughout the state and are able to bring a pragmatic approach to achieving real outcomes. They are able to integrate climate action with regular processes to more efficiently execute climate adaption measures.

There needs to be more support for Environmental Health qualification courses, promote and sustain more aboriginal Environmental Health workers in remote communities and to support regional local governments. The Department of Health (DOH) needs to strengthen its relationship with local government and seriously consider a funding model to support rural and remote local governments to assist with achieving climate change outcomes.

There are opportunities for local governments to incorporate climate change measures in their public health plans and EHO's are critical if the public health plan is to achieve its intent. DOH needs to develop a strategy to address critical

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shortages of environmental health qualified officers especially in regional WA.

Climate change initiatives will not be implemented in regional WA if environmental health qualified officers are not employed by local governments.

What is also critical is how the respective agencies and/or private sector organisation are held accountable for their actions. The systems they have in place need to be such that the system continues regardless of who is leading the organisation. Climate change adaptation is too critical to be reliant upon the 'good will' of a particular CEO or Director General.

A fully documented and evidence based audit program should be developed and administered by a central authority who understands the health impacts of climate change (eg: DOH).

The audit system should be based upon the Australian Standards for Quality Assurance or similar with participating agencies demonstrating (documented evidence) how their organisation understands and takes notice of indicators/reports on climate change related issues (decision making) and whether it is allocating sufficient resources (actions linked to direct budget lines and strategic objectives) to deliver their objectives. The extent of burden on the organisation is to be proportional to its size and capability.

Matched with the audit system there needs to be a range of incentives (for meeting target objectives) and potential penalties (both corporate and individual) for neglect or deliberate undermining of climate change actions.

EHA (WA) is keen to be involved in working groups to further these initiatives.

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