

# Department of Health

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Dr Andrew Robertson  
Chief Health Officer  
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Dear Dr Robertson

## **Subject: Submission to the Climate Health WA Inquiry**

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

### **Tasmanian Government response to climate change**

The Tasmanian Government has a strong record of cross-sectoral action in climate change, driven by the Department of Premier and Cabinet's climate change strategy - *Climate Action 21: Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2017-2021*<sup>1</sup>. This document sets the agenda for action on climate change to 2021, and was prepared in consultation with local government, industry, non-government organisations, research groups and the broader Tasmanian community.

The plan has 37 actions under six priority areas:

- Understanding Tasmania's future climate
- Advancing our renewable energy capability
- Reducing our transport emissions
- Growing a climate-ready economy
- Building climate resilience
- Supporting community action

The latest report card for this plan<sup>2</sup> documents that five actions have been completed, three are nearing completion and the remaining 29 are in progress. The report card also notes that Tasmania is the first jurisdiction in Australia to achieve zero net emissions.

### **Health sector actions under *Climate Action 21***

Public Health Services represent the health sector on both the Interdepartmental Committee and the Implementation Working Group for this plan.

The health sector has responsibility for two of the 37 actions identified in *Climate Action 21*. These are:

- Action 6.3: Support the aged care sector to prepare for, and respond to, extreme heat events

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<sup>1</sup> [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/tasmanias\\_climate\\_change\\_action\\_plan\\_20172021](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/tasmanias_climate_change_action_plan_20172021)

<sup>2</sup> [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/Climate\\_Change\\_Priorities/climate\\_action\\_21\\_report\\_card\\_2018](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/Climate_Change_Priorities/climate_action_21_report_card_2018)

- Action 6.4: Identify additional policies and programs to respond to the potential health impacts of climate change

Action 6.3 was completed in 2017, and represents a suite of resources available to the aged care sector<sup>3</sup>.

Action 6.4 is underway, initially through the organisation, delivery and analysis of the Tasmanian Climate Change and Health Roundtable event, held in Hobart in April 2019. This event was attended by over 40 researchers, clinicians and policy makers from Tasmania and around Australia. The aim of the event was to identify and prioritise policies, programs and research in climate change and health, specific to the Tasmanian context. Over 120 actions were identified. We anticipate that the outcomes of this report will be available shortly.

### **Additional climate change and health actions**

Public Health Services is a member of the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals network<sup>4</sup>. Membership allows access to a range of resources to support emissions reduction in the health sector and identify actions with health and emission-reducing co-benefits. Public Health Services is supporting the Royal Hobart Hospital to become a network member, and is supporting the hospital to identify sustainability initiatives in the clinical system, especially in reducing clinical waste.

### **Challenges, strengths, opportunities and initiatives relevant to WA**

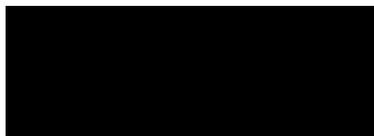
The Tasmanian Roundtable event created a launching point for discussions and collaborations in climate change and health in Tasmania, and has been pivotal in identifying actions, recognising priorities and making connections between relevant stakeholders. A similar approach could be suitable for WA, and further information on Roundtable events shared.

Tasmania's approach to this issue has been to nurture and support strong partnerships, and provide multiple engagement opportunities across research, policy and clinical areas. This has worked well in Tasmania with relatively few people working in this field, often with multiple roles.

Tasmania has utilised existing resources, including the *National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia*<sup>5</sup>, developed by the Climate and Health Alliance. Drawing on these existing resources reduces duplication and provides a consistent basis from which all jurisdictions can develop their own plans.

Departmental executive level support for action in the climate change and health space has been strong, generating and supporting opportunities and facilitating engagement. Tasmania's approach to this issue, including an emphasis on partnerships, evidence and action, has potentially mitigated the risk of opposition and kept discussions constructive and future-focussed.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mark Veitch  
Director of Public Health

26 August 2019

Copy to: Adj. Professor Tarun Weeramanthri

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<sup>3</sup> [www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/healthy\\_communities/extreme\\_heat/resources\\_for\\_residential\\_aged\\_care](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/healthy_communities/extreme_heat/resources_for_residential_aged_care)

<sup>4</sup> [www.greenhospitals.net](http://www.greenhospitals.net)

<sup>5</sup> [www.caha.org.au/national-strategy-climate-health-wellbeing](http://www.caha.org.au/national-strategy-climate-health-wellbeing)