

Health and Medical Organisation Statement on the need for strong emission reduction targets

Health for all Australians – a long term view

An Open Letter to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Climate Change and Water

November 2008

To ensure there is a future for our grandchildren, to look after the health and common good of all Australians, to keep global warming to around two degrees, the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong need to take far-sighted bold decisions. We call on them to act on what climate scientists say we need: emission reduction targets of 20 to 25% of 1990 levels by 2020.

As our leaders in this area the Prime Minister and Senator Wong are charged with a responsibility to protect the health of all Australians now and in the future. To do too little too late on global warming risks a series of devastating health impacts and puts in jeopardy our ability to sustain our current level of population.

Economic decisiveness and leadership in recent times to limit damage from the global financial downturn should serve as a model for action. A similar approach is desperately needed to avoid global warming of more than two degrees in order to preserve human society, health, wellbeing and the economy.

The scientific basis for the need to take strong urgent action around the world has been clearly spelt out. Further, Garnaut and Stern showed plainly that taking such action to protect our future will have a minute or very limited impact on our long term economic prosperity. We believe there is enough evidence to demonstrate the need for immediate and decisive action. We will be judged harshly if driven by selfish, short term greed, at the expense of survival of our children and all future generations. It is a matter of moral obligation.

We call on our current political leaders, in and out of government, to protect the interests and future of all Australians and to take urgent action in adopting appropriate emission reduction targets.

This message is supported by the following signatories:



The Health Organisations: The Public Health Association of Australia, Doctors for the Environment Australia, Australian Nurses Federation, Health Care Consumers Association, Council of Remote Area Nurses, Australian Rural Health Education Network, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, Australian Health Promotion Association, The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

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