

## MEDIA RELEASE

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8 July 2010

### **CLIMATE CHANGE & PUBLIC HEALTH: URGENT ACTION NEEDED**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is calling for urgent action on climate change to avoid dire consequences for public health.

“Despite slow progress on an international climate agreement, it is essential that Australia begins to take action to reduce emissions. At current increasing rates of emissions the world has less than a decade to stop them. The longer we delay, the higher temperature is going to go, and the more serious the outcomes for Australians,” said Dr Peter Tait, Convenor of PHAA’s Environmental Health Special Interest Group.

“At current rates of emissions the temperature by the middle of the century is likely to be one or even two degrees hotter. The impact of this on frequency of heat waves, on old and sick people and on agriculture will be severe.

“PHAA concurs with the recent assessments of sea level rise as indicating that we are entering dangerous times. However, this is only one part of our ecosystem. If we stress the environment too far then we are looking at problems with water availability, which effects growing food, having water to drink, cook and wash with.

“The only way to minimise the risk is to wind back emissions. It is essential that the Gillard Government and all other parties urgently commit to policies designed to introduce a price on emissions ahead of this year’s election. This makes it clear to business where the goal posts are. Our economy can then begin to use the currently available technologies to move to a renewable energy future. We can then safeguard our future prosperity and health,” said Dr Tait.

**For further details/comment:**

Dr Peter Tait, Convenor, PHAA Environmental Health Special Interest Group - 0429 386 186