

One Health and Climate Change

Policy Position Statement

Key messages:	<p>A safe environment and climate are core determinants of human health and wellbeing, along with the socioeconomic and political structure of society. Increasing anthropogenic disruptions are threatening their capacity to provide necessary ecological services to the systems which support human, animal and environmental health. This policy seeks to outline a series of principles and tangible actions designed to ensure the well-being of people, by also supporting the health of animals and the environment.</p>
Key policy positions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The paradigm of One Health recognises the need for a collaborative multi-sectorial and transdisciplinary approach to achieve optimal health outcomes for humans, animals and the environment.2. Anthropogenic environmental change, including global warming and climate disruption, threatens human health and wellbeing by affecting the ecological and social determinants of health – among them clean air, safe drinking water, food availability and shelter.3. The inextricable interrelationship between human, animal and environmental health necessitates a One Health response to the effects of climate change.4. The interface between climate change, environmental change and human and animal health has not been clearly acknowledged or addressed in current initiatives by the Australian Government. The lack of a multidisciplinary body enabling a unified national cross sectorial response, limits the effectiveness and scope of our response to the impacts of climate change on human health.5. An integrated One Health approach will optimise the well-being of people, animals and the environment.
Audience:	<p>Federal, State and Territory Governments, policymakers and program managers, PHAA members, media.</p>
Responsibility:	<p>PHAA One Health Special Interest Group</p>
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One Health and Climate Change

Policy position statement

(This policy should be read in conjunction with PHAA policy position statements on: Safe Climate; Global Warming; The Food System and Food Security; Health Effects of Fossil Fuels; Ecologically Sustainable Population for Australia; Nuclear Industry; and One Health.)

PHAA affirms the following principles:

1. Optimal human health is inextricably linked with both optimal animal and environmental health.¹
2. Climate change is a health emergency.² Action to ensure a safe environment and climate is a critical and urgent public health priority.³
3. The effects of global warming are novel, far-ranging and complex and require a coordinated, collaborative, multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to ensure the well-being of people, animals and the environment.
4. The interface between climate change, environmental change and human and animal health has not been clearly acknowledged or addressed in current initiatives by the Australian Government, limiting the effectiveness and scope of its response to the impacts of climate change on human health.

PHAA notes the following evidence:

5. Many current and predicted negative health impacts on humans, animals and the environment are a consequence of anthropogenic climate change.^{2,4}
6. Disease emergence is propelled by climate driven changes in vector populations and environmental stress on wildlife populations resulting in the potential for spill-over events.¹
7. The inextricable interrelationship between human, animal and environmental health – addressing climate change impacts requires a One Health response in order to:
 - a. Preserve clean water supply – including responding to extreme weather events such as cyclones and droughts, management of human and animal waste, and surveillance for infectious diseases such as leptospirosis.⁵
 - b. Ensure food security – with healthy diets from ecologically sustainable food systems. This requires insight into social, health and economic impacts of climate change on agricultural practices including global livestock production.^{5,6} Research and investment into regenerative farming practices is also indicated to ensure sustainability of food crops.
 - c. Undertake collaborative and cooperative human and animal health surveillance systems at the interface between wildlife/people, wildlife/food animals and food animals/people as well as surveillance of vector populations to ensure early recognition and response to zoonotic and emerging disease spill over events.
 - d. Maintain environmental health and local, regional and national biodiversity.

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8. Climate change is seen by scientists from many disciplines as the greatest health challenge of the 21st century, with current and future threats to human, animal and environmental health and all aspects of society being clearly understood.^{2,7}
9. Climate change will alter the distribution and incidence of a wide range of diseases—either directly or indirectly (e.g. diseases with a development stage outside the host).^{8,9}
10. Food production practices also feed into climate change. This can occur via change in land-use to provide feed for animals or more directly from production systems that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. red meat production from ruminants emitting methane).¹⁰
11. Australia has no unified national strategy, national Communicable Diseases Centre, or cross sectoral response to address the interface between climate change, environmental change and human and animal health. Current policy and funding commitments provide limited recognition of its importance.
12. Implementing this policy would contribute towards the achievement of [UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing](#) and [10 – Reducing Inequalities](#).

PHAA seeks the following actions:

13. Immediate interventions to mitigate climate change both nationally and internationally by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
14. A decreased reliance on fossil fuels both locally and economically and significant investment in order to transition to renewable energy, necessitating re-training and redeployment of workers within the coal mining industry to minimise social, economic and mental health impacts on these workers.
15. Establish a multidisciplinary body comprising of human, animal and environmental health experts to work with economists/engineers/social scientists using evidence-based approach to equipping health practitioners and instituting health-based interventions for infectious and non-infectious health conditions associated with climate change. This includes integrated human and animal surveillance systems.
16. Establish bodies to support sustainable farming practices to ensure water and food security nationally as well as providing due consideration of animal welfare impacts to both wildlife and food animals.

PHAA resolves to:

17. Advocate for the above steps to be taken based on the principles in this position statement.

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References

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