

## Health and climate change in Australia and the Asia Pacific region

### Suggested Action Matrix for Parliamentary Friends of Climate Action

# Nine-Point Plan

#### IMPLEMENTABLE ACTIONS

#### 1. Publicly recognise the health impacts of climate

- Use WHO, World Bank and Red Cross analysis to provide the basis for this acknowledgment, eg:
  - the World Bank estimates that without climate-resilient development, climate change could force more than 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030
  - A net increase of 529,000 adult deaths worldwide is projected to result from expected reductions in food availability (particularly fruit and vegetables) by 2050
  - Red Cross predicts that if no urgent action is taken, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance annually due to the climate crisis could double by 2050. Similarly, financial costs could balloon to 20 billion US dollars per year.
  - The WHO estimates between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths/year directly from climate change:
- Declare a climate emergency and join the right side of history
- Acknowledge that climate change disproportionately affects some populations including pregnant women, people in rural communities and indigenous populations

#### 2. Australia's ODA Investments in the Pacific

- *You can ensure that none of the loans granted through the new \$2billion Infrastructure Facility for the Pacific are used for fossil-fuel projects*
- Last week Pacific health leaders agreed that to avoid 3.5 million deaths/year, they need to build health systems that can withstand climate change
  - Need ROIs to demonstrate that climate-related health infrastructure - such as sewerage and water treatment facilities- don't ONLY achieve a climate change and health co-benefit, but also stack up against concessionally funded Chinese and Japanese roads and bridges
  - A proportion of Pacific aid funding should be directed to the climate-related health infrastructure that's already been identified and prioritised by 13 Pacific Health Minister.
  - Ensure that all disaster recovery work that is required to use a “build-back better approach”

#### 3. Workforce training in Australia and the Pacific

- Support Australia's Medical Deans to equip medical students with expertise to predict and treat environmental-health related conditions.
- Ensure that DFAT, when it finalises its Climate Change Policy, includes training and equipping of the health workforce in the Pacific, to recognise and know how to prevent the mortality associated with extreme heat, infectious disease and other climate-related health impacts

#### 4. A careful implementation agenda

- Ensure that funds are allocated in the next Federal Budget for a National Health Survey, which for the first time, should include questions related to the environmental drivers of poor health, including the impacts of climate change
- Include the impacts and responses to climate change as a Standing Item on the agendas of all the COAG Councils
- Require that all Cabinet Submissions contain a climate change impacts analysis
- Task the Productivity Commission to assess the cost-effectiveness of action on climate change and the associated co-benefits for health
- Give high priority to the impacts on health of climate change in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's forthcoming climate change action strategy for the aid program, and implement this strategy urgently
- Review and discuss the Climate and Health Alliance's Framework for a National Strategy

#### 5. Direct Action- working with your elected state-based colleagues and the Councils and shires within your electorate

- Encourage State & Territory Health Ministers to include climate change adaptation & mitigation measures in their public health plans, as Victoria has just done.
- Require that the Chief Health Officers (CHO) in each State and Territory report on progress against climate change-related strategies in their regular CHO reports
- Support Councils and Shires to deliver actual adaptation and mitigation initiatives



## 6. Focus on the impacts of climate change on rural and indigenous communities

- Establish a multi-institutional Health and Climate Change Research Facility, based in rural Australia, tasked with delivering policy-relevant research

## 7. Mobilise public and private financing for rural Australia and the Pacific

- Mobilise capital for low and zero emission initiatives
- Mitigate against the risks to global finance posed by climate change
- Focus on the financial regulation of climate risk through the creation of a new agenda for banks, investment funds, insurance companies and financial regulators.

## 8. Support proven solutions that address the impact of climate change on health

- Replicate and scale-up what works through these three “no-regrets” measures (via incentives and an enabling policy environment):
  - improve household thermal efficiency through measures that address cold and heat-related health impacts: through retrofits of existing housing stock; through the introduction of standards for new residential developments such as roof colour/paint; and through new efficiency standards for rental properties
  - reduce air pollution through the establishment of vehicle emission standards
  - create an enabling policy environment for electric vehicles

## 9. Support policy initiatives that involve the community and citizens

- *Go local* through the establishment of a competitive fund for shires and city councils to introduce initiatives and infrastructure that reduces the negative health impacts of climate change. That is, many Councils are preparing or already have Heat Plans, Emergency Management, Climate Adaptation and Climate Emergency Plans which contain “no-regrets” initiatives and which have health co-benefits, but which need to be funded (especially in those states which have rates-capping) such as:
  - upgrades of public lighting to efficient LED technology
  - delivery of smart, integrated water systems that provide flood and drought protection
  - acceleration of annual tree planting with a focus on canopy and shade-providing trees
  - removal of organic waste from landfill
  - support of more localised recycling solutions
  - support for the uptake and transition to electric vehicles (both Council fleet and for businesses and residents)
  - support for homes and businesses to achieve the highest efficiency standards and to be powered by 100% renewable energy.
  - rapid transition from gas to electricity in all Council buildings