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# Environmental sustainability: The next generation

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We've asked our speakers and panellists why they're passionate about sustainability in healthcare, and what advice they have for those looking to get started. Read on for their answers.

## Why are you passionate about sustainability in healthcare?

### Dónall Ó'Cróinín

- An anaesthesiology resident in my hospital - Oscar Duffy - introduced me to the main sustainability issues in anaesthesiology. My interest was piqued and I attended the sustainability session at the 2019 ANZCA meeting. This session opened my eyes. Then I began to comprehend through written, social and broadcast media the challenges facing the planet. My understanding of what needed to be done and how significant a contribution anaesthesiologists could make - both directly and indirectly - was transformed. I could not unlearn or ignore what was now stark and clear, we had to act. I was wondering now how to get everybody to feel the same but the best start I could make was to try to become more sustainable myself. Thankfully increasing numbers of anaesthesiologists are deciding to be more sustainable every day. It truly is not a question of whether we have the ability to save the planet, the question is whether we care enough to make the specific improvements to our human processes that will save the planet.

### Dr Noni Harold

- I've become more sustainable at work because I realised there is a huge number of like-minded people that I can learn from and there's tangible (satisfying) differences I can make.

### Dr Donovan Wong

- It was during training in the UK that the concept of environmentalism was brought to my attention, by a particularly passionate consultant I worked with. Now, as a clinician in Queen Mary Hospital, Hong Kong, I see with increasing acuity the many opportunities we have to try and do better. We as a profession already strive to follow best practice based on evidence for our patients. However, we do not simply influence individual patients, our actions ripple out to wider populations. It's our social responsibility to also care for the wellbeing of our colleagues as well as safeguarding those we have yet to meet in the wider global community. I hope that by continuing this conversation, we can all practice more mindfully.

### Dr Jess Davies

- Many of us are both committed to high-quality healthcare and disturbed by the waste and emissions associated with it. My environmentally considered lifestyle was in stark contrast to the waste and emissions being produced at work, so Dr Sophia Grobler and I started TRA2SH. TRA2SH leaders like registrar Dr Noni Harold continue to demonstrate that our doctors in training are knowledgeable and can lead in this emerging area.
- For me the driver was not one specific moment, but a feeling that developed over time. The impacts of climate change are too complex and devastating to be absorbed quickly. So it's with the emotional side. Vague curiosity led to the reading of a few highly charged and energising books, and my path was set.

#### Dr Tim Keady

- There was one more important factor. I was asked to do a presentation on how I would reduce the carbon emissions of the NHS by two per cent through the transformation of anaesthesia services. There's nothing like the panic of a looming presentation to focus the mind.

#### Dr Husein Moloo

- I became more sustainable when I stumbled onto the fact that a natural extension of quality improvement is planetary health.

### What gift or piece of advice would you like to share with others?

#### Dónall Ó'Cróinín

- Accept and believe that this is truly the most important issue facing humanity. Because it is. If you do that, the details of how to change professionally are easily accessible. Cut your carbon footprint like the future of the planet depends on it. Because it does. We know we can. It's time for 'Yes we will'.

#### Dr Noni Harold

- Even if you don't have time to commit to sustainability research or projects, having conversations about your interest in sustainability with a wide variety of hospital staff can be extremely valuable in creating cultural change.

#### Dr Donovan Wong

- Time is a precious commodity and we would do well in investing it in ourselves, in each other and this home we all share.
- Be brave, and just start somewhere. You will find many people come out of the woodwork to help you!

#### Dr Jess Davies

- I recommend Rebecca Huntley's book [\*How to Talk About Climate Change in a Way That Makes a Difference\*](#) which highlights the need for personal stories in connecting with those who might not think about climate change like you do.

#### Dr Tim Keady

- I recommend a book [\*Losing Earth\*](#) by Nathaniel Rich. If you're going to play, it's good to know how much skin you have in the game. (Listen to it on Audible, excellent narration).

#### Dr Husein Moloo

- All of us can play a part as so much work is needed; and no special expertise is required to improve planetary health beyond the realization that for a healthy population now and in the future we need clean water/air/soil/food.

### Further resources:

- [Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists Environmental sustainability LibGuide](#)
- [Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists Environmental sustainability webpage](#)
- [Royal College of Anaesthetists UK Environmental Sustainability webpage](#)
- [Why it matters – The College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland](#)
- [Sustainable health care: Simple efforts can reduce your practice's carbon footprint](#) – Article by Dr Husein Moloo
- [Trainee-Led Research and Audit in Anaesthesia for Sustainable Healthcare \(TRA2SH\)](#)