



ANZCA

FPM

CEO

Australian and New Zealand
College of Anaesthetists

Monday 1 June 2026

Mr Blair Comley PSM
Secretary
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Sent via email: blair.comley@health.gov.au

Dear Mr Comley

Decommissioning of nitrous oxide (N₂O) medical gas pipeline systems

I am writing to inform you of the significant environmental risk of N₂O medical gas pipeline systems leakage, and to offer our support and seek your assistance in reducing those risks through moving to point of care N₂O cylinder supply.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is committed to minimising the health impact of climate change and promoting environmental sustainability. N₂O is a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change and is the greatest clinical source of emissions in public hospitals in Australia. Both local and overseas experience has found the main emissions are from leaking N₂O manifolds and medical gas pipeline systems, *despite* these systems being maintained in accordance with Australian Standards.

Our [joint statement](#) in December 2025 with the Australian Society of Anaesthetists and New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (attached) reflects a collaborative bi-national approach on decommissioning N₂O medical gas pipeline systems. Furthermore, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have also formally endorsed this statement demonstrating a shared commitment across professional colleges to advancing environmentally sustainable healthcare practices.

Decommissioning existing N₂O medical gas pipeline systems and using point-of-care cylinders where N₂O is clinically required is in line with the recommendations from the equivalent anaesthesia organisations in the [United Kingdom](#) and the [United States of America](#), as well as the [World Health Organization](#).

The Australasian Health Facility Guidelines have been amended to state that the provision of N₂O via reticulated/piped outlets is not mandatory and that point-of-care cylinders can meet clinical needs in most settings. For facilities wanting to identify leaks prior to decommissioning these medical gas pipeline systems, the Australian Centre for Disease Control's [Detecting and Reducing Leaks from Nitrous Oxide in Healthcare Facilities: A Practical Guide \(2024\)](#) provides methods and recommendations for identifying and minimising N₂O leaks in healthcare settings.

I would like to offer ANZCA's support in helping you address this risk through technical advice, implementation case studies and clinician engagement.

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I am wondering if, in the first instance, you could please confirm your commitment to reducing this environmental hazard and let me know if you require any assistance in the move to point of care N₂O cylinders.

Please don't hesitate to contact me, or enviro-sustainability@anzca.edu.au with any queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'L' followed by a long horizontal line.

Dr Lance Emerson
Chief Executive Officer