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ANZCA Council Statement on Climate Change

The council of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists accepts the recent statements on climate change published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹, the World Health Organization^{2,3}, the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology⁴, the World Meteorological Organisation⁵, and The *Lancet* Countdown on health and climate change⁶.

ANZCA Council recognises the predicted severity of adverse health effects related to climate change^{2,3,6}, particularly in vulnerable populations. These include those directly caused by extreme weather events, vector-borne diseases, disruption to food production, worsening air pollution, and mental health sequelae. The ferocity and devastation of the Australian bushfires this summer, and their link to climate change, have been particularly harrowing.

As a specialist medical college charged with overseeing safety and quality in health care delivery, we believe the evolving situation now constitutes a public health emergency, being one that warrants urgent and decisive adaptive changes. We call on all levels of Australian Government to accord the timely response that this requires. We welcome the opportunity to work in partnership to facilitate this.

We also recognise the need for a unified and community wide response to this challenge, and therefore we will seek to lead by example in minimising the carbon footprint of our own college and profession.

References

1. www.ipcc.ch/sr15/
2. www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/
3. apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/276405/9789241514972-eng.pdf?ua=1
4. www.bom.gov.au/weather-services/fire-weather-centre/bushfire-weather/index.shtml
5. public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/2019-concludes-decade-of-exceptional-global-heat-and-high-impact-weather
6. [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)32596-6/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)32596-6/fulltext)



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ANZCA is committed to minimising the health impact of climate change and promoting environmental sustainability, and has taken measures to reduce its environmental impact, including:



Supporting sustainable waste management practices including recycling in-house and at our events.



Retrofitting measures to reduce water and energy consumption at ANZCA House.



Carbon offsetting airline travel associated with ANZCA activities.

Anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians can lead by:



Promoting the rational use of diagnostic tests, interventions and prescriptions, such as the Choosing Wisely campaign.



Employing techniques and practices that reduce emissions and waste.



Supporting education and research in environmental sustainability in anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine.

ANZCA encourages healthcare organisations and government to consider:



Transition to low-emission energy sources to reduce the footprint of healthcare facilities.



Future-proofing healthcare facilities and systems by incorporating measures that will adapt to the changing climate, and support sustainable practices including waste management.



Engagement with the healthcare industry to produce more sustainable medical products and reduce waste.



Investment in telehealth to reduce unnecessary long-distance travel and its associated emissions.