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**AMA CALLS FOR AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP TO ADDRESS THE
 GLOBAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**
AMA Position Statement on Climate Change and Human Health (Revised 2015)

The AMA today released the updated *AMA Position Statement on Climate Change and Human Health (Revised 2015)*, which was last revised in 2008.

The updated Position Statement takes account of the most recent scientific evidence, and is being released a day after United States President Barack Obama said that “*climate change left unchecked would soon trigger global conflict and condemn our children to a planet beyond their capacity to repair*”.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, said the AMA Position Statement focuses on the health impacts of climate change, and the need for Australia to plan for the major impacts, which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“It is the AMA’s view that climate change is a significant worldwide threat to human health that requires urgent action, and that human activity has contributed to climate change,” Professor Owler said.

“The evidence is clear - we cannot sit back and do nothing.

“There are already significant health and social effects of climate change and extreme weather events, and these effects will worsen over time if we do not take action now.

“The AMA believes that the Australian government must show leadership on addressing climate change.

“We are urging the Government to go to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December in Paris with emission reduction targets that represent Australia’s fair share of global greenhouse gas emissions.

“There is considerable evidence to convince governments around the world to start planning for the major impacts of climate change immediately.

“The world is facing a higher incidence of extreme weather events, the spread of diseases, disrupted supplies of food and water, and threats to livelihoods and security.

“The health effects of climate change include increased heat-related illness and deaths, increased food and water borne diseases, and changing patterns of diseases.

“The incidence of conditions such as malaria, diarrhea, and cardio-respiratory problems is likely to rise.

“Vulnerable people will suffer the most because climate change will have its greatest effect on those who have contributed least to its cause and who have the least resources to cope with it.

“*The Lancet* has warned that climate change will worsen global health inequity through negative effects on the social determinants of health, and may undermine the last half-century of gains in development and global health,” Professor Owler said.

The *AMA Position Statement on Climate Change and Human Health (Revised 2015)* states that:

- Australia should adopt mitigation targets within an Australian carbon budget that represents Australia's fair share of global greenhouse gas emissions, under the principle of common but differential responsibilities.
- Renewable energy presents relative benefits compared to fossil fuels with regard to air pollution and health. Therefore, active transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources should be considered.
- Decarbonisation of the economy can potentially result in unemployment and subsequent adverse health impacts. The transition of workers displaced from carbon intensive industries must be effectively managed.
- Regional and national collaboration across all sectors, including a comprehensive and broad-reaching adaptation plan is necessary to reduce the health impacts of climate change. This requires a National Strategy for Health and Climate Change.
- There should be greater education and awareness of the health impacts of climate change, and the public health benefits of mitigation and adaptation.
- Climate policies can have public health benefits beyond their intended impact on the climate. These health benefits should be promoted as a public health opportunity, with significant potential to offset some costs associated with addressing climate change.

The AMA Federal Council last month passed a policy resolution acknowledging the need for the healthcare sector to reduce its carbon footprint through improved energy efficiency, green building design, alternative energy generation, alternative transport methods, sustainable food sourcing, sustainable waste management, and water conservation.

The *AMA Position Statement on Climate Change and Human Health (Revised 2015)* is available at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/ama-position-statement-climate-change-and-human-health-2004-revised-2015>

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