

MEDIA RELEASE

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Gippsland PHN releases climate change strategy

The connection between climate change and health is the driver for Gippsland Primary Health Network's Gippsland Climate Change Adaption Strategy which highlights the importance of the organisation taking a leadership role on the issue.

The paper endorses world, national, state and local climate change reports which argue the health impacts of climate change are "overwhelmingly negative" and that reducing emissions of greenhouse gases will improve health outcomes, particularly if air pollution is reduced.

Research shows extreme heat exacerbates pollution, pollen and other airborne allergen levels which negatively impact on cardiovascular and respiratory disease, trigger asthma and contribute to deaths in the elderly population.

Gippsland PHN Acting Chief Executive Officer, Angela Jacob, said the organisation was challenged by its Community Advisory Committee to develop a position statement.

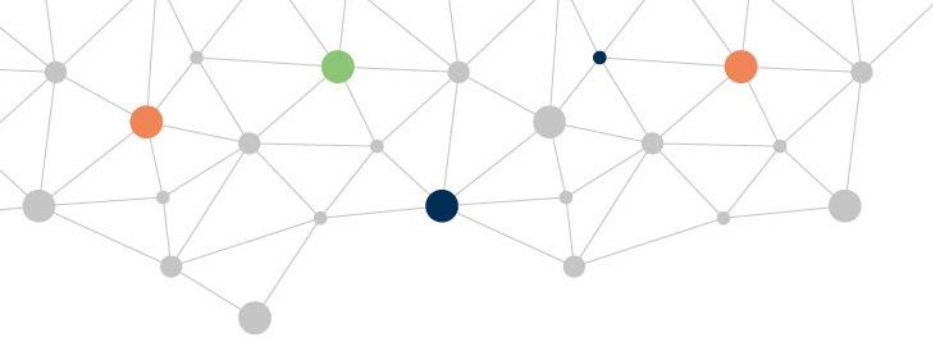
"The committee understood the connection between climate change and health, and the importance for Gippsland PHN to have a leadership role in adaptation," Mrs. Jacob said.

"Extreme weather events and natural disasters driven by climate change will increasingly define the work of PHNs as they are recognised as the logical coordinators of primary care emergency response activities in their regions."

The comprehensive strategy sets out a Climate Change Action Plan, divided into actions relating to leadership, mitigation and resilience with objectives and actions aligned to Gippsland PHN's strategic plan.

These include to:

- Understand, articulate and advocate for the impact of climate change on health for our communities;
- Provide leadership for Gippsland in planning for and responding to climate change impacts;
- Have a seat at the table for Commonwealth, State and local disaster preparedness, response and recovery;
- Understand the social implications of climate change for inequality;
- Encourage development of initiatives which reduce the reliance on hospital care;
- Provide leadership for Gippsland in planning for, and responding to, climate change impacts;



- Develop a provider workforce with relevant knowledge and skills to address climate related issues; and
- Support mental and physical wellbeing of those impacted by more severe and frequent disasters.
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Mrs. Jacob thanked Baw Baw Sustainability Network, Healthy Futures and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for their input and feedback into the strategy.

“Monitoring and evaluation of the Gippsland PHN Climate Action Strategy will occur under the governance of the Gippsland PHN Board of Directors and progress against the action plan will be reported to the Board quarterly,” she said.

You can read the Gippsland PHN Climate Change Adaption Strategy [here](#).

BREAKOUT:

Gippsland PHN is offering grants of up to \$1000 to 22 Gippsland general practices to undertake an energy assessment which will allow them to measure their climate impacts and facilitate positive steps toward climate change mitigation.

Health care contributes more than 4.4% of net global climate emissions, which is equivalent to 514 coal-fired power plants.

Supporting general practices to reduce their carbon footprint as well as undertaking sustainable initiatives forms part of Gippsland PHN’s Climate Change Adaption Strategy.

General practices who want to apply or seek more information can [click here](#)

For more information, contact Lynne Smith on 0437 918 234 or lynne.smith@gphn.org.au