



# Nurses and Midwives for Planetary Health: A Call to Action

## *Our Declaration*

As nurses and midwives, we recognise the deep connections between human health and the health of our planet. We declare that the climate crisis is a health crisis and social justice issue, and that it is our professional and moral duty to take action.

### The facts are clear

- Our world is warming due to human activity.
- This warming is having severe impacts on human health.
- We have the power and responsibility to address this crisis.

### The health impacts of the climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

Climate change is not a distant threat; it is affecting individuals and communities now:

- Climate-driven extreme weather events: Heat waves, floods, and bushfires increase mortality, respiratory diseases, and mental health issues.
- Ecosystem disruption: Biodiversity loss affects food security, reduces potential for new medicines, and increases risk of zoonotic diseases.
- Air and water quality degradation: Pollution worsens respiratory, cardiovascular and waterborne diseases.
- Vector-borne disease proliferation: Changing climates and habitats expand the range of disease-carrying insects, increasing the prevalence of malaria, Lyme disease, and others.
- Food system instability: Climate change, pollution, and loss of biodiversity threaten crop yields, nutritional quality and food safety.
- Compounding effects on vulnerable populations: The triple planetary threat disproportionately impacts disadvantaged and marginalised communities, exacerbating health inequities.

## *Our Call to Action*

As nurses and midwives, we must:

### 1. Educate ourselves and others by:

- Confidently discussing climate-related health risks with colleagues and healthcare consumers.
- Learning and teaching about protective measures for extreme weather events.
- Identifying and communicating the signs of climate-related illnesses.

### 2. Recognise and respond to the disproportional impact of climate change on vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged populations, including:

- Socio-economically disadvantaged individuals.
- Pregnant women and their unborn children.
- Rural communities.
- People with disabilities.
- Children and older people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Outdoor workers and homeless individuals.

### 3. Advocate for climate health in all policies, at local, national and global levels by:

- Engaging in community discussions and public forums.
- Developing and disseminating policy briefs on climate change health impacts.
- Collaborating with other healthcare professionals and advocacy groups.
- Calling for integration of health considerations in all decisions related to the extraction and use of fossil fuels.

Together, we can create a healthier future. The health of humanity depends on the health of our planet. As guardians of health, it is our duty to lead the way in this crucial fight.

*October 2024.*

## Our Commitment

## Our Action

### 1. Keep Learning!

- Stay informed about climate science and its health implications.
- Engage with planetary health education programs and initiatives.

### 2. Reach out and speak up!

- Incorporate climate health information into patient care and education.
- Advocate for sustainable practice initiatives in our workplaces.
- Organise and participate in community events on climate and health.

### 3. Embrace our political power!

- Vote for and support policies that address climate change.
- Actively engage with policymakers to advocate for climate-friendly health policies.

### 4. Practice Sustainably!

- Implement and champion sustainable practices in our workplaces.
- Make a personal commitment to reduce our carbon footprint.

### 5. Collaborate with others!

- Support and participate in climate-health research.
- Work with professionals within health and across sectors to address climate change holistically.