



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.

1. Ward, A. Holmes, M., Tulleners, T. & Levett-Jones, T. (2024). Healthcare in 2050: Climate Breakdown or a Path to Hope? Croakey [The hidden costs of climate inaction for Queensland voters – Croakey Health Media](#)