

The Hon. Greg Hunt, MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

22 September 2020

RE: Call for climate action in the National Preventive Health Strategy

Dear Minister Hunt

The events of 2020 have highlighted the critical importance of investment in public health, not only for the health and well-being of Australians but for the economy as well.

The National Preventive Health Strategy must address systems that are inexorably linked to health and welfare, particularly social, environmental, commercial and political determinants of health. As with unhealthy food, gambling, tobacco, and alcohol, it is critical that vested interests in relation to climate change are recognised as undermining efforts to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing. In addition to investment in a skilled workforce and systems to deliver positive outcomes, climate change must be addressed as part of the National Preventive Health Strategy.

Without immediate action, climate change is predicted to cause 85 deaths per 100,000 people globally per year by the end of the century. This is more than are currently killed by all infectious diseases across the globe. Climate change will also cause disruption of the healthcare supply chain, damage to health infrastructure and threats to the safety and quality of care. Over the next 30 years, climate change will cost the Australian economy at least \$1.89 trillion if current emissions policies are maintained.

The Australasian Epidemiological Association urges the Government to respond to the very clear ask from the Climate and Health Alliance and all of the health organisations that support their work. Climate Change is the most critical health issue of our lifetime.

Yours sincerely



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