



2019 NSW state election

DEA's Prescription for a Healthy New South Wales

NSW is fortunate to have a diverse natural environment and a vibrant healthy community with good access to healthcare. However, air pollution, drought, extreme weather and bushfires threaten our health and livelihood. At the 2019 NSW election, we need to consider measures which protect and promote health and wellbeing.



Climate Change

Australia has ratified the Paris Treaty which requires a commitment to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. NSW needs to set binding targets for renewable energy and phase out of coal fired power stations. A safe climate protects health¹.

✓ Strong Emission Reduction Targets²



Transition from fossil fuels

Energy derived from fossil fuels contributes to air pollution which damages health, causing increased rates of lung and heart disease, stroke and cancer^{3,4}. Renewable energy sources are safer and less damaging to human health⁵.

After decades of exposure to pollution from coal fired power stations and open cut coalmines, communities in the Hunter Valley, Lithgow and Central Coast have experienced disadvantage, poor health outcomes, air pollution and job insecurity. DEA supports assistance in the creation of new job opportunities by transitioning these communities to clean sustainable industries.

Fracking (unconventional gas) has many negative effects on health and the environment⁶. Fugitive methane emissions from CSG projects such as Narrabri are contributing to an acceleration in climate change.

- ✓ Strong Renewable Energy Targets
- ✓ Establish and fund a Transition Authority to guide the transition of communities away from the fossil fuel industry

✗ No fracking or unconventional gas for NSW



Reduce Pollution

Stronger pollution regulation is urgently needed in NSW. Air pollution is an invisible killer. Ensure that the polluter, and not the community and health system, pays for the pollution. This can be done by increasing the Load Base Licencing fee. The pollution from coal fired power stations (CFPS) needs urgent attention.

- ✓ Urgent review of Load Based Licencing
- ✓ Clean air for all in NSW⁷
- ✓ Ambient air quality monitors for all communities near CFPS
- ✓ Modern pollution control technology for all power stations



Sustainable Healthcare services

Hospitals and healthcare use large amounts of resources and energy and produce significant waste and greenhouse gases. The NSW Government is involved in funding hospitals and should provide strong support and incentives for hospitals to run sustainably⁸.

The NSW Government should also ensure strong adaptation, emergency and response planning, so that our healthcare system is prepared for climate related extreme weather events including fires^{9,10,11}.

- ✓ Comprehensive Healthcare Sustainability Unit for NSW



Active Transport Options

Studies demonstrate that people using active transport (walking, cycling, catching public transport) have better health: less obesity; less diabetes; lower risk of heart attacks and stroke; and better fitness and mental health¹².

- ✓ Measures to promote active transport for improved health



Biodiversity

Our health is absolutely dependent on our natural environment. NSW has wonderfully diverse ecosystems, but these face many threats¹³.

- ✓ Protect Koala Habitats
- ✓ Stop logging of old growth forests - protect habitat for threatened species
- ✓ Increase green spaces in cities

About DEA

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is an organisation of doctors and medical students focused on promoting human health through care of the environment. Our vision is "**Healthy planet, healthy people**".

For more information visit: www.dea.org.au

References

¹ Climate Change and Health in Australia Fact Sheets <https://www.dea.org.au/climate-change-and-health-in-australia-fact-sheets/>

² NSW election: our chance to vote 1 for climate and health <https://www.dea.org.au/nsw-election-our-chance-to-vote-1-for-climate-and-health/>

³ The Health Toll of Coal Fact Sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/the-health-toll-of-coal-fact-sheet/>

⁴ Victorian brown coal-fired power stations licence reviews submission <https://www.dea.org.au/victorian-brown-coal-fired-power-stations-licence-reviews-submission/>

- ⁵ Renewable Energy Fact Sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/renewable-energy-healthy-planet-healthy-people-dea/>
- ⁶ Unconventional gas and health – Fact Sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/unconventional-gas-and-health-fact-sheet-healthy-planet-healthy-people-dea/>
- ⁷ EPA: Clean air for NSW <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/air/clean-air-nsw>
- ⁸ DEA Proposal for an Australian Healthcare Sustainability Unit <https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/DEA-HSU-Proposal---05-18.pdf>
- ⁹ Severe storms, floods and your health fact sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/severe-storms-floods-and-your-health-fact-sheet/>
- ¹⁰ Bushfires and Health in a Changing Environment: Fact sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/bushfires-and-health-in-a-changing-environment-fact-sheet/>
- ¹¹ Heatwave Fact Sheet <https://www.dea.org.au/heatwave-fact-sheet/>
- ¹² Commuting to health radio interview with Melbourne GP Dr M Beavis <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/healthreport/commuting-to-better-health-in-2015/6000444>
- ¹³ <https://www.dea.org.au/biodiversity/>