



## December 2020 National DEA Newsletter



### Annual General Meeting

DEA's annual general meeting was held on Tuesday 17 November at 7.30pm. Thank you to all members who joined us via Zoom. The election results for the Board were announced with the following people elected to fill the vacancies;

- Georgia Behrens
- Stefanie Pidcock
- Kimberly Humphrey
- John Iser.

Congratulations to you all.

They join continuing Board members:

- John Van Der Kallen
- Richard Yin
- Kristof Wing
- Katherine Barraclough
- Beau Frigault
- Georgia Brown (2021 National Student Representative).

We extend our thanks and great appreciation to departing Board members, Eugenie Kayak, Kingsley Faulkner, Hakan Yaman, Graeme McLeay, Marion Carey and Sujata Allan for their leadership and significant contribution to Doctors for the Environment Australia as Board members during their tenures.

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**From the Chair**

Welcome to the last DEA newsletter for 2020. What a year it has been. No one would have predicted that we would have been in this situation 12 months ago. I must say how proud I am of the medical profession in dealing with the COVID epidemic. Not only has the profession been able to work out the strategy to control the virus but it has had to face treating sick patients as well as trying to continue to practice usual medicine. It's no wonder that we are all feeling exhausted! It is encouraging to note that our leaders did listen to the experts and acted on the advice. Consequently we now live in an unusual place in the world where there are very few active cases of COVID. I think we all wish that the leaders would follow the expert advice on climate change as well. DEA has also transformed this year.

We now have a new board and a new executive. Richard Yin is staying on as the National DEA secretary. Richard has been doing a fabulous job and I am very pleased that the executive will have the benefit of his experience. Kristof Wing has taken on the role of Treasurer. He has big shoes to fill having taken over from Hakan Yaman but Kristof is bubbling over with enthusiasm and has an eye for detail and will undoubtedly be a great treasurer. Completing the executive team is Kimberly Humphrey who is the Chair of DEA in South Australia and is now taking on the role of Deputy Chair of DEA. Denise Cauchi is continuing on as our wonderful Executive Director. I'm really looking forward to working with the team as we move into 2021.

Finally, everyone should have a look at the [annual report](#) which outlines the huge amount of work that has been done by our DEA members and staff. The amount of work achieved is truly remarkable given that we are predominantly a volunteer organisation. Well done everyone.

I wish everyone the best for the Christmas period. For those of you are working, I hope it is not too busy. For everyone else, I hope you have a nice break and that you get a chance to "catch your breath". If you are feeling motivated to do some activism over the break then there is plenty to do. Undoubtedly it is going to be hot and there will be bushfires. DEA has worked hard on getting the messages out to the public about the impacts of climate change but there is a lot more to do. Maybe you would like to try your hand at an "Oped" (an opinion piece for media) or even make yourself available for a radio interview (which is not as scary as it sounds). Just contact Carmela Ferraro (DEA Media and Communications Coordinator) or myself.

Merry Christmas and have a happy New Year.

John Van der Kallen  
DEA Chair

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## **Lancet countdown report \_ December 3 2020**

[The Medical journal of Australia/Lancet Countdown on health and climate change report](#) was released on December 3 and called for urgent action on climate change. There were a number of new statistics including that the rate of deaths in the last 2 decades due to heat has doubled in those over the age of 65. We have an important role to educate our elderly patients about the effects of heat and how important it is to reduce their carbon emissions.

Dea has been a prominent voice in the release of the report with Richard Yin and Georgia Behrens quoted in this [ABC article](#).

NSW State Chair Kim Loo also did this [great video](#) outlining some of the health impacts.

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## **Donate a Day's Pay for DEA - Tuesday 1 December 2020**

DEA held its first Donate a Day's Pay for DEA as part of our end of year fundraising appeal. As we go to print we have had 24 members pledge a day's pay or a donation. If you would still like to make a donation please click [here](#)



**Thank you for your donations !**

**#DonateADay**



**#GivingTuesday**

Of course DEA welcomes donations year round and it is through this vital support from members that we are able to continue to

protect health through care of the environment. If you would like to donate please click [here](#).

Our new DEA Board Chair John Van Der Kallen (pictured above) was one of our members who participate in Donate a Day's Pay to DEA.

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## **Biodiversity**

### **Journal club**

The inaugural Biodiversity SIG Journal Club was held last week! Facilitated by Rosalie Schulz from the NT we explored the Global Safety Net (GSN). Proposed to address the alarming decline of global biodiversity and put this issue at the forefront of international leaders and policy makers, the GSN seeks to set aside 50% of land on Earth for conservation. The interactive app allows you to see for yourself the regions of the world where environmental protection will achieve optimal outcomes for conservation and climate stabilisation.

### **Podcast**

The latest DEA Podcast, 'Your daily dose of nature' explores nature prescriptions and therapeutic horticulture- how bringing nature into the clinical context and getting patients, staff and ourselves outside to connect with nature helps support optimal wellbeing and mitigate some of the stresses we've all recently felt with the pandemic- especially in Melbourne. You can find and share it from a myriad of places, including Spotify (Looks up Doctors for the Environment Australia podcast), Apple podcasts and online [here](#).

### **Webinar - 9 December 2020**

DEA's Dimity Williams will be presenting at a webinar on how nature-based interventions can support resilience and recovery from the mental health impacts of climate change. Facilitated by DEA Mid North Coast's Sarah Mollard, [Through Nature to Nature's](#) other presenters include Dr Jo Longman from the University of Sydney and representatives from various local initiatives who use nature-based environments and interventions. All welcome!

### **The EPBC Saga continues**

At extremely short notice with a tight turn around, Katherine

Barraclough, pulled together an excellent submission Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Streamlining Environmental Approvals) Bill 2020. This latest enquiry is part of the Federal Government's ongoing bid to weaken our environmental laws to facilitate ongoing 'development'. No doubt the final policy statements will come out on Xmas eve- we'll be ready and waiting!

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## **Air Pollution**

At the end of November the NSW parliament passed an Electricity Infrastructure Investment Bill, after a marathon 30 hours of debate forced by some legislative vandalism from Pauline Hanson's One Nation. This is a major achievement by the NSW environment minister Matt Kean (liberal) who got support from labor, the Greens, and even the Nationals. It is the kind of sensible forward planning that has been entirely missing at the federal level.

It facilitates 12 GW of renewable energy and 2 GW of storage, which will secure NSW electricity supply as the old coal generators reach the end of their life, or become uneconomic to run before then.

Until this plan, NSW was dragging the chain as the state with the highest proportion of electricity from coal, and the slowest build out of renewables. It is a very positive sign that the politics are changing and there is no reason why the conservative side of politics cannot make rational choices on energy policy. Each coal power plant closure will have important flow on health effects. In a positive development that marks its significance, the plan has been attacked by Federal minister Angus Taylor, and by various coal industry figures, and Glencore is spending up on advertising to bolster its social license which is slipping away. It is a nationally significant breakthrough.

All credit to Minister Kean.

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## **Divestment**

Aware Super (formerly First State Super) set a goal of 30% reduction in carbon emissions in its listed equities by 2023, as part of its Climate Change Portfolio Transition Plan. But in [wonderful news](#), it has [achieved a 40% reduction](#) virtually

overnight by introducing benchmarks that passively exclude the highest-emitting companies on global sharemarket indices including the ASX200! This is a completely novel technique which sees the fund drop the 9 highest emitting companies in Australia and the 60 highest emitters internationally. DEA will be meeting with them this week to find out more and we'll keep you posted. The Aware Super example will be one that we'll be encouraging other funds to follow. The beauty of the strategy is that a company can be bought back at any time if it lowers its carbon intensity enough.

In other Super news, Climateworks Australia recently [published a report](#) on the progress of our superannuation industry towards net zero emissions. It finds that, despite the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts by Australian superannuation funds to address climate change risks are accelerating. We hope we are playing our part but there is always more to be done! Speaking of which...

### **HELP NEEDED!**

We are setting up meetings with UniSuper and HESTA for the new year. Are you a HESTA or UniSuper member? We need you to help us with this work and join us in our meetings with the super funds. Having members of the fund present improves our effectiveness greatly. You don't have to be an expert in finances to help either so don't let that put you off – we didn't! Please email me if you can help.

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## **Queensland**

### **Previous Events**

Special General Meeting At the beginning of October, the DEA Special General Meeting was held online via zoom. This was an opportunity for members across the country to review the organisation's re-drafted constitution, which was successfully approved. Following the meeting itself, attendees at the PA Hospital's Translational Research Institute enjoyed refreshments and heard an address from Dr Jeannette Young. A big thank you must go to all those who attended and assisted in making this event possible, particularly the organising committee.

### **Other Business**

Super Fund Divestment If you've never considered divestment, or if you've been meaning to for a while but have not gotten around to it, now is as good a time as any. You can find out more, see

where your super fund stands and join the campaign on the [Market Forces Website](#). If, like many QLD healthcare workers you are a member of Q Super, you can join the facebook group, [QSuper Members for Climate Action](#).

### **DEA QLD State Committee**

It's that time of year when the DEA QLD State Committee is planning for the new year, including recruiting new members. The committee is comprised of approximately twenty DEA members from across the state, who organise and implement the activities carried out by DEA in QLD. Joining the committee is a great opportunity to get more hands-on experience in DEA's advocacy work, events and campaigns. Although there is not specific time requirement to dedicate, it is expected that members will attend monthly Zoom meetings and actively participate throughout the year. Expressions of interest can be emailed to Beau Frigaub (frigaub@gmail.com).

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## **Tasmania**

We are seeking your perspectives on smartphone health applications. Are you a healthcare professional based in Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory or Port Macquarie?

If so, you are invited to take part in a short interview to help the AirRater team at the University of Tasmania better understand healthcare professional perspectives on smartphone health applications, such as AirRater. You do not need to be a current user of AirRater to take part. An interview will take approximately 30 minutes. We will undertake interviews via phone or videoconferencing to minimise the demands on your time. We will pay AUD\$150 to cover consultation costs so that you are not disadvantaged by taking part. If you would like to take part in an interview, please email the AirRater team at [air.rater@utas.edu.au](mailto:air.rater@utas.edu.au) and we will provide you with further information.

Thank you and all the best, the AirRater team

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## **Victoria**

The highlight for Victoria this month has been record breaking budget announcements from the Andrews Government including:

- \$1.6 billion investment in renewable energy initiatives
- \$797 million for household energy efficiency measures
- Over \$5 billion for Public Transport
- \$92.3 million to restore land and plant 4 million trees
- \$23 million for a 10 km predator exclusion fence and a new visitor centre at Wilson's Promontory National Park
- \$48 million towards community environmental programs, the ongoing management of Port Philip Bay and the work of Landcare.

While there are gaps in funding and some negative announcements (for instance, the planned introduction of an EV tax), overall it is as good a budget as we could have hoped for from an environmental perspective. Vic DEA members have given a range of presentations over the last month on climate change, environmental degradation, sustainability and health:

- Forbes McGain at the ANZSCA conference on environmental sustainability in anaesthetics
- Katherine Barraclough at the ANZSN conference on climate change, extreme weather and dialysis delivery
- Katherine Barraclough at a U3A meeting on zoonoses and environmental change
- Kristen Pearson at the Northern Hospital on climate, the environmental and health (intern teaching)

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## **Western Australia**

DEA WA has continued to focus on Education and Advocacy. As part of WAPHA, DEA, RACGP and HealthPathways WA collaborative lunchtime series on climate change and health, the last two webinars were held, the first on Eco-anxiety and the final event on the Role of General Practice in moving to a Net-zero Health Sector.

Dr Richard Yin spoke at the Disrupted festival of Ideas held at the State Library in early November on the Intersection of Faith and Activism. As part of our Rapid-Fire Education series Dr George Crisp presented to members on Biodiversity and why "variety really is the 'spice' of life". And just missed in last months' report on Thursday 29th Oct Dr George Crisp also presented at a RACGP webinar on 'Environmental Health: How climate change affects

health and healthcare' with WA DEA member Brett Montgomery as facilitator.

Dr Emma-Leigh Synnott, Dr George Crisp, and Dr Louise Sparrow participated in Perth TedX Countdown - A Climate Leadership Forum. An event bringing together individuals and organisations involved in climate action. An exciting afternoon of discussions, it was an opportunity to network, collaborate, and inspire Climate Action activities in WA.

Dr George Crisp and Dr Richard Yin also met with Chris Kane, General Manager, Strategy & Engagement of WAPHA and other executives of the organization as to how to progress healthcare's preparedness on climate change impacts and also support emissions reduction within primary and community care.

With the state elections looming in the new year DEA WA Members are starting to meet with their local MPs to discuss the Climate Health Crisis and how outline the importance of action on Climate change to secure health both now, and into the future.

DEA WA supported Sea Bird Rescue in another successful screening of the movie Albatross - raising money for the organisation to help with rescue, rehabilitation and release of these and other seabirds. DEA WA is also working in Alliance with the WA Forrest Alliance to prepare for a special screening of 'Cry of the Forest' early in the new year. Keep an eye out for a 'save the date' soon!

In other local news - Dr Emma-Leigh Synnott has also been given a role in her local area health network (Fiona Stanley and Fremantle Hospital Group - FSFHG) as the Medical Lead for Climate Health and Environmental Sustainability. The position complements that of the already established SMHS Sustainability Officer and will involve her providing education and support for clinicians, wards, departments and services in translating the SMHS Sustainability Framework into tangible activities and actions.

**In the News in WA:** Hot off the press The WA State Climate policy and the Electric Vehicle Strategy was released Monday 30th November. Policies can be found here: [State Climate Policy](#) and [Electric Vehicle Strategy](#).

Excitingly - The State Climate Policy makes references to the Climate Health Inquiry we are all waiting for, and they outline

actions planned from the inquiry including:

- "Health sustainable development unit: Establish a sustainable development unit in the Department of Health to promote sustainable development, reduce carbon emissions and energy costs, and improve health outcomes within the Western Australian health system."
- "Climate health strategies: Undertake reforms in areas that include policy and procurement to mitigate the health system's environmental footprint. Plan and implement adaptations to reduce health risks of climate change for Western Australian communities."

With these snippets the Inquiry looks to be courageous – and it will be something to help us build further on our actions from the Sustainable Health Review recommendations - with an even clearer pathway forward toward a greener and more sustainable health system.

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### Upcoming events

- **9 December 2020 6.30pm: Through Nature to Nurture webinar.** For further information on this webinar refer to the Biodiversity section of this newsletter. Click [here](#) to register
- **15 December 2020 7.30pm: "Maternal and women's health in a changing climate."** Please join Dr Kristine Barnden for this free one hour webinar and learn more about women's health in a changing climate. Click [here](#) to register

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### DEA in the news Nov 2020

DEA Member Lai Heng was on [Radio National](#) radio talking about heatwaves 30 November 2020

[As 2020 draws to an end, what have we learnt?](#)

Croakey, 26 November

Oped by Dr Arnagretta Hunter

[Hunter doctors call for stricter environmental power station standards](#)

NBN News, 25 Nov

Dr Ben Ewald interviewed ahead of a Healthy Futures conference on air quality.

Dr Ewald also spoke to Newcastle Herald and 2NUR FM

[Calls for tighter pollution controls at Vales Point power station](#)

News interview with Dr Ben Ewald, 17 November

[Should you talk with your doctor about climate change?](#)

TEDxDarlinghurst, 20 November

Dr Helen Redmond

[One year on from the bushfires, group urges government: Bring back air monitors](#)

Blue Mountains Gazette, 17 November

DEA mentioned.

[State of the Climate report-](#)

Dr Kimberly Humphrey, SA Drive

Armidale member of Doctors for the Environment Australia comments on the latest State of the Climate report released by the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology Glen Innes Examiner, 16 November News interview with Dr Sujata Allan Also, in the [Armidale Express](#), 13 November

[NHS committing to net zero emissions by 2040, Australia should do the same](#)

Independent Australia, 9 November

Oped by Dr Caroline Lee

[What's the deal with net zero emissions?](#)

Farm weekly, 9 November

DEA mentioned.

[DEA and AMA joint media statement to mark the start of the Summer of Fires](#)

Inside track: Healthcare Lexology, 2 November

News brief that mentions the DEA and AMA statement. On

bushfire anniversary, doctors commit to work together on the health impacts of climate change

[The Health Wrap: US election, coronavirus in the US, Africa & Israel, healthy stores, Indigenous evaluation strategy and more](#)

Croakey, 1 November

Mentions the DEA and AMA media statement in a story about important events shaping Australia.

["The genie is out of the bottle, we have to turn down the heat – A grim milestone heralds a grim future"](#)

Croakey, 28 October

News story on the DEA and AMA joint statement on the summer fires.

Health groups call on Queensland election candidates to commit to urgent climate action

Croakey, 28 October

Mention of DEA as one of the groups that signed the Queensland Election Briefing: Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing: opportunities to boost resilience

[MENAFN - The Conversation](#)

Profile of Hon Prof Colin Butler, who mentions his membership of DEA's Scientific Advisory Committee

[A GP tackles bushfires and climate change](#)

Phoenix Australia, date unclear.

Oped by Anna Seth

## **Connect with us on social media!**

Keep abreast of the latest DEA news and events, as well as health and environment stories, reports, studies and insights by connecting with us on Facebook, twitter and Instagram!

@DocsEnvAus

@doctorsfortheEnvironment

Join us on social media!

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