

Dear [[First Name]]

## Looking forward

### #HealthyRecovery

In the largest ever mobilisation of the health sector, DEA has joined over 370 health organisations and 40 million health professionals demanding a healthy recovery from Covid-19. This means reducing air pollution, reforming fossil fuel subsidies, scaling up renewable energy, ramping up public transportation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. See the letter [here](#) and link to full list of signatories.

## Addressing climate and bushfires

National Bushfire and Climate Action are holding a public panel as part of their **National Bushfire and Climate Summit 2020: Coordinating a National Response**. It is to be co-hosted by Greg Mullin (Former Commissioner, Fire and Rescue NSW) and Kerry O'Brien and you can register for the event on June 9th [here](#).

DEA has provided a submission to the Senate Inquiry, [Lessons to be learnt in relation to the 2019-20 bushfire season](#). Of note is the recent release of an Issues Paper by the Bushfire Royal Commission after only 3 days of evidence specifically focusing on health – the original TOR failed to mention health. DEA will of course be submitting requested comments.

## Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

DEA has several Special Interest Groups – which you will hear more about in the coming months as we aim to involve more members in their activities (and thank you to those who have recently expressed interest in joining the air pollution SIG). Dimity Williams has been leading the Biodiversity SIG for several years. They have been working incredibly hard over the last month and Dimity's report is highlighted here:

### Biodiversity update- Dimity Williams

[Take a bow!](#)

Thanks to everyone who signed onto the open letter we co-wrote with CAHA. 180 health professionals and health groups signed on to ask Sussan Ley to strengthen our weak nature laws. Together we managed to get some great media coverage of this important issue.

We are grateful to the members of our Scientific Advisory Committee, Professor Peter Doherty, Professor Fiona Stanley and Dr Rosemary Stanton whose support no doubt helped us gain media attention and to our friends at CAHA for working with us so collaboratively. Huge thanks to Associate Professor Katherine Barraclough, a keen part of our biodiversity group who also juggles several leadership roles within DEA and was the driving force behind this initiative. Our staff, especially our media officer Carmela Ferraro, worked hard to get this message out too!

Link to the letter: [Open Letter – EPBC Review](#)

DEA's media statement:

[Media release: Open letter prominent health leaders and groups warn failing nature laws will lead to further public health](#)

I'm happy to say we led the Guardian news last Monday.

[Australia's failing environmental laws will fuel further public health crises nobel laureate warns](#), The Guardian May 25 2020

We also got other hits, including the ABC and 3MMM as well as:

[Call for overhaul of failing enviro laws](#), 7 News, 25 May 2020

[More than 180 doctors sign open letter calling for overhaul of failing environmental laws](#) SBS News, 25 May 2020

[Health leaders warn over failing environmental laws](#), Medical Republic, 25 May 2020

For those of you on social media: Please share our FB and twitter posts and feel free to write to The Age or other Fairfax outlet and find out why they haven't covered the letter!

There is a call to action on FB for people to contact Sussan Ley and the Review Panel.

*"Whilst there is always more work to be done, it is important to take the time to create the space to soak in these moments when we have managed to get our message out.*

*So make some time right now, even just a few minutes, to stop, close your eyes, let a little smile come to your face and remind yourself that you are not working to create change on these huge environmental problems alone, there are literally thousands of other doctors and health professionals standing beside you."*

## **What can you do and looking after your health**

Thank you so much to all the wonderful members who have already contributed to our **2020 Annual Appeal**. If you haven't already there are a few more weeks left of the financial year and **donations are tax deductible**. [Donate Here](#)

Every contribution helps!

DEA has produced a new resource ***I have joined DEA – now what can I do?*** Please find it [here](#)

Also take a look at 2 new DEA videos. [Doctors' prescription for healthy solutions: community investment, renewables](#) and [Doctors' prescription for a healthy solutions: Will you join us?](#)

## **Membership Category Update**

DEA's members make DEA who we are – so please do your best at recruiting! As of 1 July you will notice there will be some changes to our current membership structure to help stream-line our accounting processes and hopefully make payment easier for you.

Joining DEA can continue to consist of a tax deductible donation that best suits your circumstances.\*

Below are some of the donating options that will be available to members as of 1 July 2020, which can be paid monthly or annually.

Platinum Wollemi Pine - \$1200 and over (\$100 per month)

Gold Wattle - \$540 (\$45 per month)

Silver Jarrah - \$360 (\$30 per month)

Bronze Banksia- \$180 (\$15 per month)

Low income - \$75

Student members are free and retired members are free to choose from any of the categories above.

As always, if you are experiencing financial hardship we encourage you to contact us to discuss other options at [admin@dea.org.au](mailto:admin@dea.org.au)

(\*Note that the first \$50 is a non tax deductible membership fee)

The option for members to pay monthly also helps DEA to better predict our income over the year enabling us to plan expenditure accordingly.

Our current membership categories will be phased out as our members renew their memberships in the 20/21 financial year.

You do not have to do anything just yet. Those whose memberships are due for renewal on and after 1 July will be sent an email 2 weeks prior to your membership renewal, in which you will be given instructions on how to renew your membership into one of the new categories.

## **State and Territory Updates**

### **Australian Capital Territory**

Dr Arnagretta Hunter has been at it again! The group she's been working with at the ANU has published a commentary in [The Lancet Planetary Health](#) about heat and the mortality effect in Australia, followed up by an op-ed in The Guardian. The article is attached and the link to The Guardian article is below:

[Our environment has always affected our mortality should we add climate change to death certificates?](#) The Guardian, May 21 2020

With all the amazing things on her plate, Arnagretta has decided to step down from the position of Convenor of the ACT Branch, which she has led in dynamic style for the last year.

The members of the iDEA2020 organising committee would like to acknowledge Arnagretta's fantastic leadership and dynamism over the last year. She brought a fresh energy to DEA in the ACT. But she's still inspiring action and activism as a member of DEA, so watch this space for more exciting work!

### Meet the new ACT Convenor and committee

The new Chair of DEA ACT is Stefanie Pidcock (hopefully soon to be Dr). She is possibly the oldest medical student in the history of the universe, but that's because she has had a (fairly) long and successful career in the environment sector before taking the leap into medicine. She started out as a zoologist (just like Louise Apgar!) specialising in the renal physiology of crocodilians (salt water crocodiles and American alligators to be precise), which she thinks may stand her in good stead for coping with junior doctor training in the coming years. She has worked as a research scientist across southern Queensland from Brisbane to Birdsville, as a senior environmental consultant across the Pacific, and as a Commonwealth Public Servant in the areas of Regional Forest Agreements, International wetlands, national parks (with a nice stint on Norfolk Island), marine protected areas and climate change.



Photo caption: This photo is from quite some time ago. It is from a newspaper article which is why it is black and white, not because they only had black and white photos back then!

Stef continues to work with a great team of committee members, including Dr Mani Berghout, Dr Mina Roberts, Dr James Ross, Rewena Mahesh and Chrissy Richardson. A truly amazing group of people.

#### Where to from here?

ACT Branch has been in a slight hiatus of late. The let-down of "Conference-Cancelling-COVID" was a bit de-energising around here. However, we're starting to regroup and develop some ideas around meaningful and fun initiatives we can progress from here on.

We're currently working on a strategy to engage with the ACT Government to improve environmental performance. James will be leading the fray on this, so watch this space.

I also plan to do some basic information slide shows for circulation about various topics such as the EPBC Act, what it is and how it works.

But it's early days, so we will be getting the band back together to throw around some ideas and move some things along shortly.

### **New South Wales**

As expected, COVID-19 has forced the cancellation of several of DEA NSW's planned activities and campaigns from the last few months. Despite this, the pandemic has provided lessons that can apply to our work on health and the environment: COVID-19 has taught us that it is possible to adapt quickly to challenges that threaten our health and has reminded us that we need to protect vulnerable populations. With that in mind, DEA NSW have been strategizing how we can best continue our work in the post-pandemic period and are looking forward to a full return to campaigning soon.

#### DEA NSW meet with Environment Minister

Dr Ben Ewald and Dr John Van Der Kallen recently met with the NSW Environment Minister, Matt Kean. On the topic of healthcare system sustainability, Kean cited the state's plan for net-zero emissions as a means of improving the energy credentials of hospitals in NSW.

DEA NSW were disappointed to learn from Kean that state regulations to curb emissions from diesel locomotives had been shelved due to vocal opposition from prominent media and industry figures. Regulations regarding diesel train emissions are now in development at the federal level and DEA NSW will be closely monitoring its progress to ensure these plans are not similarly derailed.

## Narrabri Coal Seam Gas Project

Santos is proposing to develop a coal seam gas field in the Narrabri area in northwest NSW. The proposal is currently before the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment but will likely be open to public hearings in the next two-to-three months. DEA NSW made submissions to the department strongly against the proposal. There is skepticism amongst some politicians that the Narrabri Project will actually proceed for economic viability reasons. Regardless, DEA NSW strongly opposes the project and remains committed to a complete moratorium on CSG in NSW.

## **South Australia**

Membership in our South Australian branch of DEA continues to grow with six new members added in the last month.

### Meeting with SA Shadow Minister for Health

Vienna Tran, Kimberly Humphrey, John Willoughby and Graeme McLeay met online on May 19<sup>th</sup> with the SA shadow minister for health Chris Picton. We discussed climate, gas, transport and greening health care. The Shadow Minister showed interest in greening healthcare especially.

The SA Health and Energy group has not yet met this month and will meet after the State Committee meeting on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Divestment Group and the Nutrition and Farming Group have been active. Student interest has been strong.

## **Victoria**

There is some positive environmental news from Victoria this month.

### Friends of Leadbeater's Possums Federal Court win

Last week, the Federal Court decided in favour of Friends of Leadbeater's Possum (FLBP) to protect the threatened Leadbeater's Possum and Greater Glider from logging in the Victorian Central Highlands. The case challenged whether the native forest logging industry could be held to account for its impact on federally listed species. Logging in public native forests is exempt from our national threatened species protection law (the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation or EPBC Act), provided that the logging is carried out in accordance with a Regional Forestry Agreement (RFA), a commonwealth-state agreement. Vic Forests did not complete the five-year reviews required by the RFA on time or at all, which has meant that logging in certain areas which significantly impacts the Leadbeater's Possum and Greater Glider has not been in accordance with the RFA. This verdict means that logging by VicForests in this area is no longer exempt from the assessment and approval requirements of the EPBC Act.

It is hoped that this win will have far reaching implications for the management of forestry not just in Victoria but also elsewhere in Australia.

### Senate Inquiry into Ecosystem decline in Victoria

A Senate inquiry into ecosystem decline in Victoria has recently been announced. This is much needed, given that:

- Just 11% of 170 indicators of Victoria's environmental health are good;
- 120 species of plants, animals, birds, insects and fish are facing extinction in Victoria;
- Daniel Andrews went to 2018 Victorian state election with no policies for nature.

Vic DEA is preparing a submission.

### Impact of Climate Change on Medical Specialties

John Iser, Laura Beaton and Katherine Barraclough participated in an online panel discussion this month concerning the impact of climate change on various medical specialties. This was organised and hosted by Victoria DEA student representatives and attended by over 50 medical students from around Australia.

### **Another note from our Biodiversity SIG.**

If you are curious about Ecotherapy, Forest Therapy, Nature Prescribing, Therapeutic Horticulture, Bush Adventure Therapy, Equine Therapy, Indigenous health practices (and more), the 'Nature and Health' Online Symposium is definitely for you! Examples of these nature-based health interventions are being showcased over a series of 5 webinars hosted in the month of June. So register now!

### Nature-based interventions are good for people and nature.

The organising team have gone to great lengths to secure speakers who represent a breadth of nature-based health interventions AND who can provide experiential and nourishing online experiences for webinar participants. We are delighted to be hosting the likes of [Judy Atkinson](#), [Dr Gregory P. Smith](#) and [Costa Georgiadis](#) to name a few! For the full program visit: [www.outdoorhealthcare.org.au/program](http://www.outdoorhealthcare.org.au/program)

If the scheduled times don't suit, not to worry, the webinars will be recorded and available for you to access until 31 July.

If you have any interest in uses of nature for health, wellbeing and healing, this Symposium is for you. Registration gives you full access to all resources, live presentations and shared conversations

Register at: [www.outdoorhealthcare.org.au/nhrpp-symposium](http://www.outdoorhealthcare.org.au/nhrpp-symposium)

### **We need you!**

Do you have administrative, research or social media skills that you would like to "donate" to DEA?

We are currently looking for volunteers to assist us in a number of projects within the office.

### Data Analysis

Covid19 has shown that politicians will listen to science and now is our time for action. We need a volunteer to assist us in processing and analysing demographic data of DEA members for electoral campaigning

Interested? Please contact Kylie at [admin@dea.org.au](mailto:admin@dea.org.au)

### Social Media

Are you a prolific poster on social media? Do you have time available to help us spread the DEA vision of a "healthy planet, healthy people"? Would you like to work closely with our Media Co-ordinator?

We are in need of a volunteer to assist in managing our social media profile. If interested please contact Carmela at [admin@dea.org.au](mailto:admin@dea.org.au)

## **DEA T-Shirts**

In preparation for iDEA2020 we replenished our stock of our black T-Shirts with the DEA logo. If you would like to purchase a t-shirt please email [admin@dea.org.au](mailto:admin@dea.org.au) or call the office on 0422 974 857. T-Shirts are \$30 with free postage. If you are in Melbourne and would like to view the t-shirts they will be available to view once COVID19 restrictions are lifted.

Both male and female sizes are available in sizes xS to XL for women and S to XXL for men.

## **Vote for DEA**

Thank you to all our members who have voted for Doctors for the Environment Australia in the Australia – Animal and Environment category in the MyGivingCircle grants scheme. We are now number 77 on the leaderboard (up from #469, just last week)

By voting for DEA, you can assist us in winning a share of over \$100,000 in grants. To share in the grant money, DEA needs to be in the top 10 of our category by 30 June 2020.

Please vote [here](#)

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## **DEA in the news**

[Open Letter: prominent health leaders and groups warn 'failing' nature laws will lead to further public health crises](#)

DEA in conjunction with the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) released an open letter, calling for Environment Minister Sussan Ley to strengthen Australia's nature laws.

The letter was signed by more than 180 health experts and 19 health groups and released to the media on Monday 25 May.

It was reported in more than 160 publications -- full list available on request—right across the political spectrum, including the Australian, news.com.au, the Herald Sun, 7news, and more.

It was the lead story in the Guardian:

[Australias failing environmental laws will fuel further public health crises nobel laureate warns.](#) The Guardian, May 25 2020

The story ran in the expat publication, Australian Times:

[Open letter warns weak environmental laws endanger us all,](#) The Australian Times, 25 May 2020

Also A/Prof Katherine Barraclough and CAHA's Executive Director Fiona Armstrong were interviewed on the ABC and SBS News, as well as various SBS Your Language programs, for Eg:

[Health pandemics connected to climate change,](#) SBS Mandarin Language Show

Dr Rosemary Stanton was interviewed by 3MMM. No link available.



Article published in Herald Sun, Monday 25 May 2020

### [Academics push for climate change to be included as an official cause of DEATH for bushfire victims](#)

Dr Arnagretta Hunter co-authored a report by ANU researchers that brought attention to the under-reporting of deaths due to excess heat. It was published in the Lancet Planetary Health and attracted substantial local and international news coverage. Dr Hunter's affiliation to DEA was mentioned in a few media stories, for example:

[Academics push for climate change to be included as an official cause of DEATH for bushfire victims](#), Daily Mail, 22 May 2020

[Researchers want climate change listed as cause of death in bushfires](#), Herald Sun, 21 May 2020

[Energy company to use biomass to refire one of Australia's top emitting coal power plants](#), The Chemical Engineer, 15 May 2020

- Mentions DEA submission re Redbank Power Station

['The genie is out of the bottle': telehealth points way for Australia post pandemic](#), The Guardian, 13 May 2020

- Quotes Dr Forbes McGain on hospital greenhouse gas emissions during the Covid-19 pandemic and opportunities for radical change.

[Fossil fuel projects are not the way out](#), Jimboomba Times, 11 May 2020

- Oped by Dr John Van Der Kallen.
- Published below as well as 116 other regional outlets.

[New environment laws must address main cause of the biodiversity crisis – climate change](#), Renew Economy, 7 May 2020

- Oped by Drs David Shearman and Melissa Haswell.

[COVID-19 is eclipsing the world's climate crisis, which we ignore at great cost](#), Independent Australia, 4 May 2020

- Oped by Dr Graeme McLeay urging Australia not to depend on polluting coal and gas.

[Call for wider footpaths, more cycling paths, slower streets to allow safe distancing](#), Brisbane Times, 3 May 2020

- News story that mentions DEA as one of 100 groups that signed an open letter calling for better infrastructure to improve active transport options. Also featured in

- [Sydney Morning Herald](#)
- [The Conversation](#)
- [Medical Express](#)
- [Croakey](#)

[Home gas heating can have lethal consequences, doctors warn,](#)

Mirage News, 1 May 2020

- Publication of DEA's media statement warning about indoor pollution from domestic gas appliances.

[We must also 'flatten the climate curve': An open letter to Australian politicians from a frontline healthcare worker,](#) Women's Agenda, 1 May 2020

- Oped by Dr Jessica Hegedus

[What we missed....](#)

[The costs of climate change are already upon us. We must prepare for the next emergency,](#) Partyline, 17 March 2020

- Drs Laksmi Govindasamy, Kimberly Humphrey and Lai Heng Foong for the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine link climate change to health, and urge doctors to get involved in advocacy work with their colleges and groups such as DEA.

[Hospital food environments: a human and planetary health opportunity,](#) Medical Journal of Australia letters, 10 April

- Co-authored by DEA's National Student Representative Georgia Behrens.

**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