

The Medical Journal of Australia • MJA

MEDIA RELEASE

SUSTAINABILITY: TIME FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO STEP UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

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It is time for health professionals to step up and lead to ensure a sustainable environment and health, according to one of Australia's leading medical practitioners and researchers.

Writing in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, of which he is Editor-in-Chief, Laureate Professor Nick Talley AC said 2020 was fast becoming the year planetary crises, from global warming and the unprecedented bushfire season in Australia, to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Overwhelming evidence points to a warming planet because of human activity and to the potential for very severe adverse health consequences, including other infectious disease outbreaks, if prompt action is not taken now," Professor Talley wrote.

"The recent unprecedented bushfire season may have shifted views about the potential for severe impacts of global warming on health, just as the unfolding health crisis with COVID-19 has highlighted how vulnerable our health systems are to new pathogens.

"As individual health practitioners, we can each make a difference in terms of the carbon footprint.

"We can lead by example in our homes and practices and with how we travel. We can educate our patients and those we work with and train. And we can influence the health system we are a key part of too, for example, by working on strategies to drive down carbon emissions, waste and pollution from our hospitals."

The time for complacency was over, he concluded.

"The status quo must end; it is time for health professionals to step up and lead on a sustainable environment and health. At the *MJA* we hope every health professional will work to do so with us."

Professor Talley's editorial leads the *MJA*'s 4 May sustainability-themed issue, available from today at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2020/212/8>.

Monash University's Sustainable Development Institute will hold a webinar – Planetary Health Dialogues: Sustainable Healthcare – from 4pm to 5pm (AEST) on Tuesday 5 May 2020. Speakers include Professor Talley, Professor Tony Capon (Director MSDI), Professor Lynne Madden (Inaugural Professor of Population and Planetary Health at the University of Notre Dame Australia), and Dr David Pencheon (former Director of the NHS' Sustainable Development Unit). For more information, visit <https://www.monash.edu/msdi/news-events/events/planetary-health-dialogues-sustainable-healthcare>.

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