



## **MJA-LANCET COUNTDOWN: STATES PROGRESS BUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT LAGS ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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AUSTRALIA'S transition to renewables and zero carbon remains unacceptably slow, with the Federal Government's failure to produce a national climate change and health adaptation plan "placing lives at unnecessary risk", according to the authors of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual *MJA-Lancet Countdown* report.

Published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, the report examines five broad domains: climate change impacts, exposures and vulnerability; adaptation, planning and resilience for health; mitigation actions and health co-benefits; economics and finance; and public and political engagement.

The authors, led by Associate Professor Paul Beggs from Macquarie University, did have some positives to report.

"The states continue to lead the way in health and climate change adaptation planning, with the Victorian plan being published in early 2022," wrote Beggs and colleagues.

"At the national level, we note progress in health and climate change research funding by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

"We now also see an acceleration in the uptake of electric vehicles and continued uptake of and employment in renewable energy."

But at the Federal level, there is little good news.

"We also find Australia's transition to renewables and zero carbon remains unacceptably slow, and the Australian Government's continuing failure to produce a national climate change and health adaptation plan places the health and lives of Australians at unnecessary risk today, which does not bode well for the future," wrote Beggs and colleagues.

"As Australia continued its battle against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) at the start of 2022, it was inevitably and unforgivingly reminded of the ongoing and escalating climate crisis.

"Record rainfalls led to widespread and repeated flooding in eastern Australia, with consequent impacts on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing, and at least 21 deaths.

"The start of 2022 also saw another timely reminder of Australia's vulnerability to climate-related health impacts, with an outbreak of the mosquito-borne Japanese encephalitis virus across several states being declared a communicable disease incident of national significance."

Beggs and colleagues concluded by stating that the greatest threat to Australians' health was "from within".

"Australia's failure to play its part in the mitigation of climate change and to adequately prepare for its myriad impacts is now costing lives.



**MJA**

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Media Release

“As powerfully expressed by Norman Frank Jupurrurla, a Wumpurrarni (First Nations) man of Tennant Creek (Northern Territory): ‘when it comes to climate change we should all be strong voices working together – for healthy country, healthy communities, healthy children’.”

The MJA-Lancet Countdown report is available now at

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2022/217/9/2022-report-mja-lancet-countdown-health-and-climate-change-australia-unprepared>

A related editorial is available now at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2022/217/9/health-sector-leadership-central-fight-against-climate-crisis>

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