



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Department of Health Climate Action Plan 2022–24

1. Overview

The Department of Health Climate Action Plan 2022–24 aims to reduce the environmental impact of the department's operational activities and commit to making changes towards more innovative and environmentally friendly ways of working.

The Department of Health recognises the significant environmental impact of the health sector which it is a part of and the influence it has in partnership with health service providers (HSPs) and other state government agencies to take action against climate change.

The department has already implemented ad hoc small changes to reduce its impact such as paper recycling bins, recycling bins for printer cartridges, double-sided printing, and ICT disposal of e-waste – however, these initiatives have not formed part of a coordinated action plan.

This plan identifies the priority areas and associated key actions the department will target over the next 2 years to help reduce its environmental footprint. These priority areas are aligned to WA State Government climate change strategic directions and informed by concurrent work by health departments in other Australian jurisdictions.

These priority areas are broadly consistent with action already in progress by HSPs and reflect the similar challenges faced with reducing the environmental footprint of the WA health system.

1.1. Scope

This plan focuses on providing an eco-friendlier workplace for staff to help reduce the department's environmental footprint over the next 2 financial years (2022/23, 2023/24) and work towards building an eco-friendly culture.

The below is identified as out-of-scope to this plan:

- Projects and/or initiatives with a whole of WA health system focus (i.e. one or more HSPs) in response to the Climate Health Inquiry. The department, in its role supporting the system manager, has established a Sustainable Development Unit which will steward climate change actions across the WA health system.
- Any external works (e.g. structure or facade) and upgrades to base building plant equipment and engineering services (e.g. installation of renewable energy such as solar panels) at department occupied buildings. The Department of Health and the Department of Finance have commenced office accommodation planning and options analysis. This may provide opportunities to undertake major works which also improve the overall environmental and energy efficiency of the building infrastructure and engineering services.
- Development of systemwide mandatory policies.

1.2. Principles

The following guiding principles apply:

1. Changes will be evidence-based, outcome-based and represent contemporary practice.
2. Decision making will be supported by detailed cost benefit analysis.
3. Collaboration and partnerships will be explored to achieve efficiencies.
4. Progress will be monitored, evaluated and measured where possible.

2. Key drivers for change

2.1. The WA health system

The WA health system is tasked with delivering more innovative and sustainable health care and to reduce its environmental footprint.

Within Australia, recent estimates indicate the health sector is responsible for 7 per cent of the nation's total emissions.¹ Globally, the empirical evidence around climate change is overwhelming and abundantly clear – change is needed.

2.1.1. Sustainable Health Review

Resources have been committed to implement Recommendation 5 of the *Sustainable Health Review*, 'Reduce the health system's environmental footprint and ensure mitigation and adaptation strategies are in place to respond to the health impacts and risks of climate change,' which prioritises implementation to achieve a 'reduction in the environmental footprint including energy use, water use, emissions and consumables; driven by local staff, supported by system executive.'²

2.1.2. Climate Health Inquiry

In 2020, the Climate Health Inquiry, a priority of recommendation 5 of the *Sustainable Health Review*, reported a large environmental footprint of the health sector and an associated high level of emissions emitted, energy intensive operations, large water usage and large quantities of physical waste.³ It identified the large infrastructure portfolio managed across the WA health system and significant scope to build greater energy efficiency. Further, it provided direction for HSPs to individually work towards reducing their respective environmental footprint.

In response to the Climate Health Inquiry, the Department of Health established the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) in December 2021 to lead a systemwide response to climate action and sustainability. The SDU has commenced planning with an immediate focus on practices and approaches to emissions reporting, which includes developing metrics to measure emissions and other markers of environmental impact such as consumption of electricity, gas and water, waste generation and transport.

Further priorities for the SDU include development of a Sustainability Strategic Framework and to strengthen planning and investment in adaptation strategies to respond to health impacts and risks of climate change across the WA health system.

2.1.3. Staff and the current workplace

The department is located across 6 metropolitan locations with approximately 1,200 employees and its main office is situated at the May Holman Building (MHB), East Perth. The MHB is an ageing asset as evidenced by its old and inefficient building engineering services and dilapidated building condition. It does not meet current environmental and sustainable (green building) standards.

¹ Malik, A; Manfred, L; McAlister, S; et al.. 2018. The carbon footprint of Australian health care. *Lancet Planet Health*, 2:e27-35.

² Sustainable Health Review. (2019). *Sustainable Health Review: Final Report to the Western Australian Government*. Department of Health, Western Australia.

³ Weeramanthri TS, Joyce S, Bowman F, Bangor-Jones R, Law C. *Climate Health Inquiry: Final Report*. Perth (WA): Department of Health, Government of Western Australia, 2020.

In November 2021, Corporate Services provided Department of Health staff at the MHB with opportunity to contribute their ideas on key actions the department could take to reduce its environmental footprint.

Feedback showed that staff want to see changes to the workplace that will enable them to reduce their individual environmental footprint – however, they have been limited by outdated (status quo) practices, inadequate physical facilities (e.g. lack of bins for different waste materials) and a lack of both collective leadership and innovation towards greener ways of working.

Providing building facilities that enable staff to appropriately dispose of different waste materials and divert unnecessary waste (recyclables) from going to landfill and, where possible, more energy efficient buildings is important to staff.

Staff want to see a shift towards an eco-friendlier culture in the workplace. This includes more proactive leadership around reducing the department's environmental footprint, challenging existing work practices to shift towards new, greener ways of working, and more prominent information and messaging in the workplace.

2.2. WA Climate Change Strategy and Policy Directions

Beyond the health sector, the State Government has announced several strategic initiatives to provide direction for mitigating climate change and reducing the environmental footprint associated with State Government Industries, private sector and commercial industry.

On 23 June 2022, ambitious interim targets for state government emissions were announced including a 2030 reduction target of 80 per cent below 2020 levels.⁴ To help achieve this target, the State Government will deliver a range of initiatives to reduce its net emissions, including energy efficiency measures, procurement of renewable energy, reduced emissions in the government vehicle fleet and the use of local offsets.

These initiatives have formed the basis of part of our plan and include:

- [Western Australia Climate Policy, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation](#) (external site)
- [Reducing the Use of Disposable Plastic Policy, Premiers Circular 2021/13](#) (external site)
- [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030, WA Waste Authority](#) (external site)
- [Energy Transformation Strategy Distributed Energy Resources Roadmap, Energy Transformation Taskforce](#) (external site)
- [Western Australian's Plan for Plastics, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation](#) (external site).

⁴ Government of Western Australia. (23 June 2022) '[Ambitious interim target set for State Government emissions.](#)' Media Statements, Government of Western Australia, accessed 20 June 2022.

3. Key priority areas for the Department of Health

This plan outlines 5 key priority areas the department will target actions relevant to climate change and to align with work already underway by HSPs and other state government agencies.

The key priority areas are:

- 1. Collective leadership:** Increase staff knowledge and understanding of the department's environmental footprint and encourage our staff to take individual responsibility for reducing their environmental impact in the workplace.
- 2. Waste disposal and management:** Reduce waste generated in the workplace and divert waste away from landfill through providing better waste management practices.
- 3. Energy generation and usage:** Reduce energy consumption by driving new and more environmentally responsible ways of working and work with Department of Finance to increase energy efficiency at departmental buildings.
- 4. Procurement and supply of goods:** Reduce consumption of single use and unsustainably sourced goods in the workplace that are either brought in by staff or procured and/or supplied by the department.
- 5. Business transport and staff commute:** Increase usage of eco-friendly transport options and flexible working arrangements to reduce carbon emissions associated with staff commute to and from work and business travel.

Staff are the department's greatest asset and it is critical they continue to be engaged and communicated with to successfully implement actions over the next 2 years to achieve a more environmentally friendly workplace.

Recommended actions for each priority area are provided in section 4. The actions are not exhaustive and further may be added during implementation of this plan.

It is important to note that all infrastructure occupied by the department is managed by the Department of Finance's Government Office Accommodation and third parties are engaged to provide building and property management services. Where required, the department will communicate with these stakeholders on sustainability proposals and/or initiatives regarding any changes to existing building management services (e.g. cleaning and waste management services, changing to more energy efficient building fixtures, fittings and utilities).

4. Priority areas and actions

Collective leadership	Waste disposal and management	Energy generation and usage	Procurement and supply of goods	Business transport and staff commute
Key actions				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage executive leadership teams to promote and embed sustainability in the department's culture to develop a more eco-conscious organisation. 2. Appoint an executive sponsor. 3. Establish a sustainability (green) working group to oversee and monitor initiatives. 4. Nominate climate change champions across the department to support change management. 5. Establish an online intranet climate change platform with informational resources and tools for department staff. 6. Incorporate the Climate Action Plan into Department staff induction. 7. Establish dashboard reporting on progress with the Climate Action Plan, including quantification of reductions in the department's environmental footprint. 8. The Annual Report will include reporting on climate and sustainability actions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Establish a recycling program to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o provide access to co-mingled bins for all staff. o provide signage on which waste materials go in different bins. o provide departmental initiatives to encourage and incentivise recycling. 10. Reduce waste generated in the workplace and divert more waste from ending up in landfill by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o removing desk bins. o providing staff with options to dispose of different waste materials (food/organics, plastics, stationary, batteries, etc.) o Stopping use of paper towel dispensers o Reducing paper waste by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing Follow-Me printing ▪ Converting all forms to e-forms ▪ Promoting paperless working. ▪ Eliminating small printer use. o Reviewing contractual arrangements with waste providers. 11. Raise awareness and promote responsible waste management behaviours in the workplace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Educate our staff on environmental sustainability in the workplace, including the 'Waste Hierarchy' and 'Circular Economy.' o Increase organisational participation in community waste initiatives and programs (e.g. National Recycling Week, Earth Day). 12. Work with JLL and the Department of Finance to reduce environmental footprint of the cafeteria at the MHB. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Implement behavioural change strategies to reduce energy wasteful practices (e.g. turning off computers and photocopiers each night, lowering blinds on hot days to reduce AC demand) 14. Achieve improvements in energy consumption and efficiency of appliances and equipment. 15. Work with Department of Finance to reduce building energy costs (LED lighting; bathrooms and water fixtures). 16. Achieve future greener infrastructure for Department of Health accommodation. 17. Achieve carbon neutral and greenhouse emission targets set by the WA Health SDU. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Reduce usage of single-use or unsustainably sourced (non-recycled) products. 19. Review existing goods and supply contractual arrangements to identify opportunities for substituting reusable and sustainably resourced alternatives. 20. Develop departmental guide to help staff make more sustainable, environmentally friendly procurement decisions. 21. Promote government procurement requirements (e.g. Social Procurement Framework and Environmental Procurement Guide). 22. Support SDU to make improvements to whole of WA health supplier contractual arrangements and utilise purchasing power to drive demand for recycled and sustainably sourced material. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Consult with staff and find ways to encourage use of eco-friendly transport to and from work (e.g. public transport, carpool, bicycle) to reduce carbon emissions associated with staff transport. 24. Support flexible and/or virtual working. 25. Reduce Department of Health business travel (travel to meetings and other offsite business). 26. Integrate Electric Vehicles into the Department's Government Vehicle Fleet, including Electric charging stations.

5. Document control

Version	Amendment date	Description of revision	Approval
DRAFT	July 2022	Initial draft published for consultation.	Endorsed by DEC
1.0	September 2022	Incorporation of staff feedback.	A/Deputy Director General
1.1	17 October 2022	Review by Communications Directorate prior to publishing	

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