



**RACP**  
**Specialists. Together**  
EDUCATE ADVOCATE INNOVATE

**The Royal Australasian College of  
Physicians' submission to He Pou  
a Rangi | Climate Change  
Commission**

**Call for evidence: National Climate  
Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA)  
2026**

**Poutū-te-rangi | March 2025**

## Introduction

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to He Pou a Rangi | Climate Change Commission to contribute to the upcoming National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA) 2026.

The RACP represents over 32,000 medical specialists and trainees across 33 medical specialties and works to educate, innovate and advocate for excellence in health and medical care. The RACP trains the next generation of specialists, while playing a lead role in developing world best practice, evidence informed, models of care. We draw on the skills of our expert members, to develop policies that promote a healthier society. By working together, our members advance the interest of the medical profession, our patients and the broader community.

## Background and current situation

Anthropogenic climate change is a global public health emergency. Evidence shows the health impacts of climate change can be attributed to worsening environmental exposures such as ambient heat, air pollution, storms, floods, reduced water quality, reduced food production, increased food spoilage, and change in disease vectors. These exposures underlie health effects including heat stress illnesses, cardiovascular disease, infectious gastrointestinal disease, physical trauma, malnutrition, psychological stress, vector-borne disease, and other epidemic illness<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>. In addition, forced migration and conflict caused by scarce food and water resources will have consequent impacts on health<sup>2</sup>.

As medical professionals at the frontline of climate change, the RACP is committed to transformative advocacy at local, national and global levels. Such a commitment is consistent with our professional duty towards the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community.

The Climate Change Commission are calling for evidence to inform work on the second National Climate Change Risk Assessment, due to be delivered by August 2026. The [National Climate Change Risk Assessment](#), produced every six years, identifies the most significant risks – assessing their nature, severity and the need for co-ordinated actions to respond.

The changing climate impacts many aspects of the lives, livelihoods, and environment of the people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Within their call for evidence, the Climate Change

---

<sup>1</sup> The Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Climate change and health position statement. Sydney: The Royal Australasian College of Physicians; 2016. Available from <https://www.racp.edu.au/policy-and-advocacy/policy-and-advocacy-priorities/climate-change-and-health>. Accessed 17 March 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Watts N, Adger WN, Agnolucci P, Blackstock J, Byass P, Cai W et al. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. [Internet] Lancet 2015;386(10006):1861-914. Available from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60854-6/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60854-6/abstract). Accessed 17 March 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Costello A, Abbas M, Allen A et al. Managing the health effects of climate change: Lancet and University College London Institute for Global Health Commission. [Internet] Lancet 2009;373(9676):1693–1733. Available from [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)60935-1/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60935-1/abstract). Accessed 17 March 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, KR, Woodward A, Campbell-Lendrum D, Chadee DD, Honda Y, Liu Q et al. 2014: Human health: impacts, adaptation, and co-benefits. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Field CB, Barros VR, Dokken DJ, Mach KJ, Mastrandrea MD, Bilir TE, Chatterjee M et al. (eds.]. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; 2014. pp. 709-754.

Commission have identified seven domains of risk. The RACP's submission will focus on one of these domains – "People, Health and Communities".

## RACP Positions and Submissions on Climate Change Risks and Actions

### Risks

#### [The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change - Policy Brief for Australia 2023 \(2024\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* December 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - The RACP contributed to the latest Policy Brief for Australia, published as part of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change.
  - The Lancet Countdown has a mission to ensure that health is at the centre of understanding and responding to climate change. It is imperative that health organisations increase efforts to decarbonise their operations and that the Australian governments develop a nuanced National Heat and Health Action Plan.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Policy Brief
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

#### [RACP Feedback on the National Health and Climate Strategy Consultation \(2023\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* 31 July 2023
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Submission to the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care on the development of the National Health and Climate Strategy.
  - Risk: Health impacts, risks and vulnerabilities of populations can only be prioritised for adaptation action after an assessment of these impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities has been undertaken.
  - Risk: Groups that should be considered to have additional risks to the health impacts of climate change (and already face existing access barriers to healthcare) include:
    - Older adults
    - People with disabilities
    - Tamariki
    - People with chronic medical conditions (particularly cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and renal disease)
    - Socioeconomically disadvantaged communities
    - Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
    - Outdoor workers
    - Rural and remote communities
    - Communities living in flood plains
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.

- *Information type:* Submission
- *Location:* National / International

### **RACP Climate Change and Health Position Statement (2016).**

- *Date of evidence:* November 2016
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This statement outlines the RACP's positions on climate change and its impacts on human health.
  - Acknowledges that climate change will increase the steepness of current social health gradients, with the most vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by the most severe adverse effects of climate change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Position statement
- *Location:* National / International (Australia)

## **Actions**

### **The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change - Policy Brief for Australia 2023 (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* December 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - The RACP contributed to the latest Policy Brief for Australia, published as part of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change.
  - The Lancet Countdown has a mission to ensure that health is at the centre of understanding and responding to climate change. It is imperative that health organisations increase efforts to decarbonise their operations and that the Australian governments develop a nuanced National Heat and Health Action Plan.
  - The Brief calls for the development of a nuanced and inclusive National Heat and Health Action Plan for Australia that addresses settings where people work, live and play – and not duplicate existing efforts. This is applicable and adaptable to the Aotearoa context.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Data, information, guidance and tools.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Policy Brief
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **RACP advice on Modelling the Health Impacts of Climate Change (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* January 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - In 2024, the RACP provided advice to the Australian Federal Treasury on modelling the health impacts of climate change.
  - Climate change impacts on health result in healthcare costs, avoidable deaths, and loss of life years.

- Climate change impacts health and healthcare both directly and indirectly. Undertaking economic modelling to estimate the costs of climate change on health and to quantify the economic benefits of taking action is an important aspect of informing policy decisions in health sector adaptation for climate change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Data, information, guidance and tools.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Report on modelling
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **RACP Feedback on the National Health and Climate Strategy Consultation (2023).**

- *Date of evidence:* 31 July 2023
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Submission to the Australian Government’s Department of Health and Aged Care on the development of the National Health and Climate Strategy.
  - Action: The RACP asks that the Strategy focus on building healthy and climate resilient communities through whole of government and Health in All Policies approaches.
  - Action: A National Toolbox is needed to guide health professionals and communities. Page 31 outlines what such a toolbox should include.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Government policy, processes, rules and standards; Data, information, guidance and tools.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Submission
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **RACP Submission on the Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper (2023).**

- *Date of evidence:* October 2023
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Australian based submission to the Commonwealth Government on the Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper, focused on the important role of the health sectors in crisis response. Climate change is and will continue to be a key driver of crises in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.
  - Action: The RACP urges the Commonwealth Government to invest in building healthy and climate resilient communities and healthcare systems to decrease climate risk and climate disaster vulnerability.
  - Action: Engage with Indigenous peoples and other priority populations to identify and adapt for risks posed to these communities and cultures. Additionally, address systems and structures that cause socioeconomic inequities.
  - Action: Ensure access to specialist services for conditions arising from extreme weather events and for chronic physical and mental health conditions as part of response and recovery.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Government policy, processes, rules and standards; Community adaptation planning process; Engagement and outreach with communities and mana whenua.
- *Cross-cutting themes this evidence relates to (may leave blank):* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.

- *Information type:* Submission
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **RACP - Climate Change and Australia's Healthcare Systems: A Review of Literature, Policy and Practice (2021).**

- *Date of evidence:* December 2021
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - A report commissioned by the RACP, designed to provide evidence-based recommendations and actions for Australian policymakers, health systems, health professionals and communities on the need for urgent action to address the health impacts of climate-change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Government policy, processes, rules and standards
- *Cross-cutting themes this evidence relates to (may leave blank):* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Report
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **RACP Climate Change and Health Position Statement (2016).**

- *Date of evidence:* November 2016
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This statement outlines the RACP's positions on climate change and its impacts on human health.
  - Action: The RACP advocates for a national climate change and health strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand, including meaningful mitigation and adaptation targets, effective governance arrangements, professional and community education, effective intergovernmental collaboration, and strong research capacity.
  - Action: The RACP calls for bringing medical expertise and a focus on human health and justice to the centre of all public policy as it relates to climate change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Government policy, processes, rules and standards
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Position statement
- *Location:* National / International (Australia)

## **Evidence from non-RACP sources on Climate Change Risks and Actions**

### ***Risks***

### **Ministry of Health. Health National Adaptation Plan 2024-2027 (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* October 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - The first Health National Adaptation Plan, covering 2024-2027, acknowledges that climate change has been described as the biggest global threat to health of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The vision of the Plan is 'to protect the health and well-being of peoples and



communities from the effects of climate change to achieve pae ora – healthy futures for all New Zealanders’.

- Chapter 2 details the impacts of climate change on human health, including the particular impacts for health equity, Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi implications.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Government report/plan
- *Location:* National

### **World Economic Forum - 70% of workers are at risk of climate-related health hazards, says the ILO (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* 1 May 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This article focuses on the impacts of climate change on worker health. Key findings:
    1. Workers will be exposed to increased heat stress, resulting in an increase risk of kidney dysfunction and physical injury.
    2. Workers will be exposed to increased UV radiation, resulting in an increased risk of work-related skin cancer.
    3. Workers will be breathing more polluted outdoor workplace air, resulting in an increased risk of respiratory and cardiac work-related impairment and deaths.
    4. Agricultural workers will be exposed to higher levels of dangerous pesticides, resulting in an increased risk of pesticide related illnesses.
    5. Workers will be at increased risk of parasitic and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Article
- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **ESR. Climate Change Scenarios for the Health Sector. (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* March 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This report presents the climate change scenarios for the health sector developed by a collective group of health sector stakeholders within Aotearoa New Zealand.
- *Climate hazards:* All
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Report
- *Locations:* National

### **Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand. Days with extreme temperatures. [Surveillance Report] (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* February 2024

- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This report presents indicators of extreme temperature (hot days and cold days) in Aotearoa New Zealand. It comments on the current overlap in where temperature extremes occur and the geographical distribution of populations that are more vulnerable to heat.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* Heatwaves, cold snaps and rising average temperatures
- *Cross-cutting themes:* The physical science basis, including climate observations and projections for Aotearoa NZ other; cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Surveillance report
- *Locations:* National

### [Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand – Extreme rainfall and drought. \[Surveillance Report\] \(2024\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* February 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This report presents indicators of drought, annual rainfall and days where extreme amounts of rainfall occurred in Aotearoa New Zealand. It comments on the current overlap in where these days occur and the geographical distribution of populations more vulnerable to extreme weather.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* Storms and extreme rain and wind; Changing rain and wind patterns; Drought and dry spells
- *Cross-cutting themes:* The physical science basis, including climate observations and projections for Aotearoa NZ; other cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Surveillance report
- *Locations:* National

### [Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand – Gastrointestinal diseases linked to climate change. \[Surveillance Report\] \(2022\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* September 2022
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This factsheet presents indicators of gastrointestinal diseases related to climate change. Notifications of salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis are associated with increasing temperatures. Notifications of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis are associated with changes in rainfall patterns and drought conditions.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* Storms and extreme rain and wind; Changing rain and wind patterns; Heatwaves, cold snaps and rising average temperatures; Drought and dry spells
- *Cross-cutting themes:* The physical science basis, including climate observations and projections for Aotearoa NZ; other cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Surveillance report
- *Locations:* National

### [2021 WHO Health and Climate Change Survey Report \(2021\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* 8 November 2021



- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This report, published at COP26 UN Climate Conference, provides a snapshot of the overall progress that governments have made in the field of health and climate change to date (2021). The report further details work that remains in order to protect populations from the potential health impacts of climate change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Research report
- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **Australia and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine – Statement on Climate Change and the Health of Older People (2021).**

- *Date of evidence:* April 2021
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - ANZSGM position statement outlining the impacts of climate change on older people. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to changing environmental conditions due to medical comorbidities, altered homeostasis and physical limitations, including susceptibility to infectious disease outbreaks in residential aged care facilities.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Position statement
- *Location:* National

### **Fatima, S.H. et al. – Extreme heat and occupational injuries in different climate zones: A systemic review and meta-analysis of epidemiological evidence (2021).**

- *Date of evidence:* 17 January 2021
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This article focuses on the impacts of climate change on worker health. Key findings:
    1. 24 studies assessed the effects of heat exposure on occupational injuries.
    2. Both hot temperatures and heatwaves increase the risk of occupational injuries.
    3. High-risk climate zones include Humid Subtropical and Oceanic Climates.
    4. Young workers and male workers were identified as high-risk.
    5. High-risk industries include agriculture, forestry, construction and manufacturing.
    6. Heat disproportionately affects populations in suburbs of lower socio-economic background and regional/remote communities.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Peer review journal article

- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa context

**[Climate Justice Research Centre, UTS: The Australia Institute – Heat Stress and Work in the Era of Climate Change: What we know, and what we need to learn \(2020\).](#)**

- *Date of evidence:* November 2020
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This report identified four key groups of workers as being at high risk of heat stress:
    1. Workers who labour inside, in environments with poor climate control, or whose work requires them to be exposed to heat and humidity.
    2. Outdoor workers, especially those who are weather exposed.
    3. Workers moving between different climates as part of their work (i.e. moving between extreme heat and cold).
    4. Workers whose roles expose them to situational extreme heat, such as emergency workers and firefighters.
  - High heat also impacts many workers in less direct ways: for example, poor sleep during a hot night can make it harder to work safely the next day, and working in extreme heat can make the drive home from work more dangerous.
  - Workers whose jobs are less secure, for example temporary workers, on demand workers, and migrant workers, are at greater risk.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Research report
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

**[Levy, B.S. & Roelofs, C. – Impacts of Climate Change on Workers’ Health and Safety. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health \(2019\).](#)**

- *Date of evidence:* 25 February 2019
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Climate change has increased the risk to workers’ health and safety. Workers are at increased risk of heat stress and other heat-related disorders, occupational injuries, and reduced productivity at work.
  - Climate change will influence the distribution of weeds, insect pests, and pathogens, and will introduce new pests, all of which could change the types and amounts of pesticides used, thereby affecting the health of agricultural workers and others.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Peer review journal article
- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

**[Levi, M., Kjellstrom, T. & Baldasseroni, A. – Impact of climate change on occupational health and productivity: a systematic literature review focusing on workplace heat \(2018\).](#)**

- *Date of evidence:* 24 April 2018
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This article focuses on the impacts of climate change on worker health. Key findings:
    1. 20% of articles selected for review were from Australia/Aotearoa New Zealand.
    2. A significant proportion of studies reported findings regarding the Mesoamerican nephropathy issue. This is a disease occurring especially among young and middle-aged male sugarcane workers, without conventional risk factors for chronic kidney disease.
    3. For injuries, there is a reversed U-shaped exposure-response relationship between Tmax and overall daily injury claims.
    4. Outdoor workers are at increased risk of vector-borne infectious diseases, as a positive correlation between higher air temperatures and current or future expansion of the habitat of vectors being observed.
    5. As for productivity, agriculture and construction are the most studied sectors; a day with temperatures exceeding 32°C can reduce daily labour supply in exposed sectors by up to 14%.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Peer review journal article
- *Location:* International (worldwide including Aotearoa New Zealand) – applicable to national Aotearoa context

**[Marinaccio, A. et al. – Climate change and occupational health and safety. Risk of injuries, productivity loss and the co-benefits perspective \(2025\).](#)**

- *Date of evidence:* 15 March 2025
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This article focuses on the impacts of heat stress on worker health. Key findings:
    1. The risk of occupational injuries increases significantly during heatwaves.
    2. More than 4,000 injuries per year due to heat have been estimated in Italy.
    3. A decrease in productivity (until 80%) has been estimated during heatwaves.
    4. The compensation costs associated have been evaluated 49 million euros per year.
    5. The co-benefits analysis is crucial in climate change adaptation strategies.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Peer review journal article
- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa context

### **NIWA – Climate change and possible impacts for New Zealand (undated).**

- *Date of evidence:* undated
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Part of a series by NIWA on “climate change information for climate solvers.”
  - Effects of climate change on people summarised, including:
    1. Hotter temperatures and heatwaves bringing health issues for vulnerable groups, including babies and elderly people, as well as outdoor workers.
    2. Warming climate increases likelihood of tropical diseases establishing in Aotearoa New Zealand, including dengue fever and malaria.
    3. Health risks posed by extreme weather events that are likely to increase in frequency and intensity.
    4. Likely negative effect on many people’s mental health.
    5. Māori communities are likely to be disproportionately impacted, as many homes and tapu places are close to the coast and particularly at risk from sea-level rise and coastal erosion.
    6. Safe water supply is likely to be affected, both during dry periods and storm events causing contamination of drinking water.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Research report
- *Location:* National

### **Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand – Environmental Health Indicators - Climate Change Āhuarangi kē (undated).**

- *Date of evidence:* Undated
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Environmental health indicators, outlining health impacts associated with aspects of climate change including:
    1. Temperature: describes changes in Aotearoa New Zealand temperature over time, and possible impacts on health.
    2. Drought and rainfall: statistics on drought and rainfall in Aotearoa over time, and possible impacts on health.
    3. Climate-sensitive diseases.
    4. Vulnerability to climate change: identifies population groups who are more at risk from health impacts of climate change.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Climate hazards:* All
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Research report
- *Location:* National

## **Actions**

### **Ministry of Health. Health National Adaptation Plan 2024-2027 (2024).**

- *Date of evidence:* October 2024
- *Summary of evidence:*

- The first Health National Adaptation Plan, covering 2024-2027, acknowledges that climate change has been described as the biggest global threat to health of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- The Plan identifies a number of health-focused adaptation actions, grouped into
  1. Leadership and governance
  2. Social and environmental determinants of health
  3. Knowledge and risk assessment
  4. Health care service resilience and adaptation
  5. Community and whānau leadership.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of Action:* Other: health focused adaptation actions in a number of groups
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Government report/plan
- *Location:* National

### **IPCC – Climate Change 2023 Synthesis Report (2023).**

- *Date of evidence:* 2023
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - This Synthesis Report concludes the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It addresses a broad range of policy-relevant questions approved by the Panel.
  - Page 106 (item 4.5.5) outlines the potential near-term mitigation and adaptation actions that address the health impacts of climate change, including food, infrastructure, social protection, and water policies. The report stresses that the key pathway to climate resilience in the health sector is universal access to healthcare.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Government policy, processes, rules and standards; Data, information, guidance and tools.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Synthesis Report
- *Location:* International (worldwide) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

### **Climate Justice Research Centre, UTS: The Australia Institute – Heat Stress and Work in the Era of Climate Change: What we know, and what we need to learn (2020).**

- *Date of evidence:* November 2020
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - Section 3 of this report details how trade unions in Australia are responding to the growing impacts of heat stressed workers across different industries. This section helps map the complexities faced by workers and their unions in dealing with heat stress in the workplace.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of action:* Data, information, guidance and tools.
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Research report
- *Location:* International (Australia) – applicable to national Aotearoa New Zealand context

## [Te Whatu Ora – Heat Health Plans: Guidelines and Key Information \(2023\).](#)

- *Date of evidence:* 30 September 2023
- *Summary of evidence:*
  - The Heat Health Plan Guidelines are aimed at health and community service providers, health sector organisations, local government and other community organisations to help them prepare their own heat health response plans.
  - Extreme heat can cause illness and death, but effective planning and actions can reduce its effects on health.
  - Studies have shown that many of the hospitalisations that occur during heatwaves are for preventable conditions that could have been avoided with better planning and communication of heat health message.
- *Domain:* People, health and communities
- *Type of Action:* Data, information, guidance and tools
- *Cross-cutting themes:* Cascading risks, where impacts interact and domino to have broader consequences.
- *Information type:* Guidance document
- *Location:* National

## Concluding remarks

The RACP thanks He Pou a Rangi | Climate Change Commission for the opportunity to provide advice on this proposal.

To discuss this submission further, please contact the RACP's Aotearoa NZ Policy and Advocacy team at [policy@racp.org.nz](mailto:policy@racp.org.nz).

Our RACP members would warmly welcome receiving briefings from the Climate Change Commission on this issue as the proposal progresses and are open to meeting with the Climate Change Commission.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Hamish McCay  
Aotearoa NZ President  
**The Royal Australasian College of Physicians**