



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Release

RACP calls for climate change action

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians is calling for a more coordinated, national approach to climate change and the threats it poses.

The College welcomes recommendations highlighted in the Australian Academy of Science Report – [*Climate change challenges to health: Risks and Opportunities*](#).

RACP President Laureate Professor Nick Talley said national and international scientific institutions agree climate change is occurring.

“Climate change presents a current and ongoing threat to human health globally - it’s time we move from debates about the validity of climate change to how we collectively react to it,” Professor Talley said.

“The risks to human health cannot be ignored. As individuals, groups, organisations and societies we must act to be ready to respond to, and where possible, prevent adverse impacts on health.”

The RACP recognises that climate change is a health equity issue and supports the call for action to minimise its impacts on health.

“The health-related risks associated with climate change will have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable Australians,” Professor Talley said.

Professor Talley said physicians can play a pivotal role in how society deals with and minimises the adverse consequences of climate change.

“The medical profession has a duty of care to protect and promote the health of our patients and the community,” Professor Talley said.

The College also supports the report’s call for multidisciplinary research and open access to data.

“This is crucial to providing a greater understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of climate change on human health,” Professor Talley said.

Impacts include heat-related illness and exacerbation of cardiorespiratory disease, increases in the prevalence of food and water-borne disease and stresses on healthcare infrastructure and systems.

“Physicians need to be able to take the necessary steps now to prepare for a world affected by climate change,” Professor Talley said.

“Coordinated cross-sectoral approaches will allow Australian society to reap the benefits of action on climate change including a reduction in chronic disease levels, improved life expectancy and workplace productivity.

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 14,950 physicians – often referred to as medical specialists – and 6,530 Trainee members across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents more than 34 medical specialties including paediatrics & child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology and public health medicine, occupational & environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients. www.racp.edu.au