



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians

Media release

## **RACP leads global medical campaign at Paris' COP21**

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A Global Consensus Statement calling for action on the health impacts of climate change was handed to Dr Margaret Chan Director-General of the World Health Organization at COP21 in Paris on Tuesday.

Coordinated by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), the statement was endorsed by 68 international health and medical bodies and more than 1500 individual signatories from 50 countries.

Australasian Faculty of Public Health President-Elect Professor Lynne Madden also presented the statement on behalf of the RACP at the Climate and Health Summit 2015 held in Paris on Saturday.

Titled *Act now to reduce the damaging health impacts of climate change*, the consensus statement calls for urgent action to combat the damaging health impacts of climate change.

"The global health and medical community's unprecedented consensus and support for this statement is a show of the international medical momentum for strong commitments at COP21," Professor Madden said.

"Acting on climate change has been described as the greatest global health opportunity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"The RACP has taken the lead by demanding action on climate change to protect the health of Australians and New Zealanders and others around the world through the global campaign *Doctors for Climate Action*, which called for world leaders to commit to real action on climate change at COP21."

Organisations including the Hong Kong College of Physicians, American Medical Association, Indian Academy of Paediatrics, West African College of Physicians and the British Medical Association signed the statement.

"The Global Consensus Statement and *Doctors for Climate Action* campaign have allowed the medical community to bring pressure in the debate about climate change," Professor Madden said.

RACP President, Laureate Professor Nick Talley said the world can no longer ignore the real impacts of climate change that affect every individual, including many of our Pacific neighbours who are already experiencing devastating consequences.

"In Australia, if we fail to take action on climate change we will see increases in the frequency and severity of heatwaves, bushfires, droughts and floods," Professor Talley said.

"These events have potentially devastating health impacts, with increases in heatwaves putting vulnerable people, including children, the elderly and those suffering with chronic illnesses at heightened risk of exhaustion, heatstroke and more serious health complications such as renal failure.

**Ends**

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**About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP):** The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric 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. The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.