

# NURSES' **SIX STEP CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

Climate Action Nurses' plan for driving action on the Climate Crisis.

**OCTOBER 2023**



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Climate Action Nurses (CAN) acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of Country we call Australia. Sovereignty of the land we call Australia has never been ceded. We extend our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging, recognising the deep connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with this land.

As nurses committed to climate action, we respect the unique role of Aboriginal stewardship in caring for the environment for countless generations. We honour the wisdom, resilience, and sustainable practices of the First Nations peoples and commit to learning from and supporting their ongoing efforts in environmental conservation.

May our work in climate action be guided by a deep respect for the land and the diverse cultures that enrich it.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **About Climate Action Nurses**

Climate Action Nurses is a national network of nurses aiming to encourage nurses to take action on Climate Change.

We operate on a powerful theory of change, envisioning a sustainable future through three key impacts. Firstly, we champion the concept of Climate Ready Healthcare, emphasising the urgent need for healthcare systems to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change. CAN promotes the implementation of resilient infrastructure, preparedness plans, and training programs to ensure healthcare facilities can effectively respond to climate-related emergencies and safeguard patient well-being.

Secondly, CAN strives to foster Climate Friendly Communities by actively engaging with local stakeholders. We advocate for sustainable urban planning, green spaces, and access to clean air and water, aiming to lower emissions both inside and outside of the healthcare sector.

Finally, CAN is committed to empowering, educating and activating Climate Smart Nurses, so that we can harness the power of the largest healthcare workforce to step up, step forward and lead.

## **Suggested citation**

Climate Action Nurses (CAN) 2023, Nurses' Six Step Climate Action Plan, CAN, Brisbane.





# SIX STEP CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

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Climate Action Nurses is the peak professional body representing climate literate nurses. We aim to empower, educate and activate the nursing profession to act on climate change.

Nurses have a rich history of providing evidence based implementable solutions to complex problems.

As Climate Action Nurses we believe our **six step plan** is required to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We call on all levels of Australian Government and Industry to enact the our policy by 2030.

1

# STOP CONSUMING FOSSIL FUELS

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Most greenhouse gas emissions are related to burning of fossil fuels for energy and transportation [1]. To reduce global emissions, Australia must rapidly reduce the use of fossil fuels including coal, oil and gas by 2030.

1

# 2

## TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY & SUPPORT JOBS

Australia is behind in renewable energy and transport. The transition to renewable energy is fundamental in achieving the Federal Government's commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Many people's livelihood rely on the resource, energy and transport sectors [2]. There will be more jobs created in renewable energy projects than jobs lost from the cessation of fossil fuel projects. We support interventions to upskill and reskill employees underpinning the job market created from these industries.

# 3

## PROMOTING CLIMATE FRIENDLY FOOD

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Consuming plant-based foods has been shown to dramatically reduce individual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions [3]. A collective societal dietary move could dramatically reduce emissions and positively influence planetary and human health. Promoting a diet focused on reducing meat intake, eating sustainable fish, avoiding food waste, and reducing processed packaged food is a critical health message that nurses should be adopting and communicating.



# 4

## NURSES AT ALL LEVELS OF MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY

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Australia has committed to a National Health and Climate Strategy. Nurses must be included in all levels of governance.

This includes the Commonwealth Government appointing a **Chief Health and Climate Nurse**. Nurses should be instrumental in leading interprofessional decarbonisation and regeneration of healthcare. Adapting and preparing the workforce and health systems for the escalating effects of climate change is priority.

# 5

## PLANETARY HEALTH INFORMED GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

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Human health is entirely dependent on flourishing natural environments [4]. Human health is based on planetary health. All industry and government decisions must be made through this lens.



# 6

## NURSING WISDOM IN SYSTEMS THINKING

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Australia must foreground nursing wisdom in adjacent industries and endorse a climate risk management approach to develop system driven climate solutions. Nursing wisdom values care of the whole person. Nurses understand the complexity of human health and are considerate of the social, environmental and spiritual factors that influence wellbeing. This wisdom can be applied to system driven climate solutions.

System thinking makes sense of the complexity of the world in terms of wholes and relationships rather than reducing it to individual separate and isolated parts[1]. Systems thinking facilitates the collaboration between nurses and adjacent industries, advancing solutions to the climate crisis considerate of diverse perspectives for more equitable outcomes for our most vulnerable populations.



## SUMMARY

The Nurses' Six Step Climate Action Plan represents a crucial framework for our organisation, Climate Action Nurses, as we navigate the intersection of healthcare and environmental sustainability. This comprehensive plan not only underscores our commitment to mitigating the impact of climate change but also recognises the unique role that nurses play in fostering a healthier planet. By acknowledging and addressing the environmental determinants of health, we can enhance the overall well-being of our communities.

The significance of this Climate Action Plan lies in its holistic approach, encapsulating not only traditional healthcare practices but also the integration of sustainable and ecologically conscious strategies. As nurses, our influence extends beyond clinical settings, and through this plan, we embrace our responsibility as advocates for planetary health. By implementing the Six Step Climate Action Plan, we empower our nursing community to be agents of positive change, promoting resilience, and driving sustainable practices in healthcare delivery.

Whether in urban hospitals, regional clinics, or community health initiatives, the plan provides a flexible framework that can be tailored to diverse healthcare contexts. It encourages collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to fostering a climate-resilient healthcare system. Through the implementation of these steps, we envision a future where the nursing profession leads the charge in building a sustainable, equitable, and environmentally conscious healthcare landscape for generations to come.

# REFERENCES

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