



Nurses' Six Step Climate Action Plan

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 the following 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 following policy **by 2030**¹:

1. Stop Consuming Fossil Fuel

Most greenhouse gas emissions are related to burning of fossil fuels for energy and transportation¹. 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

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 sectors². 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 Diets

Consuming plant-based foods has been shown to dramatically reduce individual CO2 emissions³. 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 & Adaption Strategy

Australia has committed to a National Health and Climate Strategy. Nurses must be included in **all levels** of governance. This includes the State and Commonwealth Governments **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

Human health is entirely dependent on flourishing natural environments⁴. Human health is based on planetary health. All industry and government decisions must be made through this lens.

6. Nursing Wisdom in Systems Thinking

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 parts⁵. 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.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2022) Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/#:~:text=The%20report%20shows%20that%20emissions,1.5%C2%B0C%20of%20warming>

² Rutovitz, J., St John, A., Wilmot, K., Nagrath, K., Corveddu, N. and Taylor, H. (2023). Energy efficiency definitions for the Australian Energy Employment Report. Prepared for RACE for 2030 CRC.

³ Scarborough, P., Clark, M., Cobiac, L. 2023, 'Vegans, vegetarians, fish-eaters and meat-eaters in the UK show discrepant environmental impacts, *Nature Food*, vol.4, no. 565–574

⁴ Whitmee, S., Haines, A., Beyrer, C., Boltz, F., Capon, A. G., de Souza Dias, B. F., Ezeh, A., Frumkin, H., Gong, P., & Head, P. (2015). Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation–Lancet Commission on planetary health. *The Lancet*, 386(10007), 1973-2028.

⁵ Hollnagel, E., Woods, D. D. & Leveson, N. C. (Eds.) (2006). Resilience engineering: Concepts and precepts. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate