

06 April 2017

Nick Horsburgh
Climate and Health Alliance
PO Box 343
Clifton Hill, VIC 3068

By email to: nick.horsburgh@caha.org.au

Dear Mr Horsburgh

Re: Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Climate and Health Alliance on their draft Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia (the Framework).

The RANZCP is the principal organisation representing the medical speciality of psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand and is responsible for training, educating and representing psychiatrists on policy issues. The RANZCP represents more than 4000 qualified psychiatrists in Australia, many of whom have specific interest in this matter. As such, we strongly support the purpose of the Framework and welcome the opportunity to contribute.

Natural disasters and extreme weather events linked to climate change can lead to a wide range of deleterious health effects including mental health problems and health risk behaviours, as well as effects on other social and behavioural domains. The RANZCP is pleased to see this recognised in the Framework.

The RANZCP broadly supports the seven areas of policy action but would suggest adding some recommendations under 'Emergency and disaster-preparedness'. Emergency and recovery workers should be offered sufficient support services due to their high risk of exposure to cumulative traumatic experiences. The RANZCP also suggests the education of emergency responders to recognise the signs of common post-disaster mental health morbidities, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, and the development of pathways to facilitate timely referrals to health professionals for individuals exhibiting symptoms.

Under 'Research', the RANZCP would suggest including research into effective treatments for people who have been traumatised by climate change-related disasters and weather events.

Further information on the RANZCP's recommendations for addressing the mental health impacts of climate change can be found in our [Policy statement 35: Addressing the mental health impacts of natural disasters, climate change-related weather events and acts of terrorism](#),

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this letter, please contact Rosie Forster, Senior Department Manager, Practice, Policy and Partnerships via rosie.forster@ranzcp.org or by phone on (03) 9601 4943.

Yours sincerely



Professor Malcolm Hopwood
President

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