



Not for public release at this stage

Strategic Vision for Action against Climate Change

1. Preamble

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; The College) considers climate change and the associated health impacts to be a population health emergency. Climate change presents an immediate risk to the capacity and ability of EDs, health systems and the emergency medicine workforce to safely manage increased demand as a result of more frequent and intense climate disasters. ACEM recognises that EDs and hospitals need to be resourced and supported to respond and manage increased presentations including surges in demand. Alongside this, ACEM actively supports efforts to minimise the impact of climate change including measures to reduce the carbon footprint of hospitals and health systems. Given the scale of climate change, ACEM recognises the vital need to support and partner with other organisations and actors to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

2. Purpose of this document

This document outlines ACEM's Strategic Vision in taking action to prepare for and mitigate the deleterious impacts of climate change on human health. This Strategic Vision is aligned with the overall goals of the [ACEM Business Plan 2019-2021](#) and the [ACEM Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#), which identify the importance of ensuring that Australasian emergency departments are prepared and equipped for the impacts of climate change.

This Strategic Vision is organised under six overarching priorities of leadership, research, advocacy, partnerships, education and culture. The strategies to achieve each of these priorities are listed below. A separate operational plan will support this strategic vision in its implementation within ACEM and amongst Emergency Department Directors, Fellows of ACEM and trainees.

3. Overarching Priorities

Leadership	In anticipating the impact of the climate emergency on the health care system and particularly on emergency departments, ACEM will demonstrate leadership in enacting climate action to prevent and mitigate the impact of climate change. Emergency department directors can also be leaders within their healthcare service and systems while clinicians have a role in leading by example within their workplaces.
Research	ACEM, emergency department directors and clinicians have a role in developing an evidence-base to accurately capture the impact of climate change on emergency departments and health systems. Such research would assist in the development of policies, guidelines and advocacy strategies.
Advocacy	In its role as the independent, peak professional organisation for emergency medicine ACEM is uniquely positioned to advocate to governments and healthcare providers on the impacts of climate change on emergency medicine and the capacity of health systems to manage demand. Emergency department directors and clinicians will lead and support these advocacy efforts with

	hospital management and at a state and national level, through the media and with members of parliament and government representatives.
Partnerships	To address the international climate emergency, effective partnerships at all levels are needed to ensure the health system and communities are prepared for climate emergencies. Such actions will also support the transition to a carbon-free economy.
Education	As the body responsible for the training of emergency physicians, ACEM must educate and prepare clinicians and the community for the known and predicted effects of climate change. This would encompass education of Fellows, Trainees, as well as the broader health workforce engaged in emergency care. Clinicians also have a role in ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills to respond to the climate emergency.
Culture	Developing a culture starting in EDs that normalises sustainability in all activities and policies and extends throughout an organisation and into the broader healthcare system is a vital part of responding to the climate emergency.

4. Strategies

Leadership

- Members (Fellows and trainees) to lead climate action to prevent, mitigate and manage the impact of climate change on emergency care.
- Emergency physicians will lead the debate and set standards for sustainable health care in a climate emergency, with Directors and their delegates demonstrating leadership to other departments and/or their healthcare organisation or as part of the larger healthcare organisation (e.g. Local Health District/District Health Board).
- ACEM will continually identify measures to reduce its carbon footprint and improve environmentally sustainable measures within the organisation. This will include a sustainability matrix that is applied to the development and review of all College policies.

Research

- Build an evidence base to support education and advocacy activities in relation to the impact of climate change on emergency departments and the broader health system particularly in the areas of workforce planning, patient demand and ED presentations.
- Recognise climate induced disaster mitigation as part of the remit of Emergency Medicine and disaster planning
- Support and conduct climate related research projects as they relate to EDs

Advocacy

- Develop and partner in advocacy campaigns regarding disaster preparedness for emergency departments in the context of climate change and its impacts.
- Advocate for equity of access to timely and appropriate emergency care and equity of outcomes with a focus on those who are most vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change such as older people, First Nations peoples, people with pre-existing medical conditions and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Proactively advocate for *Choosing Wisely* and other health resource stewardship initiatives in order to promote the effective use of limited healthcare resources
- ACEM members including the Faculties are effectively resourced to advocate for emergency department preparedness in the context of climate change.

Partnerships

- Establish and further develop partnerships to support and strengthen the College's climate change activities, advocacy and research
- Identify and support opportunities to partner with hospital and health care entities to further the adoption of sustainability principles in the decisions of health leaders
- Encourage Fellows and Trainees to participate in initiatives against climate change

Education

- ACEM will educate College staff about climate change and sustainable activities
 - FACEMs and trainees will be educated about the impact of climate change on emergency medicine and the effects on Emergency Department performance, and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to plan, prepare and respond to climate-change disasters
- Accountability and governance

Culture

- Grow and sustain a culture of sustainability in emergency medicine that is accountable to the broader community for its environmental and social impact
- Foster a culture of *Choosing Wisely* and resource stewardship amongst the leadership of emergency medicine to embed in daily practice.