



# Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2024-2027

December 2024

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing



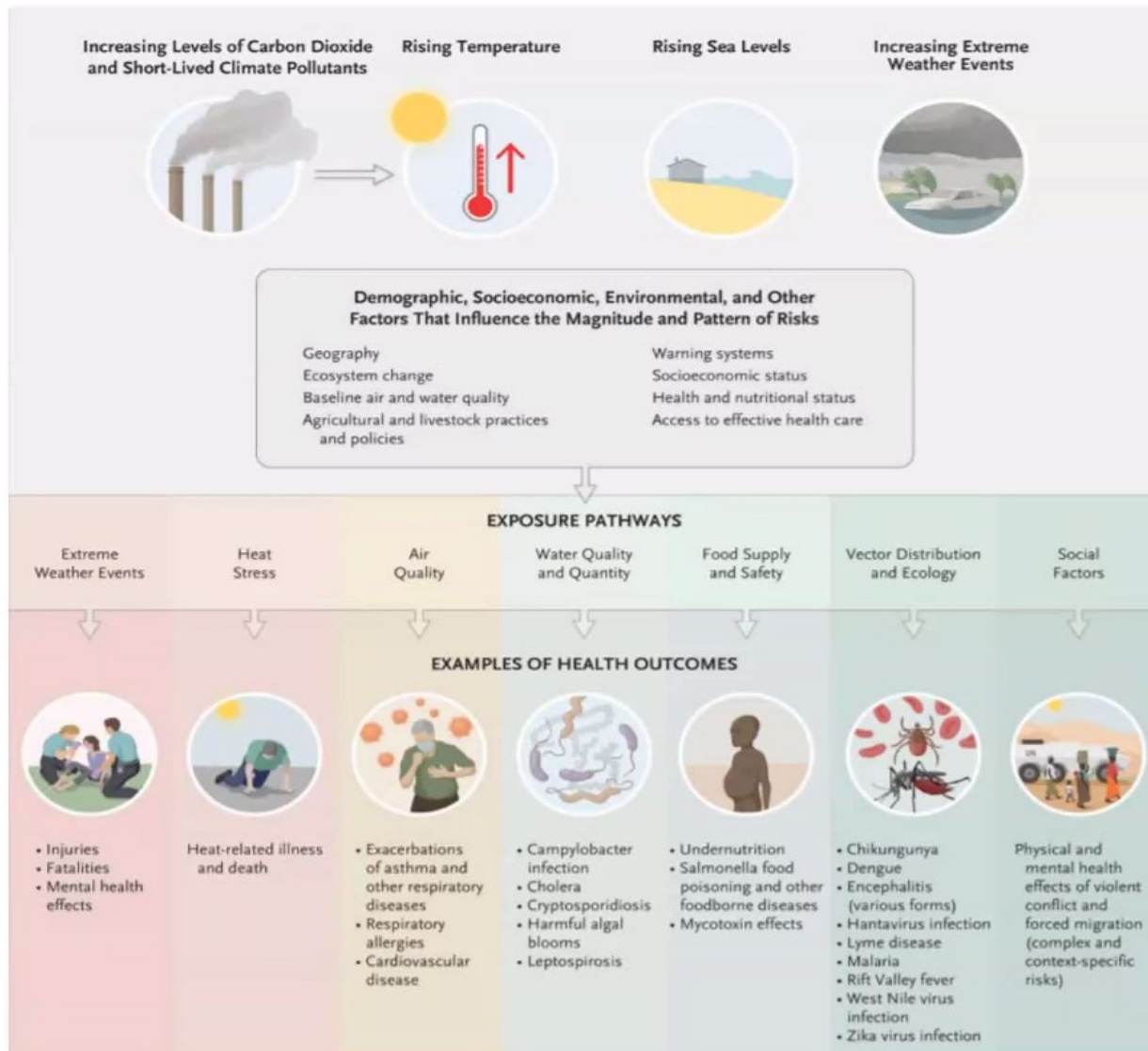
Ahpra acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands, skies and waters and their ongoing connection to country, kin and culture.

For more than 60 thousand years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, experts in environmental sustainability lived in harmony with and cared for country. Taking no more than needed to sustain, survive and thrive, the lands, waters and skies nurtured them in return for protecting and respecting the plants, animals and systems.

Ahpra's commitment to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and reducing our environmental footprint are intertwined. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing guides both strategies.

Ahpra's Environmental Sustainability Strategy aligns with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment, by centring and amplifying their voices, practices and beliefs.

# Climate change has profound health impacts



- “(T)he single biggest health threat facing humanity.” (WHO)
- Climate change is causing profound impacts across the world with many beyond our ability to make effective adaptations (IPCC 2022 report)
  - A disproportionate impact (inequitable experience) on the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
  - Reinforced and expanded in [AR6 Synthesis Report \(2023\)](#)
- Australia is facing greater risks and impacts than other parts of the world
  - [Substantial increase](#) in risk of droughts, fires and floods.
  - We are one of the largest emitters per capita
  - Our health system contributes ~ 7% to our national carbon footprint.
- Current responses
  - [Australian Government targets: 43% below 2005 emissions levels by 2030, net zero by 2050.](#)
  - [National Health and Climate Strategy](#) and National Health, Sustainability and Climate Unit
  - [Mandatory climate disclosure reporting](#)
  - State/Territory Government Climate and Sustainable Healthcare Policies

# National Scheme Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Protecting the public by addressing the health impacts of climate change, promoting planetary health and respecting  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional lands

## Themes - linked UN Sustainable Development Goals

Responsible consumption  
and production



Good health and well-being



Climate action



## Objectives

### INTERNAL

1. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
2. Reduced waste generation (prevention, reduction, re-use and recycling)
3. Sustainable procurement and resource management

### EXTERNAL

4. Enhanced health system leadership
5. Practitioner support and guidance

# Detailed view



Themes	Good health and wellbeing & Climate action		
<b>Objective</b>	<b>1. Reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions</b>	<b>4. Enhanced health system leadership</b>	<b>5. Practitioner support and guidance</b>
<b>Result</b>	We will reduce our emissions in target areas by >20% by 2027.	We will lead and engage in joint initiatives with others to address the health impacts of climate change and promote sustainable health care and a focus on planetary health.	We will support and encourage practitioners to address the health impacts of climate change and promote sustainable healthcare and planetary health.
<b>Actions</b>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme-wide GHG emissions data collection, analysis and review (including travel, paper, waste, and power/water consumption where available)</li> <li>• Develop a Scheme roadmap to reduce emissions related to travel, waste and paper usage by at least 20% by 2027.</li> <li>• Expedite development of an updated staff/Board travel policy to reduce emissions and increase virtual meetings where effective and appropriate.</li> <li>• Scheme-wide green travel incentive promotion (public transport, car-pooling, scooter, EVs, active - walk/run/cycling, ↑end of trip facilities).</li> <li>• Working from home emissions reduction guidance for staff.</li> <li>• Promote respect, care and ‘walking gently’ on the lands we live and work on, to do no further damage to Aboriginal Lands, as key context in all acknowledgements of country.</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy development (e.g. ↓paper, ↓merchandise (lanyards, promotions), sustainable travel – thresholds for in-person meetings/↑use of carbon offsets for travel and accommodation, ‘green’</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a climate change engagement plan in line with our position statement (including local office action groups, regional/national networks)</li> <li>• Identify and support key national and international initiatives (e.g.: co-signatory to the ACQSHC <a href="#">joint statement</a> on sustainable high-quality health care, and support access to high-quality, safe virtual models of care, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples).</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative initiatives with key stakeholders, including to promote sustainable health care practice (e.g. the reduction of low value treatments/diagnostics).</li> <li>• Influence and engage our key stakeholders in collaborative initiatives - professional associations, education providers, jurisdictions and communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ways of knowing, doing, being and working.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioner communications plan to promote sustainable health care, developing skills for treating patients impacted by climate change, and to reinforce Scheme interest in addressing health impacts of climate change and promoting planetary health (e.g. for incorporation in Board communiques, newsletters and in-person briefings)</li> <li>• Collaborate with Accreditation entities, via the Accreditation Committee, to embed climate requirements in accreditation systems and processes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to national sustainable health care and/or climate change initiatives, including sustainability requirements in registration standards, codes and guidelines and promotion of emissions reduction practices (e.g. reduced motor vehicle use, use of aerosol inhalers, lower emissions health care solutions)</li> </ul>

# Detailed view (cont.)



Theme	Responsible consumption and production	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>2. Reduced waste generation</b>	<b>3. Sustainable procurement and resource management</b>
Result	Increased volume of total waste redirected to recycling, compost and other sustainable destinations by >20% by 2027.	We will implement sustainable procurement, commissioning and resource management systems that reduce our scope 3 emissions by 20% by 2027.
<b>Actions</b>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour change and sustainability promotion campaigns (e.g. standardised signage and waste processes/guidance across offices, 3-minute mash segments, CEO updates, RAVE nominations)</li> <li>• Review and strengthen current waste programs: re-use (including clean/donate to social programs), extend e-products life span, environmentally friendly e-product purchasing, and recycling (e.g. batteries, IT hardware, pens/markers) .</li> <li>• Implement food/garden organics (FOGO) recycling in relevant offices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and stakeholders to identify areas to maximise resource management policies and processes</li> <li>• Work with relevant Ahpra teams to conduct supply chain sustainability audit</li> </ul> <p><b>Longer term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update and enhance procurement policies to include management of environmental risks (e.g. catering, hotels - providers with certified low emissions programs/sustainability policies)</li> <li>• Develop office sustainability policy and procedures (furniture, fittings and consumables)</li> </ul>

# Our position on climate change



- The National Scheme:
  - **acknowledges** that climate change is having a major impact on the health of Australians, with disproportionate effects on disadvantaged and marginalised communities
  - **supports** the conservation and protection of the environment, by centring and amplifying voices, practices and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
  - **supports** the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement and the *Climate Change Act 2022 (Clth.)* to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees
  - **understands** that a transition to net zero emissions is required by all organisations to avoid the worst impacts of climate change
  - **commits** to reducing our emissions related to travel, waste and paper usage by at least 20% by 2027
  - **commits** to supporting and encouraging health practitioners to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promoting planetary health in their practice and the services for which they work
  - **undertakes** to lead and work collaboratively with jurisdictions, our partners, stakeholders and communities to facilitate and enable the good use of resources, including choosing sustainable options where possible and without compromising care standards, and transitioning to more sustainable models of care.

# Appendix – background information



# Background

- Updated National Scheme Strategy 2020-2025:
  - Objective EP2 (Strengthened contribution to accessible and sustainable healthcare): **greater focus on our contribution to addressing the health impacts of climate change and reducing our organisational carbon footprint**
  - New strategic measure **EP 2.2: Emissions management and reduction**
- A supporting framework based on ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) principles was proposed to help deliver these changes.
  - Focus on the **environment** aspects of sustainable healthcare, including reduced carbon emissions, waste and effective management of resources.
- Articulates our contribution to a health system that ‘... *improves, maintains or restores health, while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and leveraging opportunities to restore and improve it, to the benefit of the health and well-being of current and future generations*’ (World Health Organisation, 2017)

# Purpose and context



- **Purpose:** our contribution to reducing the health impacts of climate change, promoting planetary health and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.
- **Context:**
  - Objectives and Guiding Principles of the National Law
    - » The paramount principle of protection of the public
  - UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with specific focus on
    - » SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing
    - » SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production, and
    - » SDG13 Climate Action
  - Climate risk and net zero approaches in health care (e.g.: [NSW Government Climate and Energy Action](#))
  - Sustainable health care principles (E.g.: [Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in HealthCare Sustainable Healthcare Module](#))
  - Proposed [climate reporting obligations](#) for Australian corporate entities
  - State and Territory climate and sustainable health initiatives e.g.: [WA Sustainable Health Review](#)

# Environmental risk management



- A key component of strategic planning involves the identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks related to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors that Ahpra faces.
  - These three elements have a substantial impact on Ahpra’s reputation, operational performance, and long-term sustainability.
- Key environmental risks associated with Ahpra’s ecological footprint include:
  - pollution
  - waste management
  - resource depletion
  - climate change impact
  - biodiversity loss.
- Adequate management of our environmental risks involves not only complying with environmental regulations, but proactively seeking ways to reduce negative environmental impact through the adoption of sustainable practices.
- Risks will be managed in accordance with Ahpra’s risk management framework. The framework will also help define, assess and monitor our actions and impacts.

# UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



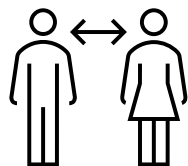
- The United Nations developed the SDGs in 2015
  - 17 goals, 169 targets
  - Shared values and social expectations
  - Sustainable/inclusive approach to facilitating economic growth and well-being
- 3 SDGs, highlighted below, directly align to the draft strategy

SDG	Relevant SDG targets	Alignment
3: Good health and well-being	<b>3.8</b> Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	To the National Law guiding principles, including the paramount principle of protection of the public and access to services provided by health practitioners.
12: Responsible consumption and production	<p><b>12.5:</b> By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.</p> <p><b>12.7:</b> Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities</p>	To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns including the safe management of food and e waste
13: Climate Action	<p><b>13.2:</b> Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.</p> <p><b>13.3:</b> Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning indicators.</p>	To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, including reducing CO2 emissions.

# ESG Principles



## Environment



## Social



## Governance

- Environmental, social and governance (ESG) is:
  - a contemporary governance approach ‘...at the core of responsible business practices’
  - inclusive of non-financial risks and opportunities in our day-to-day activities
  - a set of criteria used to measure and evaluate an organisation’s ESG impact, including in carbon emissions, waste management, protection against modern slavery, community engagement, anti-corruption and responsible executive remuneration.
- ESG and sustainability are now used interchangeably, and standards are continuing to evolve
  - Sustainability can be expressed by considering the interplay of ESG factors to meet present needs without compromising the future.
- ESG is aligned to international corporate disclosure and reporting standards
  - The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is widely recognised as a standard setter, including major Australian companies and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.
  - The Australian Government released a mandatory climate reporting position that require entities to report in detail from July 2024 across a range of domains including governance, strategy, risk management and metrics/targets.
  - Ahpra is currently not required to report under these changes, at least in the early stages. However, we should consider a proactive, voluntary approach as climate disclosures are likely to be expected by our key stakeholders.