



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health**

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Ms Fiona Armstrong
Executive Director
Climate and Health Alliance
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Dear Ms. Armstrong

Fiona

I refer to your letter of 2 October 2018 concerning the potential impact of climate change on human health. I regret the delay in responding.

The Liberal National Government recognises that climate change is an issue that all levels of government must address. At a Federal level, Australia's response to the long-term and acute effects of climate change are managed through its existing health systems, including a range of programs to address health conditions that are susceptible to environmental pressures. These national programs have the capacity to respond to short and long-term changes in disease prevalence, and are regularly reviewed to ensure they best meet the health needs of Australians.

My Department maintains a comprehensive surveillance system to monitor changes in incidence and trends in communicable diseases, including changes that may occur due to climate change. Where a health event significantly affects a state or territory, or affects multiple jurisdictions, a mechanism exists where the Australian Government offers national coordination and assistance and works with state and territory governments to develop a national response. State and territory jurisdictions take the lead on any direct impacts of environmental emergencies. Indirect impacts are dealt with through the relevant areas of my Department and through national consultative forums with the states and territories.

In addition, my Department consults regularly across Government agencies to ensure that Australia's capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change are appropriate and effective. I can advise that we are working with all Australian Government departments, through the Disaster and Climate Resilience Reference Group, to undertake a range of actions to understand how climate change will impact on our work, and our portfolio responsibilities. This work will inform future work on climate change and health.

You would be aware that internationally, the Australian Government is a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement which commits to limiting the global average temperature to well below 2°C.

Australia is also signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 which include climate action to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience and to ensuring good health and wellbeing for all of every age.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hunt