

Committee Secretary  
Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: [ec.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ec.sen@aph.gov.au)

## **Re: Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023**

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) would like to thank the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee for the opportunity to provide feedback on the **Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023**.

As Australia's peak professional body representing nursing, ACN supports, in principle, the intention of the Bill.

ACN is committed to ensuring all Australians can lead a healthy life. Many factors contribute to this aim, including tackling climate change to ensure our children and future generations are free from the harmful health impacts of greenhouse emissions. ACN acknowledges this generation has an urgent responsibility to our children and future children.

Our Emissions Reduction Policy Chapter, comprised of ACN members, has developed a series of policy documents relating to nurses' roles in championing climate change action. The intersection of climate and health underscores the urgent need for intergenerational climate equity, as the actions we take today to address climate change profoundly impact the wellbeing and prospects of future generations.<sup>1</sup> Research tells us that nurses, as one of the most trusted professions, are in prime position to be climate change champions and role models.<sup>2 3 4</sup>

Nurses have an ethical imperative to lead the development of equitable climate change and emissions reduction solutions with their patients, peers, community, and policymakers.<sup>5 6</sup> ACN promotes nurses as vital stakeholders in driving sustainable development across the healthcare

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization 2023. [Leaders spotlight the critical intersection between health and climate ahead of COP-28 first-ever Health Day](#). Departmental news. New York.

<sup>2</sup> Butterfield, P., Leffers, J., & Vásquez, MD. (2021). 'Nursing's pivotal role in global climate action.' The British Medical Journal, 373(1049). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n1049>

<sup>3</sup> Climate and Health Alliance (2021). Real, urgent and now: Communicating the health impacts of climate change. Climate and Health Alliance. Retrieved from: <https://www.caha.org.au/run>

<sup>4</sup> Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2021, '[Ethical leadership in emissions reduction – Position Statement](#)', ACN, Canberra

<sup>5</sup> International Council of Nurses. 2018. '[Nurses, climate change and health](#)'.

<sup>6</sup> Australian College of Nursing. 2020. '[ACN emissions reduction charter](#)'.

sector through ethical leadership.<sup>7</sup> Nurses can significantly impact both professionally and personally to reduce emissions and mitigate climate-related health effects.<sup>8</sup> In partnership with health services, ACN believes nurses must promote and prioritise the importance of climate change through policy development and advocating for green infrastructure.<sup>9</sup>

ACN notes the early gains in healthcare emissions reduction that have been achieved by introducing nurse-led sustainable practices.<sup>10</sup>

ACN understand that this proposed Climate Change Act 2022 amendment is intended to significantly manage greenhouse gas emissions in all industries to benefit young people's and future generations' wellbeing. As such, it aligns with the position of the ACN in relation to climate change.

Immediate climate action stands as the pathway to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation,<sup>11</sup> safeguarding the health and prosperity of all Australians,<sup>12</sup> both now and in the generations to come. Reducing greenhouse emissions fosters a more environmentally sustainable future for our children, reducing their need for healthcare services.

ACN has made the following comments and additions regarding the Bill amendments:

Item 4 Section 5, under Definitions, add a further item:

(d) physical health and psychological wellbeing

Item 5 at the end of Section 5:

Please note that the three paragraphs are numbered 2, 3, and 3. Please check and re-number appropriately if necessary

If you have further enquiries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Policy and Advocacy,

Yours sincerely,

Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward  
RN, MMgt, FACN, FCHSM, Wharton Fellow, MAICD.  
Chief Executive Officer

5 October 2023

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<sup>7</sup> Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2021, '[Ethical leadership in emissions reduction – Position Statement](#)', ACN, Canberra

<sup>8</sup> Australian College of Nursing 2021. '[Nursing Leadership in Emissions Reduction – Guiding Principles](#)', ACN, Canberra.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2021, '[Ethical leadership in emissions reduction – Position Statement](#)', ACN, Canberra

<sup>11</sup> Australian Government 2023. [Intergenerational Report 2023](#)

<sup>12</sup> Climate Council 2023. [Intergenerational Report: Tackling Climate the Number One Priority for Australia's Future](#). Media Release August 2023