Media Release

Attention: news, health, environment, climate change

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Nurses and midwives put climate change health impacts on the agenda

Strong support for tomorrow’s first ANF (Vic Branch) Health and Environmental Sustainability Seminar reflects a shift towards recognising the impact of the changing climate on health including increased emergency admissions during heatwaves and the injury and immediate and long-term psychological impact of recent natural disasters.

The seminar will look at the impact of the environment on health from two perspectives: the effect of climate change on public health and the shift towards environmentally sustainable practices in major Victorian health services.

Australian Nursing Federation (Victorian Branch) Assistant Secretary Pip Carew said the seminar was timely and addressed the concerns of Victorian nurses and midwives witnessing the extreme weather events in recent years and record making summers.

‘ANF members are concerned about the effect climate change is already having on the health of their patients and communities and they’ve asked us to contribute to this critical debate.’

The seminar will also showcase environmentally sustainable practices currently in place in Victorian health services, giving attendees the opportunity to take new ideas back to their workplaces.

Ms Carew said the ANF was excited by members’ positive response to the seminar which was fully booked within a few weeks of registrations opening.

‘Nurses and midwives understand the impact of our changing climate on health, including the physical and mental health of those people directly impacted by extreme weather events and exposure to chronic illnesses. Members in rural areas experience this first-hand and they want to be, and are, involved in the solutions,’ she said.

‘Increasingly Victorian hospitals and health services are acting to improve environmental sustainability, in areas such as recycling non-infectious plastic once-only use medical equipment, water usage and infrastructure, and contributing to environmental and health gains as well as financial savings.’

Seminar presentations will be delivered by an inspiring group of experts including The Climate Commission Chief Commissioner Professor Tim Flannery, Environmental Sustainability Victoria Commissioner Professor Kate Auty, representatives from Austin Health, Western Health and Albury Wodonga; leading health academic Professor Megan-Jane Johnstone, Deakin University School of Nursing and Midwifery; Climate and Health Alliance Convenor Fiona Armstrong and the personal and professional experiences of rural and regional nurses who lived through recent major weather events.

‘ANF is excited about the expertise of the speakers who have agreed to present because they offer our members the opportunity to expand their knowledge and take positive and practical ideas back to their workplaces,’ Ms Carew said.

Media inquiries: ANF (Vic Branch) Assistant Secretary Pip Carew 9275 9333 or ANF Media Officer Robyn Asbury on 0417 523 252

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