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North Yarra Community Health

Climate Change Action in Community Health

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Aim:

To determine the capacity of metropolitan community managed CHSs in Victoria to respond to climate change.

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Objectives:

- Determine the current understanding of climate change within metropolitan community managed CHSs;
- Document the extent to which CHSs currently implement policy & practices that respond to climate change; and
- Identify the barriers affecting the capacity of CHSs to respond to climate change.

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Methods:

- Telephone interviews in June /July 2007
- 12 CHSs participated - 52% of all possible CHSs, all metropolitan regions were represented
- CHC participation was voluntary
- All results have been de-identified

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Results:

Understanding of climate change

- Definition
- Causes
- Effects

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Results:

Definition

“significant change in climate over a period of time”

“the impact of human activity on the climate and environment...leading to changes in weather patterns, increasing average temperatures and impact on species”

“our natural environment is heating up and becoming more volatile”

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Results:

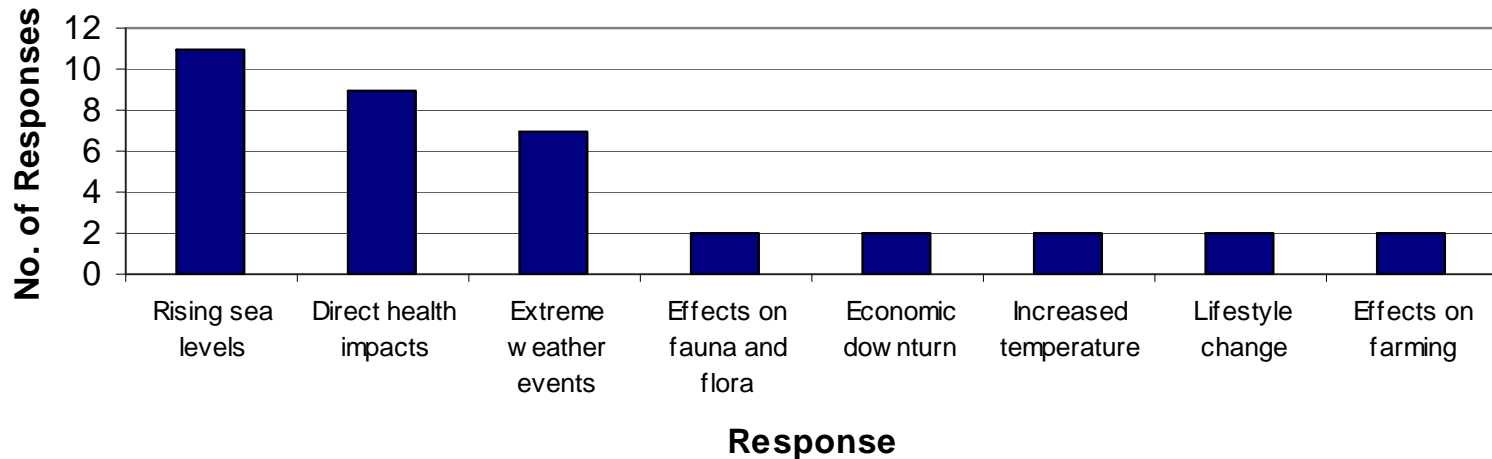
Causes

- Eleven of the twelve respondents correctly referred to increased fossil fuel use and/or its bi-products as a major causative factor
- Half also spoke of lifestyle factors, using descriptions such as living in a “disposable society” and the rise of “consumerism”

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Understanding of climate change

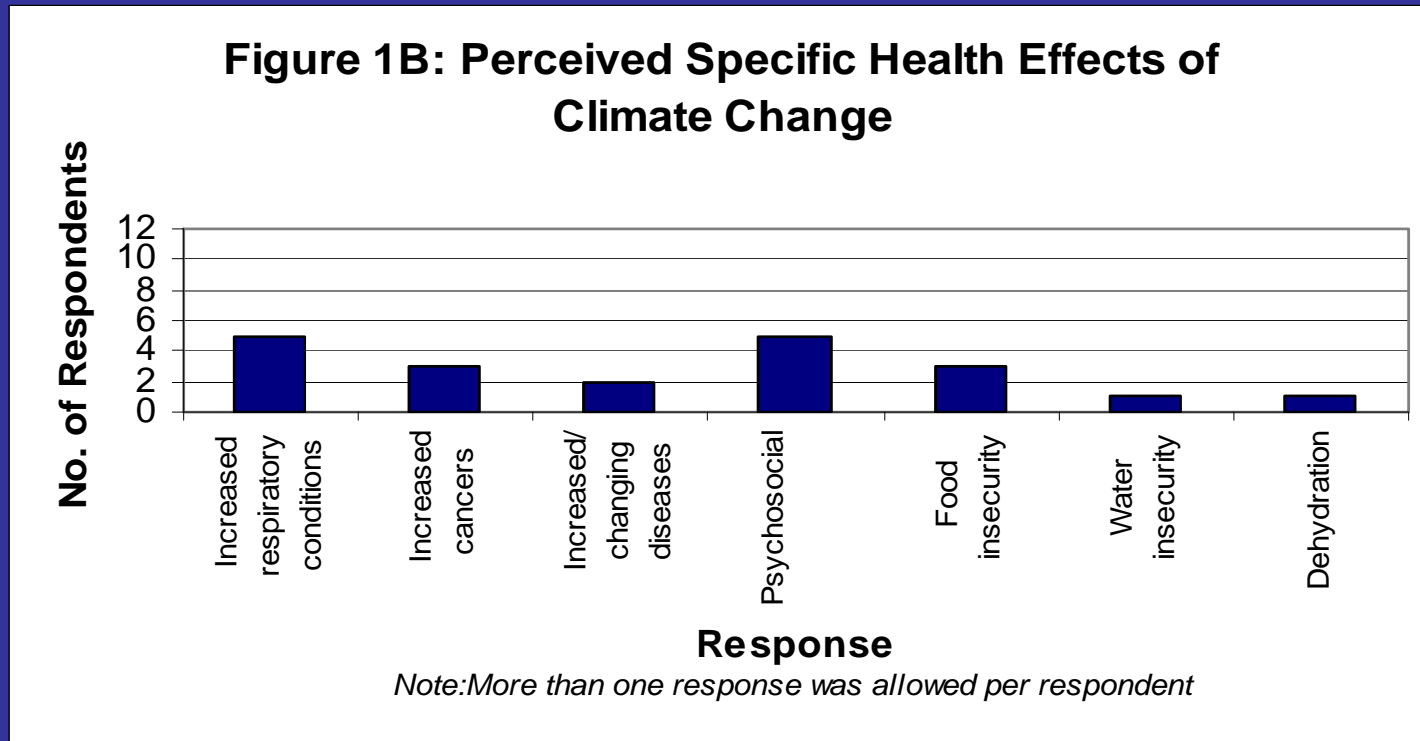
Figure 1: Perceived Effects of Climate Change



Note: More than one response was allowed per respondent

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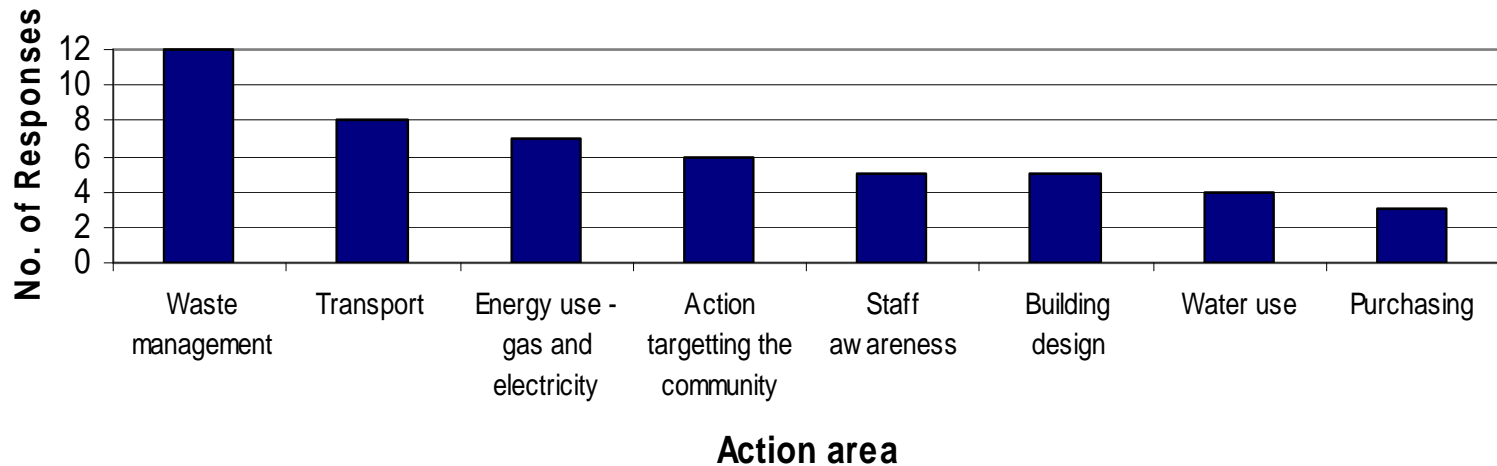
Understanding of climate change



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Current Policy & Practices

Figure 3: Climate Change Action - Policies and Practices



Note: More than one response was allowed per respondent

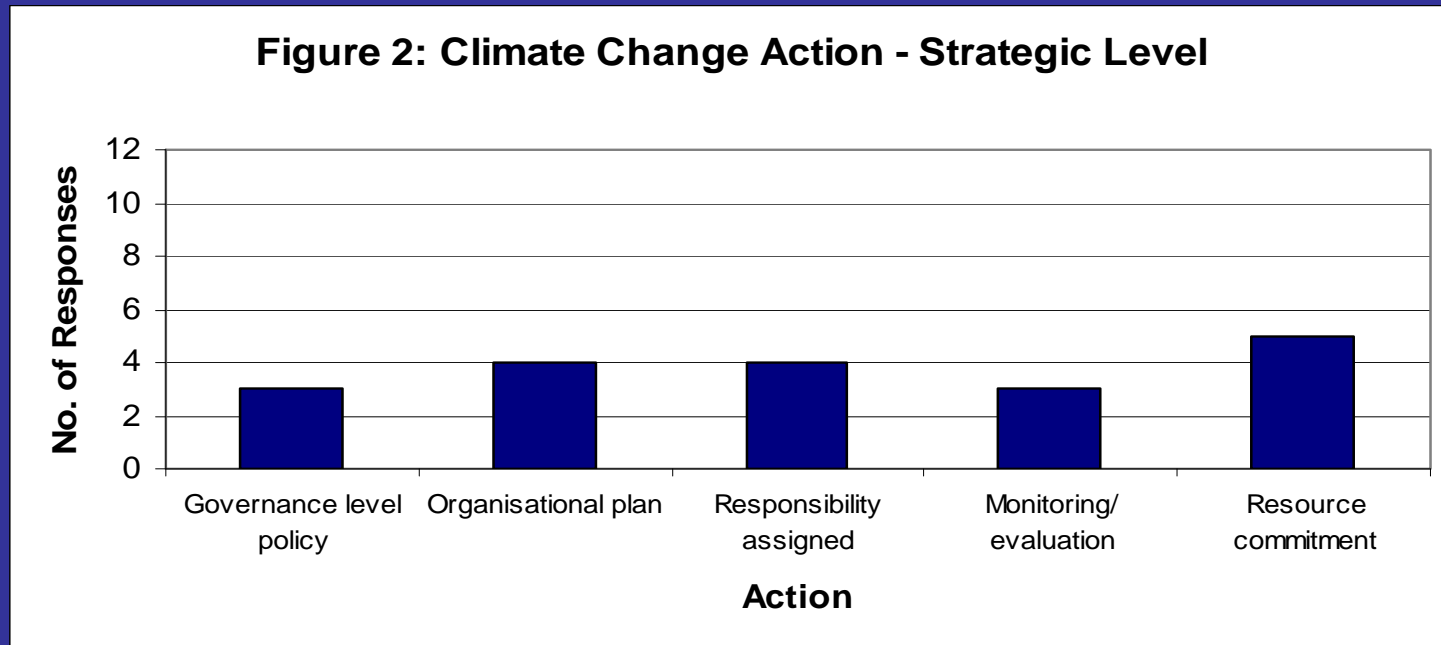
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Table 1: Relationship between CHSs with Environmental Working Groups and the No. of Climate Change Action Areas

	Participating CHSs											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Environmental working group	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
No. of Policy or Practice Action Areas	6	3	2	5	7	6	1	4	4	3	6	5

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Current Policy & Practices



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Potential Scope of Action

All participating CHSs believed that climate change is an important issue for CH.

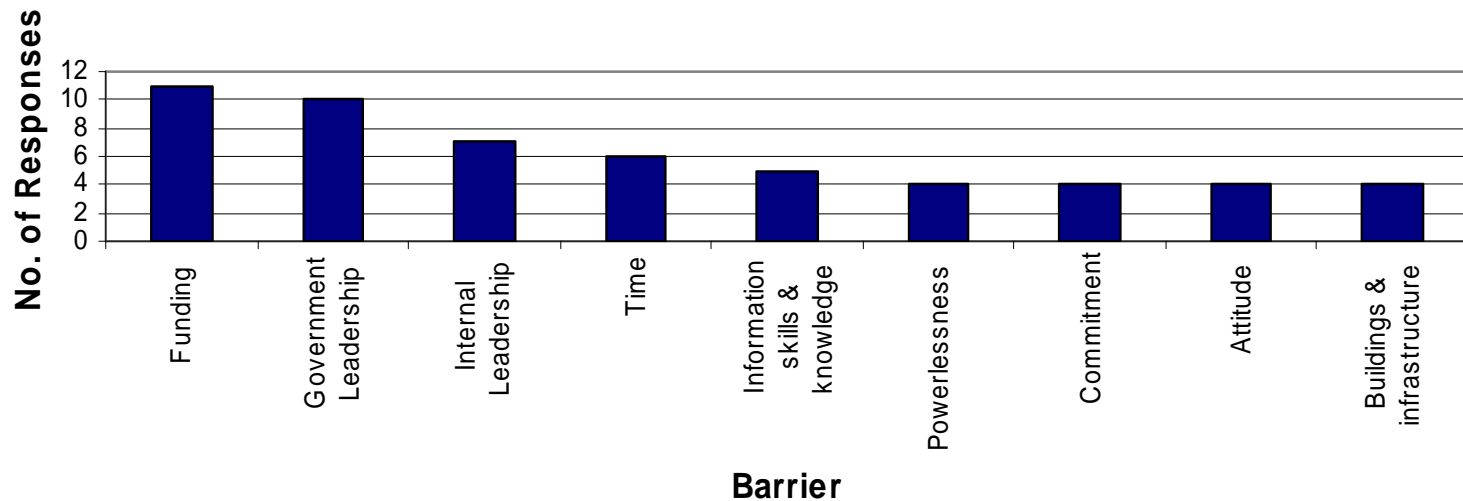
The commonly reported areas for action were to:

- Decrease their CHS's impact on the environment;
- Develop multifaceted health promotion responses including a robust advocacy strategy;
- Provide direct service responses to individuals; and
- Be involved in collective action.

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Barriers

Figure 4: Major Barriers Affecting the Capacity of CHSs



Note: More than one response was allowed per respondent

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Conclusions:

CHSs are an integral part of the Victorian health system. The CH sector with its strong focus on health promotion, its record of working in partnership with others and its close connection with vulnerable sections of the community has an important role to play in responding to climate change.

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Conclusions:

Capacity - enablers

- CHSs have displayed an interest, a willingness and an ability to respond to climate change
- Climate change is an important issue for the sector
- Identified areas for action in CH - decrease their CHS's impact on the environment; develop multifaceted health promotion responses including a robust advocacy strategy; provide direct service responses to individuals; and be involved in collective action.

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Conclusions

Capacity – barriers

- Specific funds for climate change action
- Government leadership, direction, support
- Internal leadership
- Level of skill, information, knowledge

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Recommendations:

- Environmental working groups established within CHSs;
- Increased funding for climate change responses in CH, including infrastructure improvements;
- State government environmental policies and strategies to be applied to CH;
- Identification of climate change as a Victorian health promotion priority by DHS;

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Recommendations:

- Greater level of information and resources to be made available to CH including:
 - information on the effects of climate change with particular focus on health impacts;
 - clear and concise, evidence based information on effective strategies for decreasing environmental impact within CHSs; and
 - a simple environmental self audit tool for use by CH.
- Development of an advocacy campaign

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Recommendations:

In order to progress the achievement of these outcomes a sector wide and/or cross sector working group should be established.

This work could potentially be coordinated by peak organisations such as VHA and/or VCOSS.

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“Our common future depends on our actions today, not tomorrow or some time in the future”

GEO - 4

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To view the full project report go to

www.nych.org.au/