

Welfare of healthcare workforce at stake in worsening climate crisis

16 March 2022

‘In the aftermath of the recent devastating flooding events in Queensland and New South Wales, we must continue to support our healthcare workforce who have already been stretched to their limits by the COVID pandemic,’ says AHHA Acting Chief Executive, Kylie Woolcock.

The recent flooding in Queensland and New South Wales has had an unimaginable effect on communities, but also the healthcare workforce that serves them.

‘We need to ensure that the mental and physical health needs of our healthcare workforce are continued to be looked after, particularly in the wake of yet another natural disaster,’ says Ms Woolcock.

‘Governments should be asking not only the important question of what the immediate needs of our healthcare workers are but also how we can best support their welfare during this extremely challenging time. Many healthcare workers are not only providing services to those in need but are themselves affected by the floods.

‘We also need to consider what is required to ensure we have a strong and resilient workforce. While the initial clean-up will be a long process in itself, the mental health effects of such an event can last for years, if not a lifetime.’

Flooding across both states has made it increasingly difficult for people to access medicines and treatments with the closure of pharmacies and evacuation of hospitals. This has placed a greater pressure on the services that are able to operate, with affected areas in desperate need of medical and other essential supplies.

‘Climate change and the devastating events it triggers, is taking a huge toll on Australia’s healthcare system. Action is needed now to mitigate its effects and lessen the pressure on an already strained system.

‘Governments need to provide stewardship and support to communities, particularly in regional areas, so that they can be better protected during future events. Ensuring that communities have access to the help they need, when they need it, will only become more important as the climate crisis is set to worsen.

‘This is a reminder of just how much our healthcare workforce is depended on by all Australians. Taking care of their welfare will be essential to ensure the continual delivery of health services during and after natural disasters like the recent floods.’

Online version of this [media release](#) may be found on the [AHHA website](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit healthcare.

Media enquiries: Kylie Woolcock, Acting Chief Executive, AHHA
0410 625 830