

Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of climate change on mental health, warns a new Issues Brief released today by the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's (AHHA) Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research.

The Brief, '[Promoting Mental Health in a Changing Climate: Children and Young People as a Priority Population Group](#),' sheds light on the knowledge and research gap concerning the mental health implications of climate change on this demographic, as well as the policy areas that demand immediate attention.

'There is currently a limited number of studies exploring the impact of climate change on children's and young people's mental health,' says AHHA Chief Executive, Kylie Woolcock.

'This, combined with the lack of knowledge and awareness on mental health impacts of climate change, has been a major policy barrier in developing effective early interventions aimed at children and young people.'

'We need policymakers to have better consultation with our young people, to help address a lack of inclusion in decision-making processes, especially when it comes to policies that directly affect them.'

'Australian mental health services are, at this point, not ready to deliver care for climate change related mental health issues. This Brief advocates that government should incentivise and adequately resource services to provide climate change specific support for children and young people to meet the growing need.'

The Brief also discusses the importance of providing safe spaces for children and young people to come together and discuss their concerns about climate change. There is also the issue of addressing climate change related misinformation on social media, which can amplify concerns. This could be done through creating resources for schools, as well as the development of national evidence-based guidelines on climate change misinformation.

'The impacts of climate change on the mental health of children and young people should also be considered in the development and implementation of the national strategy on health and climate change. We should recognise that early education is key, and look to include a focus on climate resilience, active citizenship, and media literacy in the national education curriculum.'

This Brief was co-authored by 2023 HEAL Scholar Hasini Gunasiri, who is a PhD candidate at the School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University. The HEAL scholar is supported by the Healthy Environment and Lives (HEAL) Network, whose aim is to bring measurable improvements to our health, the Australian health system, and the environment.

The online version of this [media release](#) and the Issues Brief '[Promoting mental health in a changing climate: children and young people as a priority population group](#)', can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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