



## Climate smart anaesthesia under the microscope

27 July 2018

Anaesthetists exploring the environmental impact of Australian healthcare are meeting in Melbourne this weekend for a keynote conference. “The Rising temperatures, the heat is on” meeting will feature presentations on a range of environment-themed issues in healthcare.

Speakers include anaesthetist and intensive care physician Dr Forbes McGain, the co-author of a 2018 paper that examined the carbon footprint of Australian healthcare. The study, published earlier this year in *The Lancet Planetary Health*, found that seven per cent of Australia’s total carbon emissions is caused by the health care sector with hospitals and pharmaceuticals the major contributors.

Another presenter, Dr Georgina Imberger, a specialist anaesthetist at Western Health in Melbourne who has practised in four countries, will tell the meeting how she no longer uses carbon emitting anaesthetic inhalant gases in her own clinical practice, choosing instead to use intravenous anaesthetics such as propofol.

Dr Imberger has practised in an anaesthetic department in Denmark where no anaesthetic gases were used, a decision “based partially on the environmental effects of these gases”.

“Our decisions, how we conduct our practice, can have effects on environmental outcomes as well as clinical ones,” Dr Imberger explained.

Dr McGain will discuss the development of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists’ draft statement on environmental sustainability in anaesthesia and pain medicine. The statement, a first for the college, will help inform anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians about the science behind sustainability and what they can do to reduce their carbon footprint at the hospital coalface.

Former federal Liberal Party leader, economist Dr John Hewson will present the keynote address “Economic threats of climate change” at the meeting which will be held at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins on Saturday July 28.