



Date submitted: 18 June 2024

Sent to: health.climatechange@sa.gov.au

ANZCA contact: policy@anzca.edu.au

Consultation: SA Health Climate Change Framework

Context

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA), including the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), is one of the largest specialist medical colleges in Australia. ANZCA is responsible for setting the highest standards of clinical practice in anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain medicine, and the training and examination of specialist anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians. As part of its commitment to contributing to a high-quality health system, ANZCA supports measures that improve environmental sustainability in healthcare and welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the SA Health Climate Change Framework. This feedback has been provided in consultation with anaesthetists that work in South Australia, including members of our Environmental Sustainability Network and the SA Green Theatres Network.

Aiming for a 65% reduction of carbon footprint by 2030 is an ambitious goal but may be necessary to mitigate further harm to the health of the community. We support the framework's four goals as it pertains to achieving a sustainable health system and the eight key priority action areas to reach those goals.

We wish to highlight some areas that would strengthen the framework, outlined below.

Leadership and Governance

- Establishment of a State Sustainable Healthcare Unit

The federal government has established a National Health, Sustainability and Climate Unit. Sustainable healthcare units exist in other states (NSW, WA, VIC, QLD) and provide the resources for a coordinated response to this complex and pressing issue. A unit must include administrative and IT support to allow data collection and analysis. Without the resources that a state-wide sustainable healthcare unit can provide, the progress towards the priority action areas will be slow and fragmented.

- Establishment of Environmental Sustainability Units within each Local Health Network

These units should operate under the state unit. Each unit should employ at least one sustainability officer. Other jurisdictions have models that can be replicated in SA. The NHS in the UK also provides good examples of governance and leadership.

Health Workforce

- Use onboarding and ongoing training to ensure staff are educated in, and can contribute to, local sustainability initiatives.
- Encourage staff and patient use of alternative transport methods by providing EV charging and adequate end-of-journey facilities for cyclists.

Infrastructure, Technologies and Products

- Incorporate lifecycle assessments into all procurement decisions, including pharmaceuticals. Prioritise circular economy opportunities and reusable items.
- Develop processes to dispose pharmaceuticals that minimise the environmental impact, particularly the ecotoxic potential from entering soil and waterways.
- Promote a low carbon footprint diet to staff and patients, prioritising local procurement of ingredients with a reduction in animal-derived products.

Energy use

- Audit energy use in healthcare facilities to identify opportunities for energy saving initiatives.
- Ensure all operating theatres have energy saving features including automated computer and air conditioning shutdown overnight.

Water, Sanitation and Waste

- Partner with waste companies, Green Industries SA, and align with the SA State Waste Strategy 2020-2025 to promote a circular economy.
- Partner with local people and organisations that can reuse items no longer required by SA Health (furniture, IT, biomedical). For example, donation of cardboard boxes to staff as moving house boxes, and sale of aseptic wipe plastic buckets to tradespeople (rather than recycling).
- Minimise clinical waste volumes through staff education, behaviour change and system improvement. Clinical waste is incinerated in a gas-powered furnace and has the highest carbon footprint of any waste stream.
- Reduce disposal of expired and unused stock through initiatives such as a medical market day, stock rotation between LHN's and donation.
- Monitor and mitigate pharmaceutical contamination of land and waterways.
- All food waste should enter a composting stream with consideration for on-site composting.

There are two priority areas that anaesthetists can support directly:

Nitrous Oxide

- Ensure all piped (reticulated) Nitrous Oxide systems are regularly tested for leaks and receive maintenance as recommended by the SA Nitrous Oxide Working Group.

- Ensure all end devices using nitrous oxide are regularly tested and maintained to reduce leaks.
- Reassess the requirement for piped nitrous oxide in all healthcare facilities, with conversion to cylinders at point of use where appropriate.
- Connect with, support and formalise SA Nitrous Oxide Working Group.
- No piped nitrous oxide in new healthcare facility builds.

Desflurane

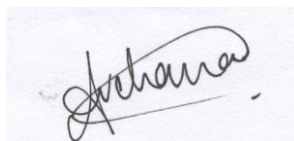
- Set a date for the removal of desflurane from the SA formulary.
- Partner with the private sector to phase out desflurane use.

The advocacy of anaesthetists has resulted in many gains within South Australia:

- Multiple LHN's have removed desflurane use from formulary.
- Two LHN's have pressure tested their reticulated nitrous oxide pipelines and identified leaks, resulting in increased monitoring and testing. One LHN has decommissioned their nitrous pipeline. This must be a priority action area for all LHN's.
- ANZCA provides an environmental sustainability audit tool to assist departments in promoting environmental sustainability.
- Switching from single use to reusable anaesthetic medication trays.
- Improving waste streaming and waste reduction in the operating theatres, the most carbon intense area of any hospital.
- Advocacy into private hospitals, resulting in the removal of ready access to desflurane in a number of SA private hospitals.
- Trials of reusable PPE gowns.
- Advocacy at a national level to introduce policy levers via the National Climate and Health Strategy to reduce anaesthesia-related emissions.
- ANZCA supports our trainees and fellows to conduct research and audits in sustainability through a trainee-led sustainability network, the environmental sustainability network and research grants.

ANZCA thanks SA Health for the opportunity to provide feedback to the SA Health Climate Change Framework. Our fellows, trainees and SIMGs in South Australia look forward to working with you in achieving the goals set out in this framework.

Yours sincerely,



Chair, Environmental Sustainability Network
ANZCA