

FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY 2021

2021-22 Pre-Budget Submission to the Department of Treasury

Protecting Australians' health requires serious investments in climate and nature

Key 2021 - 22 Budget Recommendations

- **\$400 million over 4 years to power Australia's hospitals with clean energy**
- **\$1.4 billion over 4 years to rejuvenate nature in Australia's urban environment**

From devastating bushfires to a viral pandemic and even destructive floods - the events of 2020 uprooted millions of Australians' lives and rocked our economy.

Noxious smoke from last year's bushfires permeated cities across the country. The smoke alone contributed to an estimated 417 deaths, 1305 emergency presentations for asthma and some 3,151 hospitalisations for cardiovascular and respiratory problems.¹ Although it is yet to be quantified, medical professionals have identified that these bushfires have had serious implications for mental wellbeing, including ongoing trauma, social isolation and anxiety.² COVID-19 has likewise had serious health implications with a total of 28,780 cases in Australia as at 27 January 2020.³ Not only has the pandemic heightened the risk of physical illness, but it has also contributed to increased job losses & unemployment,⁴ anxiety, panic, depression and stress for numerous individuals and population groups.⁵

These catastrophic events have demonstrated that a prosperous, resilient economy is predicated upon a healthy nation free from disease.

Our nature is our lifeline

Underpinning Australians' health is our natural world. When our air, rivers, reefs, forests and land are clean and healthy, our climate is stable and our wildlife flourishes, our physical, mental and social wellbeing thrives.

Yet our wellbeing is being threatened by environmental degradation and a continued reliance on and expansion of toxic fossil fuels. Land clearing and the changing climate have been linked to the emergence of infectious diseases

¹ Borchers Arriagada, N., Palmer, A. J., Bowman D. MJS., Morgan, G. G., Jalaludin, B. B., & Johnston F. H 2020. 'Unprecedented smoke-related health burden associated with the 2019-20 bushfires in eastern Australia', *The Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 213, no. 6.

² Zhang, Y., Beggs, P. J., McGushin, A., Bambrick, H., Trueck, S., Hanigan, I. C., Morgan, G. G., Berry, H. L., Linnenluecke, M. K., Johnston, F. H., Capon, A. G., & Watts, N 2020 'The 2020 special report of the MJA-Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: Lessons learnt from Australia's "Black Summer"', *The Medical Journal of Australia*, vol 213, no. 11.

³ Australian Government - Department of Health, Total COVID-19 cases and deaths by states and territories, viewed 27 January 2021, <<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/total-covid-19-cases-and-deaths-by-states-and-territories>>.

⁴ Gilfillan, G 2020. COVID-19: Labor market impacts on key demographics groups, industries and regions, viewed 26 January 2021, <https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp2021/COVID-19-Stat_Snapshot#_Toc54358697>.

⁵ Black Dog Institute 2020. Mental health ramifications of COVID-19: The Australian context, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/20200319_covid19-evidence-and-reccomendations.pdf>.

like COVID-19.⁶ Burning fossil fuels - including coal, gas, and oil - is the biggest driver of rising temperatures, which in turn inflames the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.⁷

Climate and nature damage is clearly taking its toll on Australians' health.

Backing fossil fuels is betting against our health

The funding decisions the Federal Government makes for 2021-22 will have a lasting impact on our nation's vitality. If public money continues to be allocated to destructive gas projects and ongoing Federal support props up the dying coal industry, a significant portion of Australians will experience increased health risks.

Fossil fuels create direct health risks

Extracting and burning fossil fuels directly impacts the health of workers and residents living in proximity to projects.

Initial health studies of gas have found higher rates of a range of health problems in residents near gas mining activities. These include: cancers; hospitalisations for heart, neurological, respiratory and immune system diseases; fatigue; asthma; higher risk births; and birth defects.⁸ Even with controls to limit exposure, Queensland communities as far as 200km from intense gas field industrialisation were exposed to high levels of pollutants from coal seam gas emissions. Within those communities there were significant increases of acute circulatory and respiratory admissions and cardiopulmonary hospitalisations.⁹

Adverse health impacts are likewise a reality for people present throughout the life cycle of thermal coal. Up to 95% of the external costs of electricity generation from coal relate to negative health implications.¹⁰ Lung cancer, premature death, asthma attacks, bronchitis and heart disease are just some of coal's health risks.¹¹ Those living within 50kms of a coal fired power station have a three to four times higher risk of premature death than those who don't.¹² These risks are present even in Australian regions located considerable distances from coal fired power stations. In fact, in Australia, pollutants from burning coal are responsible for approximately 800 premature deaths annually.¹³ Based on Australia's current fuel generation mix, burning coal is estimated to cost Australia \$1.8 billion in health impacts.¹⁴

⁶ McFarlane, R. A., Sleigh, A. C., McMichael, A. J 2013. 'Land-use change and emerging infectious disease on an island continent', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 10, no. 7; Confalonieri, U. E. C., Menezes, J. A., Margonari de Souza, C 2015. 'Climate change and adaptation of the health sector: The case of infectious diseases', *Virulence*, vol. 6, no. 6.

⁷ Binskin, M., Bennett, A., & Macintosh, A 2020, Royal commission into national natural disaster arrangements report, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/royal-commission-national-natural-disaster-arrangements-report>>.

⁸ Doctors for the Environment Australia 2019, The implications for human health and wellbeing of expanding gas mining in Australia: Onshore oil and gas policy background paper, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2019-03/apo-nid208281.pdf>>.

⁹ McCarron, G 2018. 'Air pollution and human health hazards: A compilation of air toxins acknowledged by the gas industry in Queensland's Darling Downs', *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, vol. 75, no. 1.

¹⁰ Burt, E., Orris, P., Buchanan, S 2013. *Scientific evidence of health effects from coal use in energy generation*, University of Illinois, Chicago, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://noharm-uscanada.org/sites/default/files/documents-files/828/Health_Effects_Coal_Use_Energy_Generation.pdf>.

¹¹ The Climate Council 2019, Climate Council briefing paper: Health effects of coal, viewed 11 January 2021,

<<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/uploads/d2b6cbbff522e700c99f3c4e3c0aee0.pdf>>; Farrow A., Anhauser, A., Myllyvirta, L 2020. Lethal power: How burning coal is killing people in Australia, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.greenpeace.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/GPAP-Lethal-Power-full-report.pdf>>.

¹² Epstein P. R., & Reinhart, N 2010, Lifecycle analysis of the health impacts of coal, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.kftc.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/dr_epstein_testimony.pdf>.

¹³ Farrow A., Anhauser, A., Myllyvirta, L 2020. Lethal power: How burning coal is killing people in Australia, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.greenpeace.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/GPAP-Lethal-Power-full-report.pdf>>.

¹⁴ Biegler, T 2009. *The hidden costs of electricity: Externalities of power generation in Australia*, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, Victoria, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.atse.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/the-hidden-costs-of-electricity.pdf>>; Australian Government - Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Australia's emissions projections 2020, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/australias-emissions-projections-2020.pdf>>. My

Fossil fuels drive health risks through climate change

Burning fossil fuels is the single biggest cause of climate change, which in turn risks the health of the nation. The global warming potential of fossil fuels is not limited to coal, with its high carbon emission intensity. Gas is also a highly polluting energy source. Throughout the exploration, extraction, processing and consumption of gas, significant quantities of methane are emitted. In the short term, methane is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Methane released into the atmosphere contributes significantly to rising temperatures.¹⁵ Yet rather than phasing out coal and gas, the global community is planning to produce 120% more fossil fuels by 2030 than is consistent with a stable and healthy climate.¹⁶

Without action to mitigate climate change and national leadership to transition to clean energy, Australia will experience longer and more extreme heatwaves more frequently.¹⁷ A silent killer, heatwaves have already caused more Australian mortalities than any other natural event over the past 100 years.¹⁸ In Victoria during 2009, for example, a single heatwave that was 12-15 degrees higher than average, saw a 62% increase in deaths from direct heat related illness and co-morbidities.¹⁹

By 2050, increased heatwaves could cause hundreds of additional deaths annually as Australia's population ages.²⁰ Increased cardiac arrests and heart attacks are also predicted.²¹ Other health impacts expected to rise include dehydration, heat stress, heat stroke, and the exacerbation of chronic heart, lung and kidney disease.²²

For 7.2 million people in Melbourne and Brisbane, the risk of dying from a heatwave will increase threefold between 2013 and 2080. That same risk will increase fivefold for 5.2 million people living in Sydney based on current emissions trajectories.²³

Should the Federal Government introduce a budget that supports further lethal fossil fuel industries, it will exacerbate and accelerate damaging impacts on the health of the environment and Australians.

The costs of a gas and coal focused budget are too high

No comprehensive analysis has yet been carried out to determine exactly what resources Australia's healthcare system would need if Australia and other OECD countries fail to curb their reliance on fossil fuels. The Federal Government should commission this analysis to properly assess these risks.

¹⁵ Myhre, G., Shindell, D., Breon, F. M., Collins, W., Fuglestedt, J., Huang, J., Koch, D., Lamarque, J. F., Lee, D., Mendoza, B., Nakajima, T., Robock, A., Stephens, G., Takemure, T., & Zhang, H 2013. Anthropogenic and natural radiative forcing. In: *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group 1 to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

¹⁶ SEI, IISD, ODI, E3G, & UNEP 2020. The production gap report: 2020 special report, viewed 11 January 2021, <<http://productiongap.org/2020report/>>.

¹⁷ Doctors for the Environment 2020. Heatwaves and health in Australia: Fact sheet, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DEA-Fact-Sheet_HeatwavesWEB.pdf>.

¹⁸ Steffen W., Hughes, L., & Perkins, S 2014. Heatwaves: Hotter, longer, more often, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/uploads/9901f6614a2cac7b2b888f55b4dff9cc.pdf>>.

¹⁹ Climate and Health Alliance 2012. Health sector-ill prepared for climate change, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.caha.org.au/health_sector_ill_prepared_for_climate_change_lsuzmkewglvg7ji_let0jg>.

²⁰ Australian Medical Association 2015. Climate change and human health, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://ama.com.au/position-statement/ama-position-statement-climate-change-and-human-health-2004-revised-2015>>.

²¹ Lossemore, M., & Chand, A. M 2017. 'Hospitals feel the heat too from extreme weather and its health impacts', *The Conversation*, 11 January 2017.

²² Doctors for the Environment 2020. Heatwaves and health in Australia: Fact sheet, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.dea.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/DEA-Fact-Sheet_HeatwavesWEB.pdf>.

²³ The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2019, Climate change and human health: Position statement, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Position%20statements/Climate-change-and-human-health.pdf>>.

With a health care system designed for the climatic conditions of the 20th century,²⁴ it is expected that significant expenditure will be required since it has already experienced high levels of disruption and burden in response to escalating climate events. For example, following the Victorian heatwave in 2014, presentations to the public emergency department and callouts of emergency ambulances increased by 7% and 25% respectively. The nurse-on-call telephone services and national home doctors' services each respectively had a threefold increase in consultations during that week.²⁵

“A changing climate threatens to undermine the past 50 years of gains in public health, disrupting the wellbeing of communities and the foundations on which health systems are built.” - Lancet Countdown²⁶

Expenditure required to adapt the health care system may include:²⁷

1. mechanisms to reduce disruptions to ambulances and other emergency services;
2. additional training and provision of sufficiently trained medical professionals to respond to climate induced health effects;
3. expended emergency preparedness capabilities;
4. monitoring resources to track the ongoing impact of climate on the national health system, its vulnerabilities, and response capacity;
5. infrastructure that minimises damage caused by extreme weather events and handles increased capacity to protect and provide ongoing essential services to people and communities.

Without a national strategy to phase out fossil fuels and address climate and health,²⁸ Australian individuals will be burdened with the future costs of adapting the public healthcare system, including infrastructure and resources, to meet uncontrollable and inescapable climate damage.

A healthy budget must invest in climate and nature

With this budget, the Federal Government should instead choose to mitigate growing health concerns by prioritising investments that protect and restore nature, and set Australia on course to achieving net zero emissions well before 2050. Australia should aim to be relying on 100% clean energy by 2030.

Australians are looking for leadership to address these environmental and health goals, with 81% of the public indicating support for the Federal Government to implement a net zero emissions target by mid-century and 75% supporting an earlier target of 2030.²⁹

²⁴ Hughes, L., Hanna, E., Fenwick, J 2016. The silent killer: Climate change and the health impacts of extreme heat, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/187127/2/01_Hughes_The_silent_killer%253A_Climate_2016.pdf>.

²⁵ Department of Health & Human Services 2014, The health impacts of the January 2014 heatwave in Victoria, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/health-impacts-january-2014-heatwave>>.

²⁶ Watts, N et. al. 2021. The 2020 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: responding to converging crises, *The Lancet*, vol 397.

²⁷ Hughes, L., Hanna, E., Fenwick, J 2016. The silent killer: Climate change and the health impacts of extreme heat, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/187127/2/01_Hughes_The_silent_killer%253A_Climate_2016.pdf>; World Health Organisation 2015. Strengthening health resilience to climate change: Technical briefing, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/briefing-health-resilience/en/>>.

²⁸ Horsburg, N., Armstrong, F., & Mulvenna, V 2017. Framework for a national strategy on climate, health and well-being for Australia, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/caha/pages/40/attachments/original/1498008324/CAHA_Framework_for_a_National_Strategy_on_Climate_Health_and_Well-being_v05_SCREEN_%28Full_Report%29.pdf?1498008324>.

²⁹ Murphy, K 2020. 'Three-quarters of Australians back target of net zero by 2030, Guardian Essential poll shows', *The Guardian*, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/01/three-quarters-of-australians-back-target-of-net-zero-by-2030-guardian-essential-poll-shows>>.

With this budget, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) is calling on the Federal Government to invest in the health and wellbeing of all Australians and our natural environment and end investments in fossil fuels. To create co-benefits for nature and our healthcare system, we submit that the Federal Government should, at a minimum:

1. fund the states and territories to power public hospitals with clean energy, like solar and battery storage; and
2. invest in national programs and provide funding to state and local government programs that “green” urban spaces by enabling the establishment of new parks and the planting of new vegetation across dense local government areas.

ACF further supports and endorses the recommendations made by the Climate Council of Australia Pty Ltd (the **Climate Council**) in their 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submissions for the Federal Government to:

3. invest in 12 clean policy opportunities to create 76,000 new jobs for Australians, as recommended in the Climate Council’s Clean Jobs Plan;³⁰
4. scale-up Australia’s contribution of international climate finance in government funding and leveraged private finance; and
5. rule out any Australian development assistance, trade promotion, foreign investment or export credit for fossil fuels.

³⁰ The Climate Council & AlphaBeta 2020. The clean jobs plan, viewed 27 January 2021, <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Climate-Council_AlphaBeta-Clean-Jobs-Plan-200720.pdf>.

A damaged climate impacts our frontline health workers – those we need to keep us safe are suffering in hospitals and other emergency settings.

Jacqui Dunn is a nurse on Victoria's surf coast.



“I work in emergency in a regional hospital. I see the impacts of climate damage on our health.”

I've worked in emergency for over 20 years in Australia and different countries. Now, I work in a large rural hospital where summer is our peak period.

On really hot days and in heatwaves, I see more people having heart attacks and strokes. I see more people coming in with asthma and other respiratory conditions from fires or air pollution. As far as climate change goes, we're definitely seeing an impact on the types of patients we see on different climate days.

I get a bit anxious about going to work and being able to provide quality care for people because we are just so overwhelmed. [It has a] huge impact on the services we can provide to our community.

In the long-term this [overwhelm] causes burnout. I've seen a lot of people leave from stress because it's too busy and chaotic. And this is increased on extreme heat days when people are a lot sicker than normal.

1. Power Australia's hospitals with clean energy

Australian health professionals, business, energy generators and unions overwhelmingly accept that a planned transition of Australia's energy sector from fossil fuels to clean energy, like wind and solar, is needed. This transition requires leadership and financial support from the Federal Government.

As a preliminary step towards a national transition, the Federal Government should make a financial commitment in the 2021-22 Budget to support each state to power their public hospitals with 100% clean energy and battery storage.

States, territories, and local communities are increasingly seeking opportunities to support the deployment of solar panels on hospitals. The Yackandandah Health Service, for example, spent \$65,000 raised through a community initiative to connect a 90kW solar panel system and install energy efficient lights. Overall, the Yackandandah Health Service will save \$1 million over 25 years and reduce its emissions by 115 tonnes annually.³¹ However, so far the limited funding opportunities have only supported a small portion of the 692 public hospitals across Australia.³²

Powering hospitals with clean energy and battery storage creates co-benefits for health and the environment as it mitigates the climate harm emitted by the health industry. For example, if half of the Gladstone Hospital's roof was fitted with solar panels, that hospital alone would avoid 11.9 kilotonnes of CO₂-eq emissions in 20 years. This would be the equivalent of planting 199,155 trees.³³

The Federal Government should lead the deployment of clean energy through specific purpose payments to the states and territories. The funding should enable the states and territories to analyse the clean energy capacity gaps in hospitals across their states, including regional and rural hospitals. It should further provide the states and territories with funding to install solar panels and battery storage where gaps exist.

Investment (\$million) - forward estimates

ITEM	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<i>Funding to the states and territories to deploy clean energy on public hospitals</i>	100	100	100	100

³¹ Totally Renewable Yackandandah. Perpetual Energy Fund, viewed 26 January 2021, <<https://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/resources/perpetual-energy-fund/>>; Repower Australia. Three small towns go all in on solar: Lismore, Lennox Head, and Yackandandah go all in solar, viewed 27 January 2021, <<https://www.repoweraustralia.org.au/story-2>>.

³² Australian Government - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. Access to hospitals, viewed 18 January 2021, <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/myhospitals/themes/hospital-access>>.

³³ Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian PV Institute, & UNSW Sydney 2020. Sunny side up: How schools, prisons and libraries can power Queensland's renewable future, viewed 18 January 2021, <https://d3n8a8pro7vnm.cloudfront.net/auscon/pages/18049/attachments/original/1602713819/Old_Solar_Public_Buildings.pdf?1602713819>.

Case Study

Deploying solar panels on Gladstone Hospital



Table 1: PV Metrics and benefits from deploying solar panels on Gladstone Hospital

Total roof area (m ²)	4,940
Array area (m ²)	2,484
Array area/roof area (%)	50
PV capacity (kW peak)	518
Estimated energy production (MWh/year)	781
Estimated avoided emissions (kilotonnes CO ₂ -e/20 years)	11.9
Equivalent QLD households	173
Equivalent avoided coal use (kilotonnes/20 years)	5.3
Equivalent trees planted (20 years)	199,155

Figure 1: Gladstone Hospital, now (inset) and with potential 518 kW PV array

This case study used the building footprint prior to the opening of the new Gladstone hospital emergency department.

2. Grow greener spaces to improve physical and mental health

The Federal Government should further its funding of national programs, like the Greener Spaces Better Places initiative, that are designed to expand and improve urban green spaces across the country.

Increasing natural green spaces has the potential to improve physical health and mental health. Physical health benefits include fostering physical activity and lower levels of obesity, contributing to the functioning of immune systems, reducing cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and lowering stress.³⁴ Studies suggest people who live a kilometre or more away from a green space are 1.42 times more likely to experience stress than people who live less than 300 metres away from green space.

As temperatures rise, creating new and improving existing green spaces can mitigate heat-related illnesses. Without access to green spaces, individuals living in dense urban areas with few trees will be more susceptible to the health impacts of heat. These “urban heat islands” will intensify and increase the impacts of heatwaves attributable to climate change.³⁵ Yet by increasing urban green spaces, heat-related deaths can be reduced by up to 99%.³⁶

From a mental health perspective, exposure to green spaces can relieve anxiety and depression, chronic stress, fatigue and hyperactivity.³⁷ These benefits are increased where the intensity of vegetation is moderate, attracting a diversity of wildlife.³⁸

Funding should be provided to create new parks, and plant new vegetation across local government areas, taking into account the current canopy, the heat vulnerability of the area, the population demographic, the need for proximity to green spaces to be maintained, and the challenges to grow and maintain green areas as temperatures rise.

Investment (\$million) - forward estimates

ITEM	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<i>Funding for improving green spaces</i>	300	300	400	400

³⁴ Townsend, M., Henderson-Wilson, C., Warner, E., & Weiss, L 2015. Health parks, health people: The state of the evidence 2015, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.deakin.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1031641/HPHP_state-of-the-evidence_2015.pdf>.

³⁵ Chaiechi, T., & Tavares S 2019. ‘Urban growth, heat islands, humidity, climate change: The costs multiply in tropical cities’, *The Conversation*, viewed 11 January 2021, <<https://theconversation.com/urban-growth-heat-islands-humidity-climate-change-the-costs-multiply-in-tropical-cities-120825>>; Campbell, S., Remenyi, T. A., White, C. J., & Johnston, F. H 2018. ‘The heatwaves and health impact research: A global review’, *Health & Place*, vol. 53.

³⁶ Stone Jr, B., Vargo, J., Liu, P., Habeeb, D., DeLucia A., Trail M., & Russell, A 2014. ‘Avoided heat-related mortality through climate adaptation strategies in three US cities’, *PLOS One*, vol. 9, no. 6.

³⁷ Townsend, M., Henderson-Wilson, C., Warner, E., & Weiss, L 2015. Health parks, health people: The state of the evidence 2015, viewed 11 January 2021, <https://www.deakin.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1031641/HPHP_state-of-the-evidence_2015.pdf>.

³⁸ Shanahan, D. F., Bush, R., Gaston, K. J., Lin, B. B., Dean, J., Barber, E., & Fuller, R. A 2016. ‘Health benefits from nature experience depend on dose’, *Scientific Reports*, vol. 6.

Being close to natural environments is vital for the health of urban residents.

Shaye Marshell is a resident in one of Sydney's busy suburbs.



Rainbow Lorikeets. Photo: Annette Ruzicka/MAPgroup

“When I was seriously ill and wondering why I was alive, being in the fresh air with the native birds made a huge difference to me physically, emotionally and mentally.”

I'm very lucky to live in an apartment on a hill with a view of the ocean. Even though I'm surrounded by suburbs, there is some incredible bushland and national parks nearby.

I have a serious health condition that stopped me from working and meant I was bed bound for numerous years. Having nature at my fingertips is far more healing for me than being boxed in brick walls under artificial lights.

Going outside to feel the gentle breeze and sunlight makes me feel so much happier.

Even during lockdown over the Christmas break when I couldn't get outside, I was still able to enjoy the benefits of nature. Being surrounded by native trees meant that the currawongs, magpies and lorikeets would come to my veranda. There was something physically restorative about it - quite literally a breath of fresh air.

As a society, we've become so disconnected from nature. But we are a part of it. We really need to find how we fit into it, especially for our own health.

Summary

PRIORITY	INITIATIVE	2021-22 (\$M)	2022-23 (\$M)	2023-24 (\$M)	2024-25 (\$M)
1. Clean energy for public hospitals	Funding to the states and territories to deploy clean energy on public hospitals	100	100	100	100
2. Green spaces	Funding for creating new and improving current green spaces	300	300	400	400
Total	Expenditure	400	400	500	500