

Seminar: How Climate Disasters Ripple Through Health Systems

Speaker Bios



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Host

Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite | Founding Director, Australian Institute of Health Innovation | Macquarie University



Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite is an internationally recognised health services and systems researcher with academic appointments across multiple universities worldwide. He is Founding Director of the Australian Institute of Health Innovation at Macquarie University and Director of the Centre for Healthcare Resilience and Implementation Science.

Braithwaite's work focuses on improving healthcare systems through research into patient safety, leadership, organisational culture, governance, and large-scale health service reform. He is particularly known for bringing management and organisational science into clinical and health service contexts, helping to shape understanding of how healthcare organisations function and change over time. Braithwaite's research explores issues such as clinician leadership, inter-professional teamwork, the structure and culture of acute care settings, and system-wide approaches to improvement. He has also contributed significantly to advancing multi-method research approaches in health services research and to reframing healthcare reform as a cultural and organisational challenge rather than purely structural change.

Braithwaite has published extensively in leading international journals and has contributed widely to policy, academic debate, and global health systems reform discussions. With colleagues he established the Observatory on the Future of Healthcare, creating models for sustainability. He has a passion for future proofing healthcare in the era of global warming.

Keynote Speaker

Greg Mullins AO AFSM | Founder, Emergency Leaders for Climate Action | Councillor, Climate Council of Australia



Greg Mullins has been a firefighter since 1972. He served as Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW for nearly 14 years and is now a volunteer firefighter. In 2018, he was appointed as a Councillor on the Climate Council of Australia, and in 2019 formed Emergency Leaders for Climate Action. He currently serves on several advisory bodies including the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Advisory Council, the Nature Conservation Council Bushfire Advisory Committee, the NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee, and as Chair of the NSW Ambulance Service Advisory Board.

During his career, Mullins studied bushfire control in France, Spain, Canada and the USA, completed the Executive Fire Officer Program at the US National Fire Academy, a Master of Management, served as President and Board Chair of the peak council for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand, as Australian Director on the International Fire Chiefs Association of Asia, was Deputy Chair and acting Chair of the NSW State Emergency Management Committee, represented Australia internationally, and coordinated many major emergency and disaster operations, including overseas deployments.

He is the author of *Firestorm: Battling super-charged natural disasters*, explaining from a firefighter's perspective how climate change is worsening the impact of bushfires, and is the author and co-author of several books and papers on climate change and natural disasters.

Panel

Professor Paul Beggs | Professor, School of Natural Sciences | Macquarie University

Professor Paul Beggs is an environmental health scientist and Professor in the School of Natural Sciences at Macquarie University. His work sits directly at the intersection of climate science, public health and policy, with a long-standing focus on how climate change affects human health, particularly through allergens, allergic disease, heat, air quality and other environmental exposures. He is Director of the Lancet Countdown Oceania Regional Centre, which tracks and communicates the health impacts of climate change across Australia and the wider region. Through this work, he helps place health at the centre of climate decision making and provides evidence to support adaptation, mitigation and system preparedness. Beggs has contributed to national and regional assessments of climate-related health risks and the health co-benefits of climate action, and is recognised internationally for his scholarship on climate, environment and health. His perspective brings rigorous environmental health evidence to the question of how climate disasters ripple through communities, services and health systems, and how those systems can respond more intelligently and sustainably. He also brings a strong focus on communicating scientific evidence to policy makers and the public.

Dr Matt Knox | Deputy Director, Emergency Department and Clinical Lead for Sustainability | Wyong Hospital, NSW

Dr Matt Knox is Deputy Director of the Emergency Department at Wyong Hospital and Clinical Lead for Sustainability. He is Chair of the Sustainable Emergency Medicine Climate Advocacy Network at the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine. Knox is an emergency physician working at the frontline of acute care, he focuses on translating climate and sustainability concerns into practical changes in everyday clinical work. His leadership has included hospital-based initiatives to reduce unnecessary waste, improve hand hygiene and rethink the routine use of disposable products in emergency care, including the "Gloves Off" work at Wyong ED and related sustainable practice projects. Knox's contribution is distinctive because it connects the immediate pressures of emergency medicine with the longer-term health risks of climate change and the environmental footprint of healthcare itself. He advocates for clinicians to see sustainability as part of quality, safety and ethical care. In this panel, he brings the perspective of a practising clinician implementing change in a busy hospital setting, showing how health services can reduce harm while preparing for climate-driven demand, disruption and surges in emergency presentations. His work illustrates how practical, local improvements can become a model for broader health system sustainability.

Professor Henry Cutler | Founding Director, Macquarie University Centre for the Health Economy | Macquarie University

[Professor Henry Cutler](#) is Founding Director of the [Macquarie University Centre for the Health Economy](#) at the Australian Institute of Health Innovation and a Research Associate at the Economics of Population Health Research Centre, University of Oxford, UK. A health economist, he examines how health systems allocate resources, measure value, fund services and make decisions under constraint. His work is central to the sustainability agenda because climate change will increase pressure on health systems while requiring investment in adaptation, prevention, resilience and lower-carbon models of care. Cutler brings an economic and policy lens to questions of health system transformation: what should be funded, what produces value, and how scarce resources can be directed to improve outcomes for patients, communities and the environment. He has led and contributed to major health economics projects for government and non-government organisations, helping decision makers understand the trade-offs involved in reform. In this panel, he will help connect climate-related health risks with financing, value-based care and the practical economics of building sustainable, resilient health systems over the long term. His perspective is especially useful where climate action requires investment choices, business cases and credible evidence of value.

Professor Yvonne Zurynski | Professor, Australian Institute of Health Innovation | Macquarie University

[Professor Yvonne Zurynski](#) is Professor of Health System Sustainability at Macquarie University's [Australian Institute of Health Innovation](#). Her work focuses on how health systems can become more sustainable, learning-oriented and capable of delivering better care across real-world settings. She has led major programs in health systems research, implementation and evaluation, including work associated with the NHMRC Partnership Centre for Health System Sustainability and the [Observatory on the Future of Healthcare](#). Professor Zurynski's research spans primary, community, hospital and specialist care, with a strong emphasis on integrated care, system redesign, workforce and the translation of evidence into practice. In the context of climate disasters, her perspective is especially relevant because sustainability is not only environmental: it also concerns the resilience, adaptability, equity and long-term viability of health services. She brings expertise in large-scale implementation and systems thinking to the panel, helping to address how health systems can prepare for climate shocks, protect vulnerable communities, sustain the workforce and embed change across policy, organisations and everyday practice. Her work highlights how evidence can be converted into scalable change across complex systems.

Dr Hania Rahimi-Ardabili | Research Fellow, Australian Institute of Health Innovation | Macquarie University

[Dr Hania Rahimi-Ardabili](#) is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University, where her work focuses on digital solutions for climate change adaptation. Her research explores how health services and communities can better prepare for and respond to climate-related health risks, including extreme heat, bushfires, and other climate-driven disasters. Dr Rahimi-Ardabili has led and contributed to a range of projects, particularly focusing on core challenges, such as understanding consumer and system needs and improving risk communication by exploring lived experiences. Her work utilises participatory approaches, bringing together consumers, clinicians, policymakers, and researchers to co-design solutions that address community needs. As a member of the Observatory on the Future of Healthcare, she contributes to national discussions on the implications of climate change for health systems and service delivery. Her research aims to translate evidence into scalable, practical actions that strengthen health system preparedness, empower communities, and protect health in a changing climate.

About the Australian Institute of Health Innovation

The Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI) is an internationally recognised research-intensive centre within Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. We collaborate widely, conducting high impact research into health services and systems to make a positive difference for patients, healthcare professionals and society. Professor Jeffrey Braithwaite, AIHI's Founding Director, leads the Institute with fellow Research Centre Directors, Professor Johanna Westbrook, Professor Enrico Coiera, and Professor Henry Cutler.

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