



Health and the environment

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Individual and population wellbeing is inextricably linked with the health of the environment. A healthy environment not only leads to improved health for the population but it also encourages people to make choices for better health. ¹
2. Public policy underpins the promotion and maintenance of health at both the individual and the population level.
3. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation supports:
 - 3.1 the Global Green and Health Hospitals agenda as it provides a framework for environmental health and wellbeing.
 - 3.2 the development of a health and aged care service sector which focuses on health promotion, prevention and restoration, and involves communities in decision making;
 - 3.3 environmental impact assessment criteria being included in accreditation processes;
 - 3.4 the national standardisation of environmental impact assessments;
 - 3.5 the inclusion of environmental issues and environmentally sustainable practice in nursing and midwifery education;
 - 3.6 collaboration between nurses, midwives and medical industry manufacturers to eliminate superfluous packaging and implement mindful design that facilitates end of life recycling wherever possible;
 - 3.7 nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing advocating for healthy environments;
 - 3.8 sustainable procurement strategies that include best practice environmental and social criteria in the purchasing process; and
 - 3.9 nurse/midwife national standards and codes of ethics addressing the importance of responding to the environmental impact of healthcare delivery as a safety and quality measure.
4. All health, aged care, and other facilities where health services are provided (for example schools) acknowledge and accept responsibility for the environmental impact of health and aged care service delivery.
5. All health, aged care, and other facilities where health services are provided, should establish a mechanism which, in collaboration with stakeholders and other appropriate personnel, advises on policies and protocols in relation to environmental issues; undertakes environmental impact assessments; provides advice on new and existing products and buildings; and seeks to operate in the most resource efficient and environmentally compatible manner.



6. In order to ensure best practice and compliance with relevant legislation, all health, aged care, and other facilities where health services are provided, should carry out environmental audits to assess their: energy use; water and resource consumption and efficiency; pollution of soil, air and waterways; waste generation and disposal; and product use and procurement.
7. All health, aged care, and other facilities where health services are provided, should set goals and targets in relation to the reduction of: general and clinical waste; energy usage; water and resource consumption; and levels of pollution generated by the facility.
8. All health, aged care, and other facilities where health services are provided, should develop policies and protocols to minimise the over-use of all disposable products and seek alternatives where appropriate.
9. Environmental hazards must be identified and controlled in relation to maintenance and decommissioning activities, and eliminated at their source wherever possible.
10. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing are encouraged to be socially aware and proactive in relation to environmental issues and support workplace sustainability initiatives.
11. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing have the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of policy and action plans to establish environmentally sustainable techniques and practices in the workplace. This includes Environment Management Plans.
12. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing, without fear of victimisation, have the right to bring to the attention of colleagues, employers and the public, the dangers of environmentally harmful processes and products.

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Reference

1. World Health Organization. ***The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion***. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO; 1986 Nov 21 Available from: <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/index.html>

This policy relates to the ANMF Policy on Climate Change.