

Key steps for global health, climate post-COP28

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Researchers from the Monash Sustainable Development Institute have published a research paper that details how the global health community can play an integral role in decision-making and action to address

climate change.

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change marked a step forward in integrating health into the global climate change agenda. COP28 notably placed health at the forefront of climate change efforts with dedicated discussion and funding announcements, signaling a crucial shift in focus.

The [research](#), published in the journal *Public Health Research & Practice* by Associate Professor Angie Bone and Associate Professor Zerina Lokmic-Tomkins from the Monash Sustainable Development Institute, says that in order to maintain this momentum, health must continue to be a central theme in negotiations, with policymakers and practitioners advocating for evidence-based policies that prioritize the well-being of all.

Associate Professor Bone explained how integrating health considerations into decision-making and action to address climate change can lead us towards a more sustainable, resilient and equitable future.

"COP28 saw an increased presence of public health practitioners, who can play a critical role in understanding the implications of climate change for the communities they serve and embedding responses in their practice," Associate Professor Bone said. "These individuals are well placed to strengthen the evidence base for interventions, monitor progress, and advocate for health-promoting climate policy.

"COPs form an important part of how we collectively address climate change and the [health sector](#) finally has a place at the COP table. The sector now needs to become an enabler of action across sectors, as well as managing the health consequences of climate change on communities and health services."

For the first time, there was a dedicated "health" day at COP28 and US\$1 billion (A\$1.5 billion) in climate-health financing was announced, along with a Declaration on Climate and Health, which was signed by 148 countries.

Australia also launched its National Health and Climate Strategy and also hopes to host COP31 in 2026 with Pacific states, potentially providing a catalyst for strengthened resolve.

Associate Professor Lokmic-Tomkins said [urgent action](#) is needed to phase out [fossil fuels](#) and increase community and health service resilience.

"Public health practitioners have a critical role in ensuring climate policies protect and promote health and equity. Further investment into the sector would be welcomed in order to increase the resilience of communities and [health services](#) to address innumerable challenges, including those associated with [climate change](#)," Associate Professor Lokmic-Tomkins said.

More information: Zerina Lokmic-Tomkins et al, Global health and climate action: achievements and imperatives from COP28, *Public Health Research & Practice* (2024). [DOI: 10.17061/phrp3422412](https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp3422412)

Provided by Monash University

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