

## Promote and enable action on climate change Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation (ANMF), Victorian Branch

### GGHH Agenda Goal

- Leadership

### Health organization goal

- Promote and enable action on climate change and environmental sustainability among nurses, midwives, and assistants in nursing throughout Victoria using education and conferences.

### The Issue

Climate change and environmental sustainability are key public health issues yet often overlooked in professional training.

By promoting action on climate change and environmental sustainability, ANMF (Vic Branch) is supporting members to expand their knowledge, achieve their environmental goals and take positive and practical ideas back to their workplaces.

### Progress Achieved

- Attendance at the annual Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference (HESC) grew from 150 nurses and midwives in 2013, to current levels of between 600 and 750 (A five-fold increase in 5 years).
  - Alternate years this is coupled with a Wellness conference to reinforce the link between environmental health and public health and wellbeing.
- Environmental education seminars run twice a year and are consistently fully pre-booked.
- ANMF's course, *Nursing for the Environment*, achieved finalist for the 2018 Victorian Premier's Sustainability awards in the category of Health.
- ANMF (Vic Branch) Green Nurses and Midwives Facebook has over 800 members and a 90% participation rate. Within this forum members share knowledge, resources, tools, ideas and connections.
- ANMF began employing an Environmental Health Officer in 2015 to work with members as a knowledgeable and supportive resource. This is a particularly valued contribution given the majority of healthcare services in Australia do not have a dedicated Sustainability Officer.
- Successful advocacy and political lobbying by ANMF (Vic Branch) resulted in a Government funded new position; State Waste Education Officer in 2018. ANMF (Vic Branch) is an active participant in the Project Working Group supporting this role. Eight interventions have been



The annual ANMF (Vic Branch) Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference attracts many hundreds of nurses, midwives and caregivers who come together to showcase their activities and further promote action on climate change and environmental sustainability.

identified for waste mitigation and development of educational resources that will be rolled out across public healthcare in Victoria in 2018-2020.

As an industry representative in healthcare, ANMF (Vic Branch) carries responsibility for action on climate change and environmental sustainability in its own activities as well as its membership.

1. Sustainable building initiatives resulted in ANMF (Vic Branch)
  - Winning the 2017 Victorian CitySwitch State Signatory of the Year award
  - Achieving high commendation in the 2017 CitySwitch National Signatory award.
  - Admitted into the CitySwitch “Hall of Fame” in 2018.
- Building features include:
  - 120 solar panels,
  - hybrid car spaces,
  - end of trip facilities,
  - smart lifts,
  - energy efficient shading and light systems,
  - in house composting of organic waste powered by solar generation
  - improved recycling streams.
  - Storm water management tanks for flushing toilets and fire response
  - Met a 4.5 NABERS energy target and 5 Star Green Star Rating.
2. Staff employed at ANMF (Vic Branch) receive sustainability education through in-service and new staff orientation.
3. ANMF (Vic Branch) is a founding member of Take 2, Victoria’s collective climate change pledge program.

The health implications of climate change and environmental degradation are a central issue for nurses and midwives and [many are making a significant contribution to environmentally sustainable healthcare.](#)



The ANMF (Vic Branch) building has many sustainable features including 120 solar panels providing the energy to run an organics dehydrator.

### Sustainability Strategy Implemented

ANMF (Vic Branch) aims to play a leading role in advancing environmentally sustainable healthcare both through direct member support and through influencing health policy to help facilitate their initiatives. We recognise the importance of providing education to support behavioural change in our membership of nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing. This is to equip them in implementing environmental sustainability practices in their workplace and contribute to a growing momentum of climate awareness and mitigation action in Australian healthcare.

### Implementation process

1. 2013: Formed an Environmental Committee to drive environmental changes within the organization.
2. 2013: Launched the ANMF (Vic Branch) Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference (HESC) as a response to a 2012 delegates' resolution. This now-annual conference covers a range of issues related to the links between health and the environment, and attracts nursing and midwifery professionals and students keen on practising environmentally sustainable healthcare.
3. 2014: Became a member of Global Green and Healthy Hospitals and the federal office is a member of the Climate and Health Alliance.
4. 2014: Created the ANMF (Vic Branch) Green Nurses and Midwives Facebook Page which functions as a connection, communication and resource hub. Participants post questions, share ideas, articles and resources they create or discover.
5. 2015: Employed an Environmental Health Officer to:
  - connect members to “green champion” groups within health networks and establish new “green groups”,
  - drive new policy,
  - network with nurses and midwives and promote the work of green champions through ANMF (Vic Branch) publications and events.
  - liaise between government and grassroots groups.
6. 2016: Became a founding member of the Victorian Andrews government climate change initiative, Take 2.
7. Education: Conducted multiple environmental education seminars that help participants recognize the professional and practical aspects of sustainability in health and develop skills to overcome barriers in setting up sustainable programs at work. In 2017 we officially launched the ANMF (Vic Branch) continuous professional development (CPD), Nursing for the Environment.
8. 2017-18: ANMF (Vic Branch) successfully lobbied the Victorian Andrews Government for the creation of a new Waste Education Officer to develop waste education and mitigation activities across Victorian public healthcare. ANMF (Vic Branch) sits on the Project Working Group supporting this role.

### Tracking Progress

The Health and Environmental Sustainability conference has grown in attendance, starting with 150 nurses and midwives in our first conference in 2013, to nearly 800 in 2018. The growth in attendance has shown that nurses and midwives care about their environment and are committed to delivering sustainable healthcare to their patients.

The Green Nurses and Midwives Facebook Group now has over 800 members who are active on the site sharing ideas, questions and supporting each other to achieve sustainability goals.

Nursing for the Environment education is booked out in advance with strong positive feedback and recognized in the Premier's Sustainability Awards, 2018.

ANMF (Vic Branch) has played a significant role in creating awareness, educating and equipping, connecting and supporting nurses, midwives and careers in climate mitigation and environmental sustainability.

### **Challenges and lessons learned**

Supporting members from across a large number of health services and networks can be complex. Instituting the Facebook Group enabled members to have a central place to meet and allowed the ANMF (Vic Branch) Environmental Health Officer to more easily reach and support members.

Connecting members from the same health network is also vital, given they are often not aware of the achievements of their colleagues and, when they are able to share ideas and experiences, they are encouraged.

There are various levels of understanding amongst ANMF members, from beginners to well informed. We have implemented regular course revisions to ensure education is contemporary, relevant and applicable as well as training in behavior change and advocacy. A "train the trainer" model maximises efficacy.

### **Next Steps**

- The Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference will continue annually.
- There is room for our sustainability education modules to be reformatted for beginners and the advanced in both online and transportable versions. Web site development will expand downloadable resources and links.
- Ongoing member support to make changes at their workplace.
- Ongoing political engagement and advocacy to promote environmental sustainability as central to health care delivery in Victoria.
- Ongoing work with Victorian Waste Education Officer and Project Working Group to support the roll out of waste strategies in Victorian healthcare.
- Ongoing support of a national strategy on climate change and health and just transition from fossil fuels to a renewable energy mix.

### **Demographic information**

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Victorian Branch, (ANMF (Vic Branch)) is a professional and industrial organisation representing over 83,000 nurses and midwives in Victoria. The ANMF (Vic Branch) is a State Branch of the Federation nationally that represents the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 275,000 nurses, midwives and carers across the country.

**Links**

<https://www.anmfvic.asn.au/campaigns/2017/01/01/health-environmental-sustainability>

<http://anmf.org.au/pages/climate-change>

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