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Justice and Community Safety Directorate  
ACT Government  
[E: civilconsultation@act.gov.au](mailto:civilconsultation@act.gov.au)

To whom it may concern,

### **ACT Government Discussion Paper on the Right to a Healthy Environment**

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the ACT Government Discussion Paper on the Right to a Healthy Environment.

AHHA is Australia's national peak body for public hospitals and healthcare providers. Our membership includes state and territory health departments (including ACT Health Directorate), Local Hospital Networks (LHNs) and public hospitals, community health services, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and primary healthcare providers (including Capital Health Network), aged care providers, universities (including Faculty of Health, University of Canberra and the Australian National University College of Health and Medicine), individual health professionals and academics. As such, we are uniquely placed to be an independent, national voice for universal high-quality health care.

AHHA has a long history of actively contributing to the health sector movement for climate action, environmental health, and sustainable healthcare. We are a long standing, active member of the Climate and Health Alliance, a founding member of the Asia Pacific Global Green and Health Hospitals Network, and a member of the Better Futures Australia health sector working group.

AHHA supports the inclusion of the right to a healthy environment in the Human Rights Act. We support the premise, outlined in the discussion paper, that to uphold the universal right to health, governments and citizens must address the environmental determinants of health. With the health system contributing to 7.2% of Australia's emissions, there is great opportunity for the ACT Government to demonstrate leadership and work towards fulfilling the right to a healthy environment through the creation of a vision for a sustainable health system.

Notably, sustainability in health care is not just about renewable energy and waste reduction. Sustainability reforms should guide how we practice medicine and provide health care. As such, the right to a healthy environment should not sit separately from broader health system reforms, but rather be embedded within them. Value-based health care (VBHC) provides a comprehensive framework for the creation of a sustainable healthcare system, re-orienting and connecting the fragmented elements of the system around the common purpose of delivering care that is person-centred, outcomes-focused, and value-based.

The policy brief '[Transforming the health system for sustainability: Environmental leadership through a value-based health care strategy](#)' published by AHHA's Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research outlines several policy recommendations that could enable the ACT Government to uphold the right to a healthy environment whilst improving community health outcomes.

We would be happy to discuss any aspect of this response further.

Sincerely,

Ms Kylie Woolcock  
Chief Executive  
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA)

