

Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Working Group III Contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report. April 2022.

“Accelerating climate mitigation in the context of sustainable development involves not only expediting the pace of change but also addressing the underlying drivers of vulnerability and emissions. Addressing these drivers can enable diverse communities, sectors, stakeholders, regions and cultures to participate in just, equitable and inclusive processes that improve the health and well-being of people and the planet” (IPCC Sixth Assessment Report).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III has delivered the third part of the Sixth Assessment Report to world governments. This report examines climate change mitigation and builds on previous Working Group reports which have looked at the physical science of climate change, and impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. An updated global assessment of climate mitigation processes and pledges with literature on the scientific, technological, environmental, economic and social aspects of mitigation is presented in this latest report.

Global temperatures continue to rise and so does the negative impact of climate change on public health and wellbeing. A review in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2020 assessed over 32 million births in the U.S. and found a statistically significant association between heat, ozone, or fine particulate matter, and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth and low birth weight. Mechanisms that implicate toxic fine particles, related to preterm birth, included maternal haematologic transport of inhaled noxious chemicals, and systemic inflammation triggers. These environmental threats are significant for human health and particularly for pregnancy and newborns.

Midwives can play a key role as social change agents, continue to work towards more sustainable practices, and take an active role as advocates with their clients. We hope the developing climate action section of the College webpage will help midwives to support positive change.

Key points from the Mitigation of Climate Change Report

“We are at a crossroads. The decisions we make now can secure a liveable future. We have the tools and know-how required to limit warming” (IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee).

- This report provides an updated global assessment of climate change mitigation progress and pledges.
- It examines the sources of global emissions and explains developments in emission reduction / mitigation efforts.
- In 2010-2019 average annual global greenhouse gas emissions were at their highest levels in human history, but the rate of growth has slowed.
- Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, limiting global warming to 1.5°C is beyond reach.
- There is increasing evidence of climate action and an increasing range of policies and laws enhancing energy efficiency, reducing rates of deforestation and accelerating the deployment of renewable energy.

- Limiting global warming will require major transitions in the energy sector. This will involve a substantial reduction in fossil fuel use, widespread electrification, improved energy efficiency, and use of alternative fuels (such as hydrogen).
- Accelerated and equitable climate action in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts is critical to sustainable development.
- Implementing the right policies, infrastructure and technology to enable changes to lifestyles and behaviour can result in a 40-70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

World Health Day 7th April 2022

Ora Taiao, the NZ Climate and Health Council released a letter to Health Minister Andrew Little on World Health Day asking for the healthcare system to be made climate ready and climate friendly as part of the health reforms. The letter was endorsed by eleven organisations representing midwives, nurses, doctors and other health professionals. The College was one of the signatories on this letter calling for a healthy climate response.

Link - World Health Day 2022 - Healthcare workers ask Government to make NZ's health system climate ready and climate friendly

https://www.orataiao.org.nz/world_health_day_2022_healthcare_workers_ask_government_to_make_nz_health_system_climate_ready_and_climate_friendly

Link - Full IPCC Report, summary for policy makers, and/ or the technical summary

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

Link - IPCC video trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFSP-aoqzU4>