



# COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

e-News Vol.17 Issue 11 November 2024

## GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION COP 29

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual United Nations Climate Change 'Conference of the Parties' (COP) was held in Baku, Azerbaijan 11-22 November 2024. A report, tabled by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) shared the following key messages:



Greenhouse gases reached record observed levels in 2023. Real time data indicate that they continued to rise in 2024.



January - September 2024 global mean surface air temperature was  $1.54 \pm 0.13^\circ\text{C}$  above the pre-industrial average. Boosted by the El Niño, 2024 is on track to be the warmest year on record. Long-term warming, measured over decades, still remains below  $1.5^\circ\text{C}$ .



Antarctic and Arctic sea ice extent in 2024 have both been well below average. In 2023, globally, glaciers lost an estimated water equivalent to about 5 times the amount water in the Dead Sea.



Ocean heat content and sea level continue to rise. In 2023, the ocean absorbed around 3.1 million TWh of heat, equal to approximately 18 times the world's total energy consumption.



The WMO states that 2024 is on track to be the warmest year on record with mean surface air temperature between January to September  $1.54^\circ$  above the pre-industrial average.

It often feels as if it is all too hard for individuals to have an impact on global warming, however there is a great deal that each individual can contribute, and if we all made that small contribution, together the impact would be really significant.

Nurses and midwives are in a unique position to be role models, advocates, and influence the behaviour of others. The United Nations list twelve things that individuals can do. Go to the URL below for more information:

<https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions>



### Save energy at home

Use less energy by reducing your heating and cooling use, switching to LED light bulbs and energy-efficient electric appliances, washing your laundry with cold water, or hanging things to dry instead of using a dryer.



### Change your home's source of energy

See if you can switch to renewable sources such as wind or solar, or install solar panels on your roof to generate energy for your home.



### Walk, bike, or take public transport

Walking or riding a bike instead of driving will reduce greenhouse gas emissions -- and help your health and fitness. For longer distances, consider taking a train or bus.



# COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

e-News Vol.17 Issue 11 November 2024



## Switch to an electric vehicle

If you plan to buy a car, consider going electric. Electric cars help reduce air pollution and cause significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions than gas or diesel-powered vehicles.



## Consider your travel

Airplanes burn large amounts of fossil fuels, producing significant greenhouse gas emissions. Taking fewer flights is one of the fastest ways to reduce your environmental impact. When you can, meet virtually or take a train.



## Reduce, reuse, repair, recycle

To protect the climate, buy fewer things, shop second-hand, repair what you can, and recycle what you no longer need.



## Eat more vegetables

Eating more vegetables and fruits and less meat and dairy, can significantly lower your environmental impact. Producing plant-based foods requires less energy, land, and water.



## Throw away less food

When you throw food away, you're also wasting the resources and energy that were used to grow, package, and transport it. So purchase only what you need, and use what you buy.



## Plant native species

Plants, animals and insects depend on each other. Most insects will not eat non-native plants, which means birds and other species lose a food source and biodiversity suffers.



## Clean up your environment

Use what you need, and when you have to throw something out, dispose of it properly. Educate others to do the same.



## Make your money count

Everything we spend money on affects the planet. Choose products from companies who use resources responsibly and are committed to cutting their gas emissions and waste.



## Speak up

Speak up and get others to join in taking action. It's one of the quickest and most effective ways to make a difference.

A 2023 article by Austin et al, published in the *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* (Vol.23:1) suggest there are six pathways to lower carbon emissions in healthcare:

1. Reduce
2. Reuse
3. Recycle
4. Rethink
5. Research
6. Advocate

The article goes on to outline twelve actions which can be taken by nurses and midwives in an inpatient healthcare setting to reduce the environmental impact of care. Some of these actions are easy and cost effective to implement; others take a little more time and thought, but if implemented, have a lasting impact. The article summarises that the pace of climate action is failing to meet the consequences of climate change, pointing out that healthcare contributes 4% of carbon emissions globally, double that of the aviation industry. Nurses comprise the single largest health workforce, it is therefore our moral imperative to act. The full article is well worth reading:

*European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, Volume 23, Issue 1, January 2024

<https://academic.oup.com/eurjcn/article/23/1/e6/7236421>

Each nurse and midwife should be asking themselves:

- Is there a committee in my workplace mandated to reduce carbon emissions?
- Are nurses and midwives represented on the committee?
- That role can I play to contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions in my workplace?