

# Australian Institute of Environmental Health

## Agenda for Action 2000

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**27<sup>th</sup> National Conference - Cairns**  
***Asian & Pacific Partnerships ... alliances for action in the 21st Century - Local Issues within the Global Context including the AIEH/SOCEH post-conference workshop to Singapore, titled 'Regional Environmental Health Perspectives'***

### *Conference/Workshop Resolutions and Actions*

This is the third conference that this Institute has been involved in the formulation of an Agenda for Action for the purpose of identifying strategic directions in the future. The satellite workshop held in Singapore after the national conference also elicited further action for collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region.

**The Cairns conference delegates noted that:**

- 1. There was a need for continued research, education and workforce development in the Environmental Health field.**

Action 1. Build public health partnerships to meet the global challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the process of improving action research.

Action 2: Delegates suggested that a needs assessment for research and educational capacity building in the profession of Environmental Health be undertaken and the recommendations assessed by the national board.

Action 3: Improve the environmental health workforce capacity to deal with local issues within the global context.

**2. Sustainable development should be an integral component of the everyday activities of the Environmental Health practitioner**

Action 1. The delegates recommended that the Institute establish a Special Interest Group called Sustainable Development for Environmental Health and formulate Policy Statements and Action Plans ... and that the concept of sustainable development be incorporated into *every* Special Interest Group's Policy Statement and Action Plan.

Action 2. Assist the development of an agreed set of community environmental health action guidelines to help all members of local communities to work together confidently to a shared goal of: security in their living environment, now and in the future.

Action 3. The delegates recommended that the Institute investigate ways to link sustainable development into the practice of environmental health across Australia and the Pacific Rim.

**3. Environmental Health practitioners should be cognisant with the principles of the *Social Determinants of Health* when planning programs.**

Action 1. Develop partnerships and alliances to create holistic policies in environmental health that build on the physical, social, economic and cultural components of quality of life in communities.

**4. Activities in the Environmental Health profession move from a response role to that of health planning and prevention.**

Action 1. The delegates recommended that the Institute encourage Environmental Health practitioners to build healthy and sustainable communities, using integrated Public and Environmental Health Planning models to develop healthy cities and community action, healthy public policy, programs and interventions.

Action 2. Integrate the outcomes of environmental health community needs assessment into both health planning strategies and town planning schemes in communities.

Action 3. Develop working partnerships and integrate the policies and programs of the health, environment and transport sectors to build health promoting environments.

Action 4. Convene a workshop in 2001 to address ways of forming partnerships and alliances for public and environmental health...and breaking down the barriers between the sectors or discover new ways to work with the 'organisational silos' that have environmental health outcomes outside of the health sector.

## **5. The future profile of Environmental Health Practitioners within Local Government needs to be assessed.**

Action 1. Delegates suggested that the Institute hold a symposium with other professionals working in the field of Environmental Health to look at ways we can work together to produce better health outcomes – the symposium should also look at building trust amongst these professionals and information sharing.

Action 2. Delegates suggested that the Institute should encourage EHOs to promote their skills at both the operational and strategic levels.

Action 3. Delegates recommended that the Institute should promote alliances across the sectors that have environmental and public health outcomes.

## **6. The role of Environmental Health practitioners involvement in disaster management needs to be profiled.**

Action 1. Delegates recommended that the Institute promote available training courses and the strategic involvement EHOs and Local Governments have in that role.

Action 2. Delegates recommended that the Institute conduct an audit with those professions working in emergency management to ascertain their understanding of the public health implications and the number of people who are trained in the community

## **7. Indigenous Health should be a major focus of Environmental Health activity in the profession.**

Action 1. Continue to work in partnership with communities and the key stakeholders in improving the living conditions of indigenous people in Australia.

Action 2. Assist in the continued success of the environmental health workers (EHWs) education and training programs in Australia and provide practical experience for EHWs in local and state government and industry workplaces.

## **8. Institute policies should reflect the conference outcomes.**

Action 1. State and National Special Interest Groups need to review and develop relevant policies and action plans consistent with the conference theme and outcomes.

### ***The Singapore AIEH/SOCEH Post Conference Workshop elicited the following:***

**The theme of the workshop was “Regional Environmental Health perspectives”**

Conference delegates noted:

1. That Environmental Health professionals consider local and regional EH issues within a global context and where possible work together in partnerships across the region to improve environmental health outcomes.
2. That a process of environmental health information sharing across the region be further developed.
3. That the environmental health profession engage more with industry and the non-government sectors in partnership to improve environmental health outcomes in communities.
4. That environmental health action be promoted as 'good business' in communities.
5. That there is a need to build capacity to undertake research and develop action on priority regional issues such as the following:
  - the food safety challenge
  - health planning

- exotic mosquitoes and disease
- managing waste
- flexible education for EH professionals
- regional partnerships
- indoor air pollution, and
- risk assessment and air pollution

6. That the awareness of environmental health values in communities needs to be raised.

7. Professionals need to recognise the importance of 'mutual respect' when working in partnerships with other nations across the region.

**The following Actions were agreed to:**

***Action 1.***

*That IFEH member nations work in partnership to establish a Pacific Rim Regional Office of the IFEH and address regional EH issues in partnership;*

***Action 2.***

*Delegates recommended that to administer this proposed office the AIEH agreed to establish a web-site within the existing AIEH web-site and provide links to the IFEH web-site. The web-site would be the first stage in providing an avenue to build networks, continue discussions and share information; and*

***Action 3.***

*It was resolved to hold a Regional Meeting of the IFEH Pacific Rim Group at the next National AIEH Conference in Perth 14-19 October 2001.*