



DATE: Tuesday, 19 November 2019

TITLE:	REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019
DIRECTORATE:	STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To report key learnings from the Environmental Health Australia National Conference 2019 (the conference) held in Adelaide, South Australia from 6-8 November 2019.

DETAILS:

The City's Coordinator Environmental Health attended the conference from 6-8 November 2019. This provided the City with valuable insight and ongoing learnings into existing and emerging public health trends, threats and management measures.

The conference program included presentations from a wide range of speakers, covering topics including:

- Perceptions of Environmental Health – 'overlooked and underrated';
- Food enforcement and investigation;
- Hoarding, squalor and clandestine laboratories;
- Roles of Local Government in fighting food waste;
- Environmental Health and climate change; and
- Emergency preparedness and public health response.

There were some common themes at the conference which were evident in the broad range of topics presented. Primarily, it was advocated that the Environmental Health profession could do more to educate and communicate about its roles and responsibilities, including within Local Government organisations. This includes relationship building through collaboration internally and stakeholder engagement externally. The City's Health Services team are committed to building these relationships, as demonstrated by the objectives and outcomes listed in the Built Environment and Wellbeing Strategy House and Business Plan. The team recognises the valuable contribution it makes to provide technical expertise and leadership in public health, and the future potential to be 'present at the table' and continue and enhance this contribution. The City's Public Health Plan will embed stakeholder engagement and an educative approach to public health messaging and traditional service delivery.

The increasing impacts (both health and environmental) of climate change were also discussed. This will involve increased planning and preparedness at all levels with the Environmental Health and Local Government profession. A key statistic from a presentation at the conference stated it is estimated that *"25 of the 30 extra years of life we've gained over the last 100 years are the result of environmental health measures like better nutrition, sanitation and housing (Novick, L. F. 2005)"*. With this in mind, it was also presented that *"Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250 000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress (WHO 2014)"*.

These emerging environmental health threats, including those linked to climate change, requires the profession to adapt and consider how risks are managed and mitigated in the future. In a local context, Western Australian public health law is in a transitioning phase from the prescriptive based legalisation of the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* to the newly enacted outcome-based *Public Health Act 2016*. The framework of regulatory compliance for the *Public Health Act 2016* will see a more flexible, risk based approach. The City Health Services are conscious of the impacts new legislation may have, and are regular contributors to discussion papers and working groups to feed into the conversation.

Other topical presentations were also delivered, and a short summary is provided below:

Hoarding and Squalor Initiatives – A presentation by the City of Onkaparinga demonstrated that through a coordinated approach and a dedicated 'in house' community liaison resource, addressing complex community health, safety and sanitary concerns within private dwellings can be far more successful.



Food Waste - If food loss and waste were its own country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter behind China and United States. The information presented at the conference by the Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre provided simple means for Local Governments to contribute to reducing food waste in both industry and households such as FOGO and waste tracking tools.

Emergency Management – In keeping with one of the themes of the conference, several presentations talked on the critical role Environmental Health Officers play in ensuring an organisation is sufficiently prepared and able to respond to various types of public health emergencies.

The learnings from the conference will help to inform the development of the City's Public Health Plan, in addition to implementing best practice ethos and new initiatives into the delivery of existing environmental health programs and services.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Not applicable.

LEGAL/POLICY:

Under Policy No. 4.1.15 – Conferences, Council approval is required for staff attendance at interstate conferences or training. At the Ordinary Council meeting on 16 September 2019, Council approved the City's Environmental Health Officer or her delegate to attend the conference.

The same Policy stipulates that "Following attendance at State conferences, congresses, study tours and any seminars, forums, workshops of two (2) days or more duration, the attendees shall submit an individual or composite report to the Council (to be included in the Information Bulletin)".

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:

Low: It was considered low risk for a City employee to attend an interstate conference. The employee continued to be covered under the City's existing insurances whilst in Adelaide on work time.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

Keeping in line with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018 – 2028*:

Innovative and Accountable

We are open and accountable to an engaged community.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 10 September 2019, Administration presented the following approximate costs for attending this conference:

Three Day Conference Registration Fee	\$ 990
Economy Airfare (approx.)	\$ 500
Accommodation 3 nights @ \$150/night	\$ 450
Total:	<u>\$1,940</u>

The final costs incurred are as follows:

Three Day Conference Registration Fee	\$ 990.00
Economy Airfare	\$ 574.13
Accommodation	Nil
Costs of travel (taxi's)	\$ 49.90
Total:	<u>\$1,614.03</u>



COMMENTS:

Attendance at the conference provided the City's Coordinator Environmental Health a great opportunity to learn and develop from the technical content presented throughout the program. It also provided an invaluable opportunity to establish a wider network of contacts and connections within the profession in Australia and abroad. The Coordinator Environmental Health has provided an internal presentation to relevant staff to share learning from the conference and discuss how it could influence the City's projects, namely the Public Health Plan.

The Coordinator Environmental Health is available to discuss conference learnings, the direction of the Environmental Health profession and how this direction is being applied at the City in more detail with Council members. This could include future Council Workshops, particularly when updates are provided on the Public Health Plan and how the City's Health Services team are contributing to the delivery of the City's Strategic Community Plan.