



# GOING GREEN

## Putting policies and procedures into practice

*A guide for not-for-profits*

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# Introduction

Climate change is real and dangerous. It has been caused by human activity and thus demands radical changes in human decisions, actions, and behaviours. To address the climate crisis and living systems emergency in front of us, we must engage with our individual, collective and systemic responsibilities.

The Institute of Community Directors Australia is on a quest to support a green transition for the not-for-profit sector in Australia. From adoption of renewable energy and electric car fleets to everyday actions that come together to drive down our environmental footprint, we want to support the community sector to achieve rapid systemic change. We're aware that this journey will be challenging, but we are determined (and excited!) to live up to our responsibilities as we see them - to do what we can, while we can, to combat the causes and effects of climate change and to support community organisations and the people they serve adapt to the new-normal.

This transition cannot start without you: our community leaders and not-for-profit organisations.

There are thousands of actions individuals and organisations can take to slow or reverse the effects of climate change. While the volume of options

available can seem daunting to approach all at once, there are simple, highly effective steps that can be taken immediately, as your organisation, staff and broader network begin to shift towards sustainable practices.

In this help sheet, we have outlined hundreds of initiatives across ten areas of your organisation. We've provided a step-by-step guide on what to do first, how to get up to standard, and where you should aim for once you're there. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it's a good place to start.

We've also included a section of reflective questions aimed at leaders in the community and not-for-profit sector. Taking a stance on climate action can lead to some challenging conversations, and the questions are aimed at helping you maintain positive momentum when faced with resistance.

As part of your ongoing commitment and action around climate change, we encourage you to deeply listen to and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ways of knowing, being and doing. It is vital that we all acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' connection to Country and ongoing protection of the lands and waters of this continent since time immemorial.

# B.

## How to prioritise your sustainability initiatives

Use the effort/ effectiveness matrix to prioritise your sustainability initiatives

<b>HIGH EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>1. START HERE</b> Let's do this right now!	<b>2. GET TO HERE</b> Good practice for us	<b>3. ASPIRE TO HERE</b> Something to aim for
<b>LOW EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<i>If it really is low effort AND if it helps people feel warm, fuzzy and connected... sure</i>	<i>Why are we bothering?</i>	<i>Absolutely not</i>
	<b>LOW EFFORT</b>	<b>MEDIUM EFFORT</b>	<b>HIGH EFFORT</b>



# Effective initiatives your organisation could consider

## 1. GETTING OTHERS ON BOARD

### START HERE

- Get people involved and obtain buy-in: engage and consult with staff, volunteers, stakeholders and the wider community about what you're doing and why.
- Make employees aware of your environmental efforts; this will encourage them to support and participate in your initiatives. Have a suggestion box where employees can deposit ideas about how the company can increase its environmental sustainability. Reward employees for participating in or supporting your initiatives.
- Appoint a staff team (with time allocation and a budget) to take responsibility for encouraging others to support environmentally-friendly behaviour across the organisation.
- Invite a sustainability expert to explain to staff the company's impact on the environment, and the difference they could make by changing their behaviour.
- Invite an Aboriginal elder to share with staff their personal perspectives on the relationship between "Caring for Country, Caring for Climate and Caring for Community".
- Invite young students to get involved and volunteer on specific environmental projects to support your organisation, such as: project management, landscape design, building and construction, marketing, graphic design, photography, video production. When their project is completed, provide them with a written reference or a Certificate of Appreciation.

### GET TO HERE

- Communicate your organisation's priorities and strategies to staff, volunteers, clients, suppliers, stakeholders and the wider community - including the importance of these issues, and the approach and actions your organisation will take. This could be on your website, in email signatures, in social media, in Annual Reports and other published documents.
- Include information about your organisation's commitment to "Caring for Country, Caring for Climate, and Caring for Community", and how this manifests in expected sustainability behaviours by all staff in employee induction materials, workplace handbooks and training programs.
- Join a local, statewide or national Climate Action Network. For example:
- Local: Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action: NAGA <https://www.naga.org.au/members.html>
- State: Environment Victoria: <https://environmentvictoria.org.au/who-we-are/our-community/our-partners/>
- National: Climate Action Network Australia: [https://www.cana.net.au/our\\_members](https://www.cana.net.au/our_members)
- Apply a social justice lens when exploring the impacts of climate change on different sectors of the community and the clients you serve
- Create the time and space to allow your staff, volunteers and clients to grapple meaningfully with their emotional responses to the climate and living systems emergency.

## 1. GETTING OTHERS ON BOARD continued

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Establish a coherent and integrated set of organisational targets and initiatives that have been endorsed by the board and integrated into long-term strategic planning, such as:
- Commit to Net Zero by 2030
- Audit your emissions
- Establish clear five-year emissions reductions targets
- Introduce renewable energy targets
- Use procurement/tendering processes to reward climate-friendly behaviour
- Undertake director training on climate change risks and engage external experts to support the organisation
- Recruit directors and management with climate expertise or experience
- Provide dedicated resources for the organisation to address climate risk
- Embed climate change into risk management and stakeholder reporting frameworks.
- Use your public profile to encourage sustainability in the community through advocacy, social media posts, and through your Annual Reporting processes and documents.
- Advocate for Aboriginal communities to have sovereignty to care for and protect their land in the face of natural disasters and climate change.
- Advocate for vulnerable communities to participate and have a say in the clean energy transition.
- Link with other organisations and publicly join campaigns to advocate for the immediate pursuit of climate action by government at all levels.
- Declare a climate emergency <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/>

## 2. BANKING, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

### START HERE

- Switch organisational bank accounts to an ethical bank that does not invest in fossil fuels. See here for guidance: <https://www.marketforces.org.au/info/compare-bank-table/>

### GET TO HERE

- Invest accumulated savings in ethical investments that are not associated with fossil fuels. See here for guidance: <https://responsibleinvestment.org/fact-sheets-and-guides/>

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Advise and encourage staff to place their superannuation contributions in ethical superannuation funds that do not invest in fossil fuels. See here for guidance: <https://responsibleinvestment.org/resources/super-study/>

### 3. RISK ASSESSMENT AND INSURANCE

#### START HERE

- Review your insurance policies and seek professional advice in regards to updating your insurance policies to include climate risk factors.
- Consider the possible impacts of climate change on clients, staff, operations, investments and community, such as: extreme weather hazards; costs of energy; cost, availability and stability of supplies; cost of and compliance with waste removal.

**McKinsey and Co** have outlined the socioeconomic impacts from physical climate hazards as follows:

- *Livability and workability.* Hazards like heat stress could affect the ability of human beings to work outdoors or, in extreme cases, could put human lives at risk. Increased temperatures could also shift disease vectors and thus affect human health.
- *Food systems.* Food production could be disrupted as drought conditions, extreme temperatures, or floods affect land and crops, though a changing climate could improve food system performance in some regions.
- *Physical assets.* Physical assets like buildings could be damaged or destroyed by extreme precipitation, tidal flooding, forest fires, and other hazards.
- *Infrastructure services.* Infrastructure assets could be destroyed or disrupted in their functioning, leading to a decline in services or a rise in the cost of services. This in turn can have knock-on effects on other sectors that rely on these infrastructure assets.
- *Natural capital.* Climate change is shifting ecosystems and destroying forms of natural capital such as glaciers, forests, and ocean ecosystems, which provide important services to human communities. This in turn imperils the human habitat and economic activity.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/climate-risk-and-response-physical-hazards-and-socioeconomic-impacts#>

#### GET TO HERE

- Add climate risk to the risk register of your board's governance responsibilities, and consider:
- Physical risks your organisation faces from the physical impacts of climate change such as extreme weather hazards.
- Transition risks that your organisation is exposed to due to changes government policies, technology and public sentiment.
- Liability risk that are associated with Directors' failure to comply with the duty of care and diligence.
- Consider both the short-term and long-term risks of climate change. An introductory guide on how to develop a climate change risk management process can be found here: <http://broadleaf.com.au/resource-material/climate-change-and-risk-management/>
- Identify, Analyse and Evaluate Risks and then Prioritise those risks that require further attention. Establish a process for ensuring that these higher priority risks are managed effectively through preventative and preparatory measures.
- The Australian Government has prepared a thorough and comprehensive 'Climate Change Impacts & Risk Management A Guide for Business and Government' that provides detailed assistance and advice. It is highly recommended.

<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/21c04298-db93-47a6-a6b0-eaaaae9ef8e4/files/risk-management.pdf>

#### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Establish board-level mandates for climate risk oversight and reporting requirements to stakeholders.
- Incorporate climate risks into long-term strategic planning, and use scenario testing to assess climate risk.

## 4. WATER

### START HERE

- Buy office plants that consume minimum amounts of water.
- Encourage staff to quickly report leaking taps, and have them fixed promptly.
- Monitor your water usage. If there's a sharp increase on your water meter, check to see if there is a leak.

### GET TO HERE

- Audit your water consumption and bills and set reduction targets.
- Fit timers to any showers, and encourage staff to take shorter showers.
- Install water-saving taps, toilets and showers.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Install rainwater tanks water tanks to capture rainfall for toilet flushing and irrigation of lawns.
- Select drought-friendly plants and install raingardens in outdoor areas to minimise soil run-off and to help filter stormwater.

## 5. ELECTRICITY AND GAS

### START HERE

- Switch off lights, air-conditioning, computers and other appliances when not in use - don't just leave them on stand-by
- Don't use a screen saver - they are unnecessary and use energy.
- When possible, switch appliances off at the power point
- Switch to energy-efficient light globes
- Turn cooling thermostats down to 24-25 degrees in summer, and heating thermostats only up to 18-20 degrees in winter.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to dress appropriately so they are comfortable with the set temperatures.
- Turn hot water thermostats down to about 60 degrees (seek professional advice on this)
- Switch your hot water and heating systems off at night and on weekends.
- Obtain electricity from a renewable-energy supplier. See here for advice: <https://www.greenelectricityguide.org.au/>
- See here for more advice about easy ways to reduce your energy use and how to access government grant funding and rebates: <https://www.energy.gov.au/business>

### GET TO HERE

- Have an independent auditor measure your organisation's energy usage; identify opportunities (such as lighting, air-conditioning, insulation, window glazing) for reduction, and set energy usage targets.
- Install light sensors or timers, where appropriate, to reduce energy consumption.
- Purchase equipment, such as refrigerators with low energy ratings

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Set ambitious organisational emissions-reduction targets, such as Net Zero Emissions, or Negative Emissions through offsets.



## 6. RECYCLING AND WASTE

### START HERE

- **Keep products and materials in use for as long as possible by following the 8 Rs in this order:**
  1. **Refuse** – avoid buying new materials if possible, and avoid unnecessary packaging – especially plastic, where possible.
  2. **Reduce** – the quantity of goods and services you buy and the amount of waste you generate.
  3. **Re-use** – materials for as long as possible, try to avoid any items that are single use, disposable or not built to last (think fast fashion and fast furniture)
  4. **Refill** – when purchasing consumables, try to use refillable containers every time.
  5. **Repair** – when things break down, try to repair them first, rather than throwing them into landfill and replacing them with new.
  6. **Re-gift** – any unwanted items, materials, tools or equipment to other people, reserves, community groups and organisations.
  7. **Recycle** – recycle whatever waste you cannot avoid generating.
  8. **Repeat** – this process over and over, again and again
- Have separate bins for: landfill, recycling, organics, soft plastics and e-waste. Ensure you have clear signage for each bin and consider the design, location, cleanliness and appeal of your bins.
- Purchase in bulk whenever possible, to minimise packaging.
- Look for recycling symbols on the products you buy, and contact your local council area for advice re: which plastics can be recycled (as it varies from area to area).
- Adhere to local council or state government guidelines for disposing of hazardous waste.

### GET TO HERE

- Audit how much rubbish (by weight) you throw out and set targets for reduction.
- Minimise packaging and avoid single-use plastic for goods sold at cafes and shops, and for gifts and give-aways provided at festivals, events and fundraisers.
- Ask suppliers whether they will take their goods back and recycle them when you've finished with them.
- Encourage collaborative consumption by partnering with neighbouring organisations and community groups to borrow and lend tools, machinery and equipment. You might even be able to join or start up a lending "Tool library" of commonly used tools and equipment.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Develop a sustainable procurement policy, and establish a preferred supplier list for those that share your environmental values.
- Contact your local council, as they may have a range of useful information about local businesses that supply environmentally friendly products and services. See here for further guidance and advice:
  - <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/856a1de0-4856-4408-a863-6ad5f6942887/files/sustainable-procurement-guide.pdf>
  - <https://lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/PDF/esstam-sustainable-procurement-guide-30.05.17.pdf>
- Negotiate contracts with suppliers and contractors to include clauses that specify that waste be minimised, recycling maximised, emissions cut and non-toxic cleaning supplies and materials used.

## 7. PAPER

### START HERE

- When you receive unwanted mail, ask to have yourself or your company taken off the mailing list.
- Only print emails and documents when absolutely necessary.
- Add a footnote to emails encouraging others to print them only when absolutely necessary.
- Keep your own mailing lists up to date to ensure you're not sending out paper that's headed straight for the bin.
- Collect paper that has been used on one side for writing notes on the other.
- Recycle paper and toner cartridges from printers and photocopiers.
- Use recycled toilet paper and tissues.
- Buy recycled paper and cardboard products (e.g. office paper, paper stationery, toilet paper, packaging boxes)
- Buy pens made with waste ink and plastic from recycled inkjet cartridges.
- Buy a printer that will print on both sides of the paper, and set that function to default.

### GET TO HERE

- Ensure paper products are sourced from suppliers that employ sustainable forestry management practices and clean production processes.
- Audit how much paper is used every month, and set targets for reducing paper consumption.
- Email your annual report to members and stakeholders rather than sending them printed editions.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Make your office "paper-less", by digitising all your record-keeping and processes.

## 8. TRANSPORT

### START HERE

- Provide sustainable transport maps and public transport information on your website.
- Depending on the location of your organisation and the availability of services, encourage people to walk, travel by bicycle, use public transport, or car-pool when possible.
- When you host events, encourage participants to walk, cycle or use public transport.
- Offer staff public transport tickets instead of taxi vouchers.
- Where possible, have deliveries made outside peak hours, to minimise the time couriers' engines are running in traffic.
- When time allows, use cycling couriers rather than those on motorcycles or in cars.
- Only fly somewhere when absolutely necessary - teleconference or video conference if you can.

## 8. TRANSPORT continued

### GET TO HERE

- Get your staff to report how many kilometres they drive to and from work each day, and report the overall figure back to them, and what it equates to in carbon emissions. Use this as a baseline to set targets to reduce staff transport emissions.
- Provide bike racks to encourage staff to cycle to work.
- Locate bike parking at the most convenient areas on your site.
- Locate general car parking in secondary areas (disabled parking excepted).
- Use car sharing to replace some/all of your car fleet.
- Replace your car fleet with hybrid cars.
- Don't offer large cars as part of salary packages - promote hybrid cars or find other more environmentally friendly incentives.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Provide end-of-trip showers and locker facilities to encourage staff to cycle to work.
- Provide staff with Myki cards as part of their employment package.
- Coordinate a staff car-pooling program (and the sharing of costs) for staff to get to and from work, and reward staff who participate.
- Eliminate your staff car fleet altogether, or exchange petrol for electric vehicles

## 9. CLEANING, KITCHENS AND CATERING

### START HERE

- Buying cleaning products which have packaging with recycled content. There are several Australian manufacturers of cleaning products who are using recycled PET and HDPE plastic in bottles and recycled fibre in cardboard packaging.
- Provide reusable mugs, glasses, crockery and cutlery, rather than plastic or paper.

### GET TO HERE

- Audit the use of cleaning products and chemicals, identify harmful or toxic products, and replace with non-toxic products where possible.
- Negotiate contracts with cleaners to include clauses that specify non-toxic cleaning supplies and materials must be used.
- Reduce food loss and compost organic waste.
- Provide a wide range of plant-based meals and minimise meat-based offerings.
- Use compostable packaging instead of plastic for takeaway food.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Have onsite composting bins or worm farms for all organic waste generated on the premises.
- Offer only vegetarian and/or vegan meals at cafes, function centres and events.

## 10. BUILDINGS, RENOVATIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTIONS

### START HERE

- Cover any gaps around doors, windows and cupboards that let draughts in
- Ensure there is nothing blocking windows, to let the maximum amount of sunlight in during winters.

### GET TO HERE

- Insulate your hot water tank and pipes.
- Install double glazing to insulate windows.
- Install flow-restrictors on all taps.
- Plant garden areas with low water use, drought resistant indigenous plants.
- Install waterless-urinals and dual-flush toilets.
- Buy products made from recycled materials, such as modular carpet tiles made with recycled nylon yarns and recycled PET bottles.
- Look for products made from recycled plastic for garden beds, outdoor furniture, decking, screening, signage, or fencing.

### ASPIRE TO HERE

- Install solar panels to generate electricity, and insulation to retain warmth or cooling as required.
- Re-locate your offices or premises close to public transport.
- Re-locate your business to a “green” building.
- If planning asset improvements or considering any type of development, choose your advisers carefully (eg: architects and builders).
- Incorporate ESD (Environmentally Sustainable Design) principles and materials, and make best use of aspect and local geography to maximise natural heating and cooling.
- Buy recycled construction materials, and sell off or give away any materials, furniture or equipment surplus to needs to other members of the local community (rather than having it end up in landfill).
- Assess the impact of your operations on the biodiversity (animal and plant life) of an area and take steps to reduce these negative impacts.

# D.

## How to respond when facing resistance about climate change action

Leaders in the community and not-for-profit sector have an important role to lead Australia towards a safer, fairer and healthier future.

It can be challenging for leaders to initiate conversations about climate change and to maintain positive momentum when faced with resistance.

Here are some self-reflective questions that you could explore that may help you on your journey.

- Have I tried to accept everyone 'as they are and wherever they are' on their own journey towards comprehending and accepting the facts about climate change?
- Have I spent time getting to know people and exploring our shared values?
- Have I attempted to develop rapport, common ground and trust?
- Have I showed that climate change is personal and is affecting all of us - regardless of our different lifestyles, interests and hobbies?
- Have I explained why climate change matters to me through sharing personal stories and narratives?
- Have I explored the language I could use when discussing the issue of climate change?
- Have I explored the different ways people may respond to climate change?
- Have I understood that feelings of shame, guilt, anger and fear may condition some people to remain closed to discussing climate change?
- Have I found ways to respond with empathy and compassion to help open up the conversation?
- Have I gracefully accepted that I am unlikely to change anyone's beliefs in a single interaction or conversation?
- Have I reminded myself that every little bit counts - even if it's only a small influence in the right direction?



## Further information and support:

### *Useful Links:*

- [\*\*10 Communication Tips to Change the Climate Story\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Learn more about divestment from fossil fuels\*\*](#)
- [\*\*To find auditors to help you measure and reduce your energy and resource-use\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Advice on developing a sustainable procurement policy\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Advice on minimising waste and maximising recycling\*\*](#)

### *Additional references used in the preparation of this material:*

- Facilitators Declare Australia (Ange Andrews, Cassie Wright, Che Biggs, Hedy Bryant, Julia Curtis, Laurel Freeland, Pru Gell, Ross Allen and Simone Maus)
- The fourth R Pty Ltd (Ange Andrews)
- ACOSS Climate Change and the Community Sector member survey 2021
- AICD NFP Chairs' Forum Meeting Agenda - 27 April 2021