

# National Carbon Offset Standard Carbon Neutral Program Public Disclosure Summary



An Australian Government Initiative



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment and Energy**

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## COMPANY NAME

**Uniting Communities Incorporated.**

## BASE YEAR:

**2014/15**

## FIRST CARBON NEUTRAL PERIOD:

**2015/16**

## Declaration

To the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this Public Disclosure Summary is true and correct and meets the requirements of the National Carbon Offset Standard Carbon Neutral Program.



Simon Schrapel

Chief Executive

Type of carbon neutral certification: Organisation

Verification

Date of most recent external verification/audit: 26 November 2015

Auditor: EY

Auditor assurance statement link:

# 1. Carbon neutral information

## 1A. Introduction

Uniting Communities works with South Australians across metropolitan and regional South Australia through more than 90 community service programs. There is a team of more than 1,500 staff and volunteers who support and engage with more than 20,000 South Australians each year.

Uniting Communities recognises that people of all ages and backgrounds will come across challenges in their life. We offer professional and non-judgmental support for individuals and families offering programs for:

- Older people – two aged care facilities and independent living assistance
- Younger people
- Families & children
- Housing & crisis support
- Mental health & well-being – Lifeline Adelaide
- People with disabilities
- Carers
- Financial & legal services
- Goodwill stores.

We also support community-led initiatives through small grants and community development.

Uniting Communities is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and has been working on emissions reduction across its main administration building and services outlets since its goal of becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2015 was set by the Uniting Communities Board in 2010. In 2015 we became the first registered charity in Australia to become certified Carbon Neutral and the very first organisation in South Australia to do so.

Uniting Communities was announced the winner of the Community and Regions category at the Inaugural Premier's Climate Change Council – SA Climate Leaders Awards 2016. This award recognised our commitment to becoming certified carbon neutral and encouraging behavioural change in our organisation as well as in the broader community

Our carbon program, now named Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN), has been headed by a committee of employees and managers from across the organisation. Together they develop emissions reduction plans and initiatives, monitor progress and report to the executive team.

Key to continuous progress in carbon reduction and communication across an organisation of this size are our Site Representatives. They facilitate on the ground action.

Uniting Communities greenhouse gas inventory has been prepared in accordance with the National Carbon Offset Standard Guidelines 2013 and other standards referred to within that

document including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Standards and the National Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reporting Act 2007.

Uniting Communities has used the Operational Control method of consolidation and has considered the following greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) and hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs).

## 1B. Emission sources within certification boundary

### Quantified sources

The greenhouse gas inventory has been prepared using the Operational Control approach. In 2015/16 Uniting Communities operated its services from approximately 54 sites, five of which were owned and the remainder leased. The carbon emissions from these facilities are calculated and aggregated via a carbon management system for which Uniting Communities purchased a license in 2014. All data is maintained in this system and regular reporting is provided to managers.

*Table 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Sources*

Scope	Emissions source
Scope 1	Natural Gas
	Refrigerant
	Transport Fuel - Company Fleet
Scope 2	Electricity
Scope 3	Business Travel – Air
	Business Travel - Employee Commuting
	Business Travel - Grey Fleet
	Copy Paper
	Stationery
	Waste – Landfill

### Non-quantified sources

The impact of excluding the following sources is not expected to materially affect the overall total emissions.

As a public benevolent institution Uniting Communities relies to some extent on volunteers for the provision of its services. Emissions contributions are currently unquantifiable as volunteers are not generally compensated for their time or travel. Some services for particular programs are brokered to external providers, for example independent living services. These services are paid for through a set fee that does not include the breakdown of fuel or other emissions sources.

Sometimes Uniting Communities finds it necessary to engage contractors and consultants however the expenses associated with these services are immaterial from an emissions



perspective, as are the provision of food and beverage and medical supplies which are part of our residential aged care services.

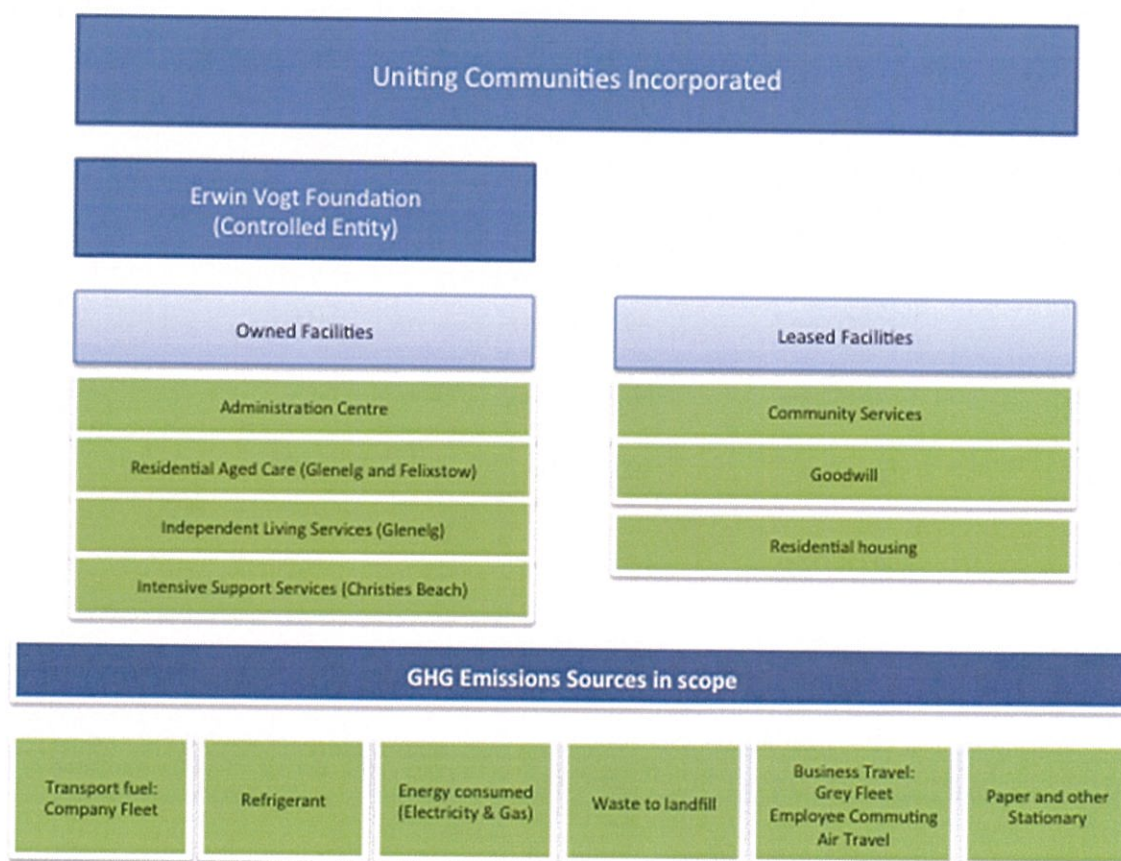
During the year, Scope 3 emissions from water usage was added to the Carbon Neutral Program Guidelines. As a full set of data for water consumption was unavailable, Uniting Communities has decided not to expand its Scope 3 inventory to include it. A thorough assessment of these emissions, based on actual data, will be undertaken for the next reporting period to determine if this is a material source of emissions.

Other immaterial or hard to measure activities include some purchased goods and services, accommodation, taxi travel and capital goods.

The disposal of building materials from the demolition of 43 Franklin Street has not been included in the carbon inventory as this is not considered to be part of Uniting Communities normal activities. However, it is worth noting that an aspirational goal of 98% recycling was included as part of the demolition contract.

### 1C. Diagram of certification boundary

The diagram below shows the facilities and operations that Uniting Communities runs along with the emissions sources included in its carbon inventory.



## 2. Emissions reduction measures

### 2A. Emissions over time

Five new sites have been opened this year and six have been closed in response to changes in program services and funding. Overall the difference in emissions is minimal. Uniting Communities has grown its Home Care services during the year which has lead to increased travel in privately owned and company fleet vehicles. However the efficiency of the fleet has improved with the ongoing conversion of petrol vehicles to hybrid petrol/electric. 10 vehicles were converted this year resulting in financial and carbon emissions savings.

Electricity emissions have reduced by 9% although consumption has only gone down by 2.3%. The difference between the emissions and consumption figures can be attributed to the reduction in the SA emissions factor having fallen from 0.61 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e per kWh to 0.56 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e per kWh. The 2.3% reduction in consumption relates to the closure of two particular sites and the remainder from ongoing efforts by employees to use less power.

This year Uniting Communities began redeveloping its administration building involving the demolition of 43 Franklin Street. This has necessitated the relocation of employees and equipment to 10 Pitt Street and may have had an impact on this site's total emissions, however it is not possible to quantify this fully as these sites were both on the same electricity supply meter.

<b>Table 1. Emissions since base year</b>			
	Base Year 2014/15	2015/16	Percentage change
Scope 1	520 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	499 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	-4%
Scope 2	1,198 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	1,073 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	-9%
Scope 3	789 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	865 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,507 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>	<b>2,437 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Total per FTE</b>	<b>4,722 kgCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>	<b>4,555 kgCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>	<b>-3.5%</b>

Note accompanying Table 1. The total emissions for 2014/15 has been restated due to the discovery of a gas meter that had been missing from the reporting system. This applied to both years and so did not affect the comparative results.

## 2B. Emissions reduction strategy

Uniting Communities' Beyond Carbon Neutral Committee maintains an ongoing emissions reduction plan. Each year this plan is reviewed in full with input from the organisation's leadership team and site representatives. The plan is also reviewed at each committee meeting both to monitor progress and to discuss any new ideas. Whilst being conscious of the organisation's largest emissions sources, initiatives are developed for all sources.

Emissions reduction is supported by capital and operating budgets allowing building upgrades and behaviour change to contribute to carbon reduction.

The carbon reduction target for this financial year is 5%.

## 2C. Emissions reduction actions

Since the inception of Beyond Carbon Neutral (including the time before it received Carbon Neutral certification) Uniting Communities has reduced its carbon footprint by over 35%. This has been achieved through a variety of means which can be summarised as changes to policy and processes, building upgrades and behaviour change.

Policy and process contributors to carbon reduction have included:

- The introduction of an automated payroll system has resulted in the reduction of approximately 55,000 copies (110 reams) this year. This has contributed to an overall reduction in copy paper purchases 12%. Printers have also been defaulted to double sided and employees are very conscious of only printing when necessary.
- The policy to have hybrid petrol-electric vehicles as the default for new company fleet purchases – this has been in place since 2007 and continues to date. Currently the fleet is 65% hybrids. All vehicles contain "Drive Green" tips on fuel efficient driving. The carbon saving is all relative to the amount of driving that takes place and in 2015/16 the number of kilometres travelled increased due to growth in services – the fuel efficiency in carbon terms improved in the last year by 0.018 kgCO<sub>2</sub>-e/km.
- Carbon offsets have been included in the purchase price of new vehicles for many years through an arrangement with CMI Toyota. The associated carbon offsets for 2015/16 came to 372 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e covering 17.5% of Uniting Communities' total carbon footprint.

Procurement continues to play a role in carbon reduction with prospective and existing suppliers being asked about their low carbon credentials. As part of the contract with the stationery provider items come to Uniting Communities fully carbon offset and the provider Lyreco International also donates offsets of the same value. In total this has reduced Uniting Communities carbon footprint by 24 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e this year. Similarly, Carbon Neutral certified paper is purchased from Fuji Zerox.

CMI Toyota and Lyreco International retire NCOS eligible offsets in Uniting Communities' name thereby reducing the number of offsets that need to be purchased at the end of each year. Offsets from these two suppliers amounted to 396 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e in 2015/16.

In the reporting year, there have been no building upgrades specifically relating to energy efficiency other than the ongoing changeover of lighting to LEDs in some leased offices. The fact that Uniting Communities is redeveloping its administration building has contributed to this and we look forward to achieving greater energy efficiency in the new building.



Uniting Communities ICT departments continues to adopt efficiency measures including the consolidation of the fleet of multi-function devices.

Behaviour change initiatives are ongoing and largely lead by our Site Representatives who identify and implement emissions reduction opportunities with their teams.

### 3. Emissions summary

Scope	Emission source	t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
1	Natural Gas	115
1	Refrigerant	27
1	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet	357
2	Purchased Electricity	1,073
3	Business Travel – Air Travel	50
3	Business Travel – Employee Vehicles	248
3	Business Travel – Employee Commuting	105
3	Stationery Purchases	12
3	Waste to Landfill	188
3	Natural Gas (indirect emissions)	23
3	Purchased Electricity (indirect emissions)	211
3	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet (indirect emissions)	28
3	NCOS Certified Copy Paper	0
Total Gross Emissions		2,437
GreenPower or retired LGCs		0
Total Net Emissions		2,437

### 4. Carbon offsets

#### 4A. Offsets summary

Table 3. Cancellation of eligible offset units			
Number of eligible offset units forward cancelled for 2015-16, as reported in 2014-15 report			2448 units
Total measured emissions for 2015-16			2437 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total eligible offset units held in surplus for future years			11 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
Estimation of emissions for 2016-17			2437 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
<b>Eligible offset units forward-cancelled for 2016/17</b>			
Date of retirement	Offset type and registry	Serial numbers	Quantity



<b>Table 3. Cancellation of eligible offset units</b>			
2016	VCS Tasmania Forestry Protection	2646-115112596-115112695-VCU-016-MER-AU-14-641-01072011-15042012-0 2646-115074294-115075250-VCU-016-MER-AU-14-641-01072011-15042012-0	1057
2016	Australian Native Reforestation Gold Standard VERS	GS1-1-AU-GS3039-49 to 1105	1057
	Energy industries (renewable/non-renewable sources), APX VCS Registry Verified Carbon Units	3569-158363038-158363433-VCU-008- APX-CN-1-877-26122010-25122011-0	396
Total offsets retired			2510 units
Net emissions			-73 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total eligible offset units held in surplus for future years (from above)			11 t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
<b>Total eligible offset units held in surplus for future years</b>			<b>84 t CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>

#### 4B. Offsets purchasing and retirement strategy

In accordance with Uniting Communities' license agreement with the Department of the Environment, offsets are purchased in advance for the financial year ahead based on last year's total inventory. Offsets acquired during the year from arrangements with suppliers are deducted from total emissions to arrive at the amount to be purchased. Should any major changes occur during the year that are expected to make a significant change in the carbon inventory, then a purchase will be made at the time of recognition of that change.

#### 4C. Offset projects (Co-benefits)

Where possible from a budget perspective, and in circumstances where it has direct control over offset purchases, Uniting Communities prefers to purchase offsets from Australia with co-benefits that resonate with its values of community and environment.

The bulk of the offset purchases were split 50%/50% between the Australian Native Reforestation (Gold Standard VERs) in the Yarra Yarra Biodiverse Corridor in Western Australia and the Tasmania Forest Protection Project VCSs.

The Yarra Yarra project provides the following co-benefits:

- Creating biodiversity habitat for rare and endangered flora and fauna
- Creating connectivity between existing remnant vegetation
- Restoring degraded areas damaged by salt, wind and water erosion
- Employment including local Indigenous people, and liaison with traditional owners
- Aboriginal heritage sites recognised and registered with the Department of Indigenous Affairs Registry
- Creating new industry in rural areas and expenditure with local businesses.

The Tasmania Forest Protection provides these co-benefits:

- Enhancing local biodiversity and habitat
- Diversifying multiple private landowners' income
- Maintaining the aesthetic and recreational values of the Tasmanian landscape.

Through its suppliers CMI Toyota and Lyreco International, via carbon management company Canopy, Uniting Communities acquired the remaining offsets in the Sichuan Huadian Xixi River Hydro-electricity Development Co., Ltd. Luogu Hydroelectric Project in China. Its co-benefits are:

- Increases employment opportunities in the area where it is located - people will be permanently employed for Project operation, and Project construction secures jobs in the construction sector. The Project therefore contributes to poverty alleviation.
- Contributes to the development of the local community by investing in new elementary school and medical services.
- Enhances the local investment environment and therefore improves the local economy.

## 5. Use of trade mark

Table 4. Trade mark register	
Where used	Logo type
We are Carbon Neutral brochure and banner in admin building entrance at 10 Pitt Street, Adelaide	Certified organisation
Uniting Communities website: <a href="http://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/we-are-carbon-neutral/">http://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>	Certified organisation

## 6. Have you done more?

Uniting Communities is considered to be a leader in emissions reduction and has reduced its carbon footprint considerably since its carbon neutral program began in 2010. Uniting Communities has always been willing to share its approach with others in the sector and since it became Carbon Neutral its executives and consultant have presented at many events.

Uniting Communities has provided case studies to both the Department of the Environment as well as to the SA Climate Change Office as part of a Carbon Neutral Adelaide.

Always seeking to do things properly we have gone above and beyond the minimum requirements of NCOS by purchasing a license to a carbon management system in which our emissions data is captured. The system is also used for monitoring and reporting on emissions to leaders across the organisation.

We strive to do things properly and so integration within the business has been a key theme this year. Accordingly, the Finance Team has taken responsibility for data management and controls, carbon has been integrated into management reporting and our committee now reports directly to the Executive Group.

As well as having a policy in place, we have shown our commitment to emissions reduction by allocating internal resources to committees and other activities as well as setting an annual capital and operating budget. We have also had a carbon management consultant assisting us since 2010. These investments have more than been repaid in operating cost savings and will continue to do so.

