

Australian Government  
Carbon Neutral Program  
Public Disclosure Summary



COMPANY NAME: Uniting Communities Incorporated

BASE YEAR: 2014/15

FIRST CARBON NEUTRAL PERIOD: 2014/15

### 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.

Signature

Date: 31 October 2017

Simon Schrapel

Chief Executive

Type of carbon neutral certification: Organisation

Verification

Date of most recent external verification/audit: 31 October 2017

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.

We also support community-led initiatives through small grants and community development and run a number of Goodwill stores.

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 behaviour change in our organisation as well as in the broader community.

In 2017, Uniting Communities became a founding partner of Carbon Neutral Adelaide and is still the only organisation with its head office in SA to be certified Carbon Neutral. We are proud of our leadership position and of the benefits that we have attained by going carbon neutral.

Our carbon program, which we now call Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN), has been led by a committee of employees and management from across the organisation and our program manager. 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 and ensure that BCN is widespread.

Uniting Communities greenhouse gas inventory has been prepared in accordance with the Carbon Neutral Program Guidelines version 4.0 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 2016/17 Uniting Communities operated its services from approximately 61 sites, five of which were owned and the remainder leased. The data from these facilities is entered into a carbon management system for which Uniting Communities purchased a license in 2014. The data entered is used to calculate the carbon emissions from each emissions source and is then aggregated. All data is maintained in this system and regular reporting is provided to managers.

In 2016/17, water was assessed as a material emissions contributor, albeit only 1.5% of the total inventory at 37 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, and added to our greenhouse gas inventory. Our two aged care facilities and other live-in services sites rely on water to provide their services.

*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
	Water

## 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 due to their travel 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.

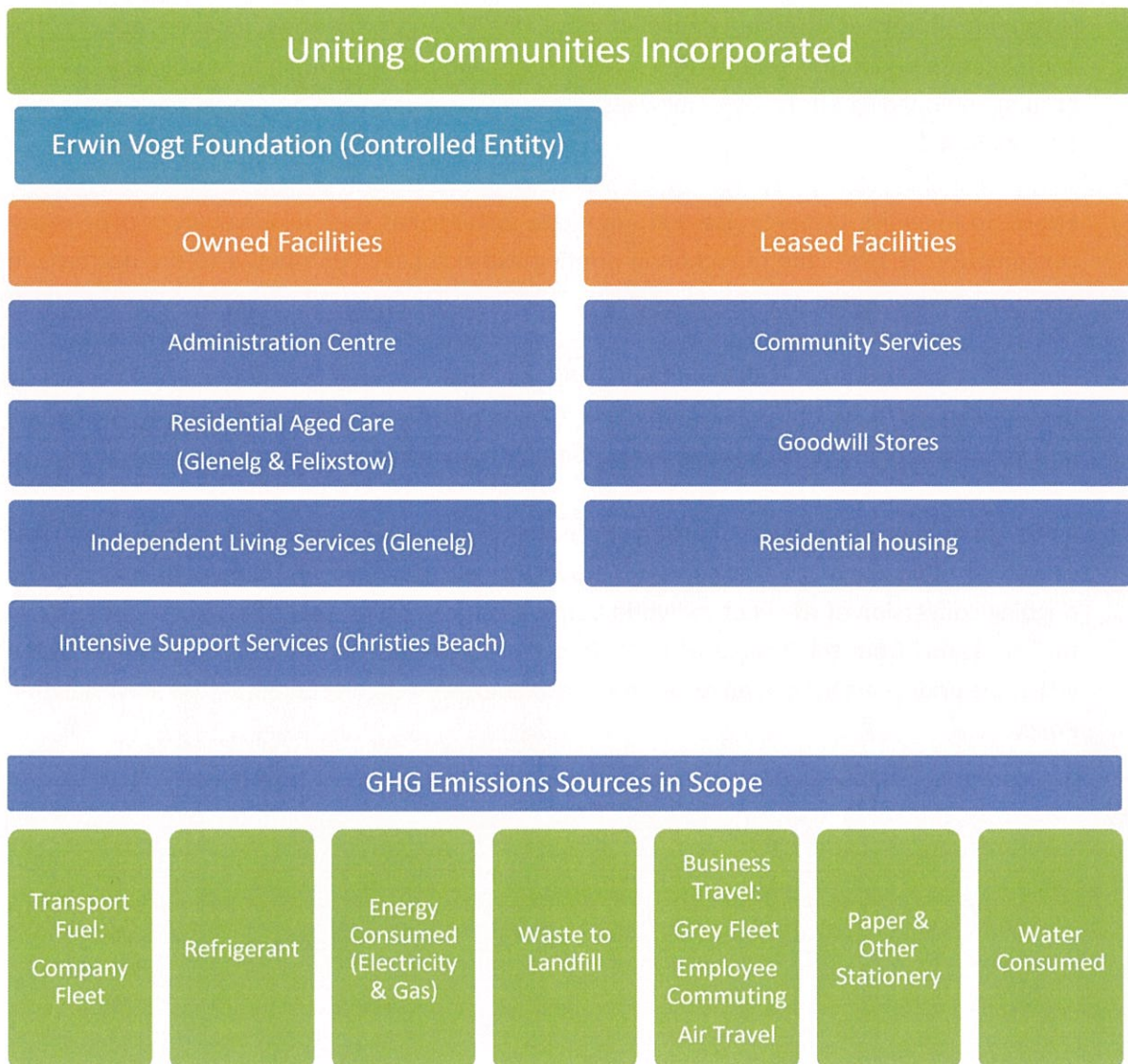
Sometimes Uniting Communities finds it necessary to engage contractors and consultants however the expenses associated with these services are immaterial from an emissions perspective, as are the provision of food and beverage and medical supplies which are part of our residential aged care services.

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

### 1C. Diagram of certification boundary

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





## 2. Emissions reduction measures

### 2A. Emissions over time

Six new sites have been opened this year and five have been closed in response to changes in program services and funding. Overall the difference in emissions is minimal. The site at Mile End closed at the start of 2017 with the staff relocating to multiple existing sites. Alleviating the need to increase the amount of leased space has enabled us to utilise the existing space at these sites more efficiently. Uniting Communities has had a small reduction in the number of company owned fleet vehicles, however the percentage of hybrid petrol-electric vehicles has increased from 65% in 2015/16 to 74% for 2016/17.

Electricity emissions have reduced by 10% this year although consumption has gone down by 5.7%. Since the base year electricity consumption has fallen by 14%. The difference between the emissions and consumption figures can be attributed to the reduction in the SA emissions factor reflecting the increased percentage of renewable energy in the grid. The reduction in

consumption relates to the closure of one of the larger sites (as detailed above), the consolidation of one site's staff into a smaller space (whilst the development of a new building occurs) and ongoing efforts by employees to use less power. Electricity use at our Glenelg site also fell by 4%.

Efforts to minimise resource use and automate systems has seen a reduction in copy paper consumption of 14% - the reduction in printing will also have contributed to the decrease in electricity consumption and consumables.

During the year an error was identified in the way that employee commuting had previously been calculated. Accordingly, prior years have been restated, as shown in Table 1. The overall impact on the total inventory (before restatement) is an increase of 268 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

A change in policy to exclude emissions from the private usage element of company fleet has caused a reduction of 2% in kilometres travelled and therefore fuel use. Coupled with the ongoing conversion of the fleet to hybrid petrol-electric vehicles, there has been a decrease in fuel emissions from this source of 6.5%. In order to ensure relevant comparability between years, the prior years have been restated in accordance with Uniting Communities' Recalculation Policy.

Table 1. Emissions compared with base year				
	Base Year / Year 1 2014/15 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Year 2 2015/16 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Year 3 2016/17 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Percentage Change Since Base Year
Scope 1	514	492	480	-6.7%
Scope 2	1,198	1,073	961	-19.8%
Scope 3	1,087	1,152	1,199	10.4%
Total	2,799	2,717	2,640	-5.7%
Total per FTE	4.82 kgCO <sub>2</sub> -e	4.82 kgCO <sub>2</sub> -e	4.66 kgCO <sub>2</sub> -e	3.6%

*Note: Scope 1 and Scope 3 totals have been restated for the Base Year and for 2015/16 to reflect a prior error in the calculation of employee commuting emissions and a policy change this year for transport fuel – company fleet. Water was added to the inventory in 2016/17 and has been included as an estimate in the prior years. The restatements have made comparisons between the years meaningful and appropriate and have resulted in a decrease in total carbon emissions since the Base Year of 159 tCO<sub>2</sub>e or 0.16 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per FTE.*

## 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 continue to focus on all sources.

Emissions reduction is supported by annual budget allocations allowing building upgrades and behaviour change to contribute to carbon reduction.

The internal carbon reduction target for this financial year was 5% and this has been achieved when comparing results on a like for like (restated) basis, disregarding the data error mentioned previously, and excluding the addition of water as an emissions source.

## 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 40%. This has been achieved through a variety of means which can be summarised as changes to policy and processes, building upgrades and behaviour change. Where possible Uniting Communities is incorporating carbon management into its everyday activities, policies and processes.

Notable carbon reduction actions this year have included:

- The introduction of an automated client care system into our aged care services has resulted in a significant reduction in paper usage. The amount specific to this initiative cannot be identified but an overall decrease in copy paper of 14% has been achieved. Some of this may be due to an ongoing consciousness of using less paper, printing double sided and the introduction of a log-in requirement for printing.
- The policy for hybrid petrol-electric vehicles to be the default for new company fleet purchases has been in place since 2007 and continues to date. Currently the fleet is 74% hybrids. All vehicles contain "Drive Green" tips on fuel efficient driving. The carbon saving this year was 6%.
- An emissions reduction audit was introduced into the organisation's audit function this year and helps to drive outcomes at a local level.
- Uniting Communities' Information Communications Technology department continues to adopt efficiency measures including the consolidation of the fleet of multi-function devices and automatic double-sided printing. Having succeeded in winning grant funding in June 2017 under the SA Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure Community Grants, Uniting Communities is working on a project to enhance its video conferencing facilities, aiming to cut staff travel, fuel consumption and save time.
- World Environment Day in June was declared World Environment Week or 'WE Week' at Uniting Communities, during which a new 'Buy Green' initiative was launched as well as holding staff competitions and morning teas at which sustainability topics were discussed and information provided to staff.
- A solar feasibility review was conducted for the two aged care facilities and was being considered for implementation at the date of writing this report.
- Mobile Muster recycling bins for mobile phones were implemented at five sites as a focus on waste recycling and reducing environmental impact.



Procurement continues to play a key role in carbon reduction with prospective and existing suppliers being asked about their low carbon credentials. 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 2016/17 came to 337 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e covering 12.7% of Uniting Communities' total carbon footprint. Also, as part of the contract with the stationery provider Lyreco International, office supplies come to Uniting Communities fully carbon offset. In total Lyreco donated offsets of 233 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. CMI Toyota and Lyreco International retire NCOS eligible offsets in Uniting Communities' name thereby reducing the number of offsets that need to be purchased by the organisation at the end of each year. Offsets from these two suppliers amounted to 570 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e in 2016/17. We sincerely thank both organisations for participating in offset programs and for their ongoing support of Uniting Communities' low carbon approach.

For part of the year, Uniting Communities was purchasing Carbon Neutral Certified paper from Fuji Zero and this has been taken into account in the carbon inventory amounting to 4 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e.

Behaviour change initiatives are ongoing and largely led by our Site Representatives who identify and implement emissions reduction opportunities with their teams. This task is carried out on top of individuals' 'normal' roles and we thank the 'Reps' and their managers for their continued efforts to reduce carbon emissions within their services to clients.

In 2017/18, we aim to continue to seek reductions in electricity use in particular and are in the process of undertaking feasibility studies for the implementation of solar power. Capital funds will be allocated where the financial analysis shows a reasonable return on investment and attractive payback period.

Uniting Communities' property managers Colliers are assisting by seeking out 'green leases' for new tenancies and engaging with landlords on energy reduction measures such as installing LED lights and more efficient air-conditioning.

Integrating low carbon into the business will remain a focus as will seeking process improvements that lead to resource savings in the form of energy, paper and/or consumables.

This year we will also be introducing an online learning module on carbon reduction which will be integrated into the staff orientation program.

### 3. Emissions summary

Table 2. Emissions Summary		
Scope	Emission source	t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
1	Natural Gas	109
1	Refrigerant	36
1	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet	335
2	Purchased Electricity	960
3	Business Travel – Air Travel	47
3	Business Travel – Employee Vehicles	260
3	Business Travel – Employee Commuting	346
3	Stationery Purchases	12
3	Waste to Landfill	197
3	Natural Gas (indirect emissions)	22



<b>Table 2. Emissions Summary</b>		
Scope	Emission source	t CO <sub>2</sub> -e
3	Purchased Electricity (indirect emissions)	199
3	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet (indirect emissions)	26
3	Upstream transport and distribution (Business Travel - Employee Vehicles)	20
3	Upstream transport and distribution (Business Travel – Employee Commuting)	27
3	Copy Paper	7
3	Water	37
Total Gross Emissions		2,640
GreenPower or retired LGCs		0
Total Net Emissions		2,640

## 4. Carbon offsets

### 4A. Offsets summary

<b>Table 3. Cancellation of eligible offset units</b>	
Total measured emissions for 2016/17	2,640 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Additional emissions due to restatement of prior years 2014/15 and 2015/16	571 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
Number of eligible offset units forward cancelled for 2016/17 as reported in 2015/16	2,510 units
Total eligible offset units held in surplus from last year	84 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
<b>Total offsets required to be retired for 2016/17</b>	<b>701 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>
Eligible offsets retired during 2016/17 from arrangements with suppliers: Guohua Tongliao Kezuo Zhongqi Phase I 49.5 MW Wind Farm Project VCU serial numbers: 3765-164541207-164541776-VCU-003-APX-CN-1-1310-01012010-31122010-0	570 units
<b>Total eligible offsets remaining to be retired for 2016/17 (true up)</b>	<b>131 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>
Additional eligible offsets retired in arrears for 2016/17 (131 units) plus 99 units purchased in advance for 2017/18 (due to minimum purchase requirement): Clean Development Mechanism Wind Farm Project – India, serial numbers: 226,273,896 - 226,273,970 (75 units) and 226,273,971 – 226,274,125 (155 units).	230 units
Net emissions	-99 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
<b>Total eligible offset units held in surplus for future years</b>	<b>99 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>

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

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

As detailed in Section 2, Uniting Communities' suppliers CMI Toyota and Lyreco International supply eligible offsets with purchases. After these have been deducted from the carbon inventory, bulk offsets are purchased according to the requirements of NCOS. However, since Uniting Communities became Carbon Neutral in 2015, it has purchased offsets in advance and thus (apart from a true up for 2016/17) is not obligated to purchase again until next year.

As Australian Carbon Credit Units are expected to become available in South Australia this financial year, an amount is expected to be secured from Biodiverse Carbon Conservation Pty Ltd which will be banked for Uniting Communities 2017/18 liability.

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

##### **Offsets purchased in advance for 2016/17**

2,510 unit of offsets purchased were split fifty percent / fifty percent 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.

##### **Offsets purchased or donated during the course of 2016/17**

Through its suppliers CMI Toyota and Lyreco International, via carbon management company Canopy, Uniting Communities acquired offsets in the Guohua Tongliao Kezuo Zhongqi Phase I 49.5 MW Wind Farm Project in China. Its co-benefits are as follows.

Being located in a power grid dominated by coal-fired power plants, development of the proposed project will not only reduce GHG emissions but also mitigate local environmental pollution caused by air emissions from coal-fired power plants. North China where the project

is located is facing rapid increase in electricity demand. Development of the project contributes to meeting local electricity demand, and therefore boosts the economy in the local region. For the local population, they benefit from the compensation for the deserted land occupation, and the job opportunities due to the construction and operation of the project.

#### **Offsets purchased in arrears (true up) for 2016/17**

##### **CDM Wind Farm Project - India**

**Social well-being:** India faces a peak power shortage of 11.70% . Wind energy projects will not only contribute in closing this deficit but they also contribute toward the Indian government's plan of meeting 10% of the total power requirement for the country from renewable sources of energy.

**Economic well-being:** The project implementation has provided a fillip to economic activity in the region. Direct and indirect employment has been generated in the plant for project implementation and management. The success of this project will encourage more business houses to invest in Wind Power projects positive contribution towards renewable energy generation and GHG reduction and thereby contributing to national development as well climate change. This further helps policy makers to divert the funds, to be originally used for power sector reforms, for improvement of other sectors.

**Environmental well-being:** The wind energy based electricity generation helps in less fossil-fuel burning in the system and thus less GHG emissions in the atmosphere. Use of renewable energy source (wind energy) also helps in conservation of natural resources (like coal), thereby contributing to energy security of the country.

**Technological well-being:** The technology used in the power plant is proven and safe. Increased interest in wind energy projects will further push R&D efforts by technology providers to develop more efficient and better machinery in future.

## **5. Use of trade mark**

<b>Table 4. Trade mark register</b>	
Where used	Logo type
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
"We are Carbon Neutral" brochure and banner in administration building entrance at 10 Pitt Street, Adelaide	Certified organisation
Carbon Neutral Adelaide website: <a href="https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/who-is-taking-action/uniting-communities">https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/who-is-taking-action/uniting-communities</a>	Certified organisation



Australian Government, Department of the Environment: <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf">http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf</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 and continues to reduce progressively since it became Carbon Neutral in 2015. 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 Program Manager have presented at many events, including the launch of Carbon Neutral Adelaide. Uniting Communities is now a Founding Partner of Carbon Neutral Adelaide and as such commits to continuing to reduce its carbon footprint and to promoting the program and its experience to others.

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.

With a strong focus on doing 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 managers and representatives across the organisation, as well as the Beyond Carbon Neutral Committee.

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 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.

The table below includes links to our organisation website and other online promotional material.

<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	<a href="https://twitter.com/UCommunities">https://twitter.com/UCommunities</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/UnitingCommunitiesOz/">https://www.facebook.com/UnitingCommunitiesOz/</a>
<b>Youtube</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwoCOgEPXwo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwoCOgEPXwo</a>