

Australian Government  
Climate Active  
Public Disclosure Statement



NAME OF CERTIFIED ENTITY: Uniting Communities Incorporated

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

### 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 Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard.

Signature:		Date:	15 March 2021
Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive			
Carbon neutral certification category	Organisation		
Date of most recent external verification/audit	31 October 2017		
Auditor	EY		
Auditor assurance statement link	<a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>		



Australian Government  
Department of Industry, Science,  
Energy and Resources

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## 1. Description of certification and organisation

### 1A. Introduction

This certification is for Uniting Communities' operational emissions.

Uniting Communities is an inclusive not-for-profit organisation working alongside more than 30,000 South Australians each year as they strive for bright futures and great lives. We operate more than 100 community programs, travel over three million kilometres per year and have a team of over 1,500 staff and volunteers.

Uniting Communities seeks to reduce inequality and improve wellbeing for all who are striving to overcome disadvantage – individuals, their families and communities – so that they can realise their potential and live the best lives they can. Our service delivery, advocacy and community building activities are central to achieving this.

We offer more than 90 services to support the needs of individuals and our community including mental health and counselling; residential aged care and support for independent living; housing crisis and emergency support; disability services; services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people; financial and legal; drug and alcohol counselling; family relationships; and respite and carer support.

Uniting Communities has been committed to reducing its impact on the environment since 2010 when the Board of Uniting Communities determined its goal of becoming a certified carbon neutral organisation by 2015. Our carbon program, Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN) is now a core organisation commitment across all operations including our central administration and services.

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. In 2016, Uniting Communities became a founding partner of Carbon Neutral Adelaide and in 2017 were named the first Ambassador of Carbon Neutral Adelaide. We are proud of our leadership position and of the additional benefits that we have attained by being carbon neutral, including financial savings, enhanced reputation, employee satisfaction and delivering on contractual requirements for grant funding.

BCN has been led by our consultant adviser and program manager and a committee of employees and management from across the organisation. Together they develop emissions reduction plans and initiatives, monitor progress and report to the executive team and Board. Across the organisation, each site has a BCN Representative, performing the on-ground role of facilitating carbon reduction discussion and actions at their sites.

This year, Uniting Communities moved into its new iconic vertically integrated building "U City". The building and community within has already received a number of awards for its design and innovation. Notably U City was rated Adelaide's greenest six star green star building and there are aspirations for it to become a carbon neutral certified building. Whilst this building has increased our absolute carbon footprint, the carbon intensity relative to our revenue has fallen year on year since our first carbon neutral certification year, 2015.

Uniting Communities' carbon account has been prepared in accordance with Climate Active's requirements for Organisations and other standards including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Standard. Uniting Communities has used the Operational Control method of consolidation.

## 1B. Emission sources within certification boundary

### Quantified sources

The emissions scope has increased this year to include external printing, which is included in stationery purchases.

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 and external printing
	Waste to landfill
	Water consumed and water treatment

### Non-quantified and excluded sources

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

As a non-profit organisation, Uniting Communities relies to some extent on volunteers for the provision of its services. Emissions from their associated travel is currently unquantifiable as volunteers do not usually claim compensation for their travel. Some services for particular programs are brokered to external providers, for example independent living services for the elderly. These services are paid for through a set fee that does not include the breakdown of fuel or other emissions sources. As such it cannot be quantified easily and the emissions associated with these services are likely to be small relative to scope 1 and 2.

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, hotel accommodation associated with business travel, taxi travel and capital goods.

## 1C. Diagram of the certification boundary

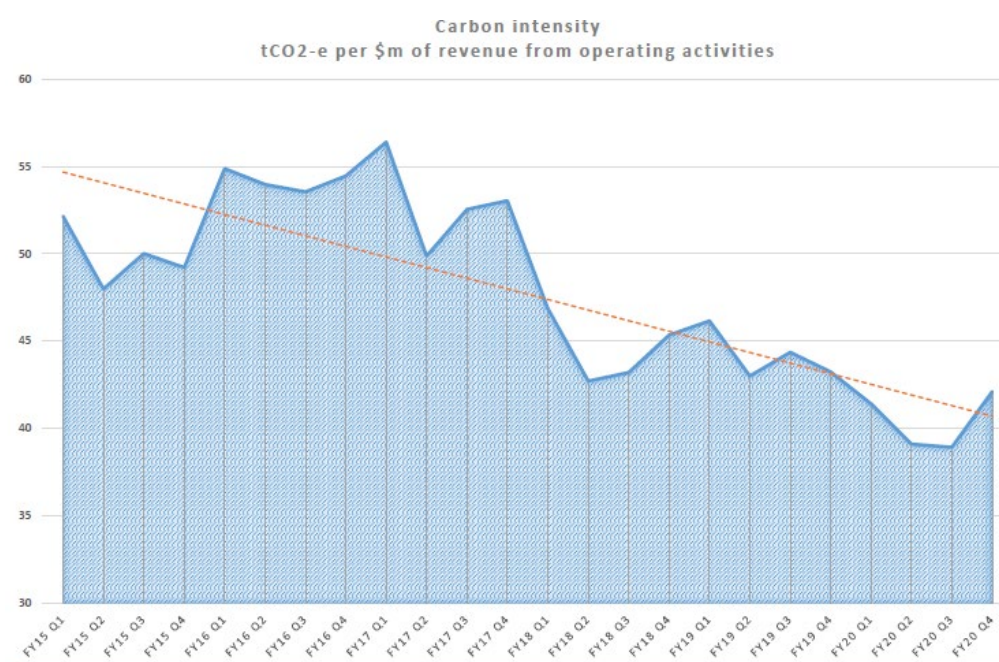
The diagram below shows the facilities and operations that Uniting Communities operates.



## 2. Emissions reduction measures

### 2A. Emissions over time

Overall emissions have decreased this year by 4.2% and around 4% for each of Scopes 1, 2 and 3. In terms of operating revenue emissions have decreased by 12.7%, despite organic growth. This reduction has been achieved during the year we moved into our new building U City – a much larger and more complex, multi-function facility. The continued reduction in emissions intensity since the 2015 based year is of note – see graph below – and amounts to 30% per million dollars of revenue. For information on emissions reduction measures this year see Section 2C.



<b>Table 2. Emissions compared with base year and prior year</b>					
	Base Year 2014/15 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	2018/19 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	2019/20 tCO <sub>2</sub> -e	Change on Prior Year (%)	Change Since Base Year (%)
Scope 1	372	365	350	-4.0%	-5.7%
Scope 2	1,198	934	894	-4.3%	-25.4%
Scope 3	1,585	1,644	1,576	-4.1%	-0.5%
Total	3,155	2,943	2,820	-4.2%	-10.6%
Per \$1m operating revenue	55	44	38	-12.7%	-30.2%

## 2B. Emissions reduction strategy 2020/21

Uniting Communities' Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN) Committee and Executive develops an emissions reduction strategy, in line with the organisations' strategic plan, and an annual plan of initiatives. Emissions reduction is supported by annual capital and operating budgets so allowing building and equipment upgrades and behaviour change to contribute to carbon reduction. The overall goals for 2020 - 2022 are:

- To maintain carbon neutral organisation certification
- To achieve SA's first carbon neutral building with U City
- Keep reducing emissions and associated operating costs, relative to income generated.

The main initiatives for the current year are:

- Greater staff education and engagement
- Implement the new sustainable procurement framework
- Work towards Green Star Performance rating and Climate Active Carbon Neutral Building certification for U City
- Continue to reduce waste to landfill across the organisation especially at residential aged care facilities
- Progress solar installations at leased sites
- Develop strategies to further increase fuel efficiency in company fleet and 'grey' fleet.

## 2C. Emissions reduction actions in 2019/20

Solar panels were installed on the three largest facilities including our two aged care facilities and our new building U City. The renewable energy produced has resulted in a reduction in emissions of 78 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e. We have also benefitted from a decrease in the grid electricity emissions factor for SA – a result of increased renewable power generation across the State.

COVID-19 has partly contributed to a 36% reduction in emissions from air travel, a 13% emissions reduction in transport fuel and a 19% reduction in business travel in employee-owned vehicles. 10% of the reduction in transport fuel was due to the ongoing conversion of company fleet to hybrid petrol-electric vehicles which improves fuel efficiency year on year.

A 23% reduction in copy paper consumption reflects the increased automation of operational processes. The 36% reduction in carbon emissions for copy paper is attributable to nearly 75% of our paper being certified carbon neutral, the result of a change in stationery supplier during the year. We are also pleased to report a 4% reduction in waste to landfill and a 6% reduction in water consumption.

Considerable efforts have been made to reduce waste to landfill at our aged care facilities in particular and these initiatives have been a major contributor to the overall reduction in waste this year. Our Glenelg aged care facility has also installed additional LED lighting (with funding from the Residential Energy Efficiency Scheme) and a green facade, partly funded by a Community Grant from the SA Government.

Our Site Representatives continued to facilitate local action at our many leased sites including introducing new waste bin systems and practices.

The organisation has made continued efforts to utilise information technology and especially video conferencing. This has been heavily used as many employees have worked from home due to the Covid pandemic, although Uniting Communities' has maintained its core community support and residential care services. The associated reduction in employee commuting has not been measured this year; unfortunately our annual commuting survey coincided with the start of Covid working from home arrangements.

Our annual World Environment Day activities extended to an entire month of '@home' initiatives which included social media sharing of vegan recipes, waste reduction and other environmental activities that our employees had introduced.

### 3. Emissions summary

<b>Table 3. Emissions Summary 2019/20</b>		
Scope	Emission source	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
1 & 3	Natural Gas	203
1	Refrigerant	0
1	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet	190
2 & 3	Purchased Electricity	1,095
3	Business Travel – Air Travel	35
3	Business Travel – Employee Vehicles	205
3	Business Travel – Employee Commuting	800
3	Stationery and external printing	64
3	Waste to Landfill	197
3	Copy Paper	3
3	Water	28
Total Emissions		2,820

## 4. Carbon offsets

### 4A. Offsets summary

<b>Table 4. Offsets Summary</b>						
Total carried forward from prior year						<b>3,728</b>
<b>Projects purchased in 2019/20 for this and future years</b>	Eligible offset units	Registry	Cancellation date	Serial numbers (including hyperlink to registry transaction record)	Vintage	Quantity
Chakala Wind Power Project India (banked for future)	VCU	VCS	5/11/20	7069-368178853-368180052-VCU-034-APX-IN-1-1197-01012017-31122017-0  <a href="https://registry.terra.org/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=121427">https://registry.terra.org/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=121427</a>	2017	1,200
InfraVest Changbin and Taichung bundled Wind Farms Project – Taiwan (Some used for 2019/20, some banked)  Note: Paired with Australian Biodiversity Units in EcoAustralia (see Section 4C)	VER	Gold Standard	30/11/20	GS1-1-TW-GS472-12-2017-6457-117603-122502  <a href="https://registry.goldstandard.org/credit-blocks/details/143361">https://registry.goldstandard.org/credit-blocks/details/143361</a>	2017	4,900
Total offsets retired in 2019/20						6,100
<b>Total for 2019/20 inventory</b>						<b>2,820</b>
Amount for prior year restatements						0
Carried forward from prior year						3,728
<b>Total offsets allocated for 2019/20</b>						<b>2,820</b>
Offsets banked for use future years						<b>7,008</b>

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

Uniting Communities offsetting policy is to purchase fifty per cent from Australia and fifty per cent from overseas and where possible to maximize the social and economic co-benefits as well as the environmental benefits. For the last two years, we have also been employing a bulk purchasing strategy to mitigate against future price rises in offsets. In 2018/19, Uniting Communities banked 3,728 Indian wind power offsets for future years and also had two native biodiverse revegetation credits remaining. All of the Australian credits and some of the wind power offsets have been allocated to this year's inventory, as shown in Table 4.

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

##### **EcoAustralia**

This year Uniting Communities purchased 4,900 units in EcoAustralia's Mount Sandy biodiverse native vegetation projects in South Australia. EcoAustralia is an award-winning stapled carbon credit product, provided by South Pole in partnership with Australian biodiversity protection organisation, Cassinia Environmental. The Australian component helps to protect and restore native vegetation. The product blends State Government-accredited biodiversity protection with international carbon offsets. An Australian Biodiversity Unit, equal to 1.5m<sup>2</sup> of government-accredited, permanently protected Australian vegetation is paired with 1 Gold Standard international carbon credit, representing 1 tCO<sub>2</sub>-e of avoided emissions.

The Mount Sandy project brings together indigenous and non-indigenous communities by promoting traditional land management for biodiversity conservation, in partnership with the Ngarrindjeri people. This project protects a rare pocket of wetlands and woodlands between the Coorong National Park and Lake Albert. As one of the last remaining areas of native vegetation in the region, the land forms a strategic wildlife corridor and is of great significance to the Ngarrindjeri people, the indigenous local nation. New plantings are from the local nursery run by the Raukkan indigenous community.

Co-benefits include climate action, job opportunities for indigenous people and the protection of flora and fauna.

##### **InfraVest Changbin and Taichung bundled Wind Farms Project**

The overseas offsets paired with the Australian Biodiversity Units are from wind power projects in Taiwan. The InfraVest Changbin and Taichung bundled Wind Farms Project This Gold Standard project is expanding Taiwan's renewables sector and raising environmental awareness. The wind farms consist of 62 wind turbines that generate over 480,000 MWh of clean power on average each year, which is supplied to the local electricity grid. By harnessing the power of prevailing coastal winds to generate clean energy, the Changbin and Taichung wind farms power Taiwanese homes, while helping to expand Taiwan's renewable energy industry. The project is helping boost sustainable development through several local initiatives, such as guided wind farm tours that raise awareness about climate change and pollution, supporting the elderly and a scholarship program.

##### **Chakala Bundled Wind Power Project India**

These projects contribute to several sustainable development goals and ensure employment opportunities and infrastructure development in the regions. Co-benefits include social, economic, environmental and technological wellbeing as described below.

*Social well-being:* The project helps in generating employment opportunities during the construction and operation phases. Project developers will use at a minimum 2% of the revenues accrued from the sale of carbon credits on an annual basis for community related activities. These include providing assistance for development of public amenities in the surrounding areas such as water distribution/sanitation facilities/building of schools and hospitals and free distribution of educational books and school uniforms,

annual eye camps health checks for villagers. The project activity will lead to development in infrastructure in the region such as development of roads and may promote business with improved power generation.

*Economic well-being:* The project is a clean technology investment in the region, which would not have taken place in the absence of the VCS benefits. The project activity will also help to reduce the demand supply gap in the state.

*Environmental well-being:* Wind being a renewable source of energy, reduces the dependence on fossil fuels and conserves natural resources which are on the verge of depletion. Due to its zero emissions the Project activity avoids a significant amount of GHG emissions including specific pollutants like SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and SPM associated with the conventional thermal power generation facilities.

*Technological well-being:* The successful operation of the projects' activities should lead to promotion of wind based power generation and would encourage other entrepreneurs to participate in similar projects.

## 5. Use of trade mark

The trademark has been used as set out in Table 5. To the best of our knowledge this is complete.

Table 5. Trade mark register	
Where used	Logo type
Uniting Communities website: <a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/purpose-and-value/our-commitments/carbon-neutral">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/purpose-and-value/our-commitments/carbon-neutral</a>	Certified organisation
"We are Carbon Neutral" brochure	Certified organisation
Carbon Neutral Adelaide website: <a href="https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities">https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities</a>	Certified organisation

## 6. Have you done more?

Carbon neutrality became a goal for Uniting Communities in 2010 and is now a core commitment for the organisation which is widely recognised as a leader in this area. Uniting Communities has always been willing to share its approach with others. Since we became Carbon Neutral our executives and program manager have presented at many events, including for Carbon Neutral Adelaide. Uniting Communities is the inaugural Ambassador for Carbon Neutral Adelaide and as such commits to continuing to reduce its carbon footprint and to promoting the program and its experiences to others. We also provide guidance to others in our industry sector on working towards becoming certified carbon neutral.

This role has become increasingly active since our new U City building opened in August 2019. U City is recognised as one of Australia's 'greenest' buildings and has achieved 6-Star Green Star Design and As Built Ratings. It is predicted to use 45 per cent less energy and 30 per cent less water than a comparable new building. The aim is for U City now is to achieve Green Star Performance and Carbon Neutral Building certification. Our state of the art function centre provides opportunities to showcase U City, as do our visitor tours.

Uniting Communities has been the recipient of a number of awards including:

- Good Design Award Winner, 2020
- Property Council of Australia, Innovation and Excellence Awards, 2020 State Winner

- UDIA SA Awards for Excellence 2020, Seniors Living Winner
- UDIA SA Awards for Excellence 2020, Innovation in Development Winner
- Recipient, City Switch Hall of Fame, 2018
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Applied Innovation 2017
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Leadership & Influence 2017
- Winner, SA Climate Leaders Awards, Community and Regions Category, 2016

<https://www.ucity.com.au/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC95f05bUvI&t=1s>

As well as having a policy in place, we have shown our commitment to emissions reduction by including carbon neutrality in employee job descriptions and setting annual capital and operating budgets. From the very start, we have engaged an external carbon consultant to assist us, allocated internal resources to committees and site-based activities and have invested in a proprietary carbon data management system. These investments have more than been repaid in operating cost savings and other benefits and will continue to do so.

Uniting Communities has provided case studies on its carbon neutral program to both the Australian Government as well as to Carbon Neutral Adelaide. We are also a signatory to Adelaide CitySwitch in respect of U City at 43 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

Below are links to our organisation website and other online promotional material.

<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/purpose-and-value/our-commitments/carbon-neutral">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/purpose-and-value/our-commitments/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>
<b>Case studies</b>	<a href="https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities">https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities</a>