



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

12-14 November 2021

DOCUMENT 16

Title	Climate Action Plan Annual Report
Type of Paper	For information and decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	
Consultation	Assembly Agencies and Synod personnel
Purpose	To receive a report on progress
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	Climate Action Plan Updated November 21 Assembly Carbon Footprint Summary Nov 2021
Recommendations	That the Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receives the Report.2. Affirms the direction of the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Accountability Report3. Acknowledges the work of Assembly Secretariat, Agency staff and the climate champions in gathering carbon footprint data to develop an Emissions Inventory.4. Encourages all Assembly personnel to continue to work towards the 2040 Zero Emissions target.
Submitted by	Rob Floyd Assembly Associate General Secretary rob@nat.uca.org.au , 0407 944 417

Climate Action Plan Report

Background:

15th Assembly

At the 15th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Assembly adopted a Resolution relating to Climate Change entitled "For the Whole Creation".

The Resolution is shown below.

Proposal 66 Climate Change (revised)

For the Whole Creation

- a) acknowledge the Church's past and continuing commitment to addressing climate change;
- b) acknowledge with thanks the long history of advocacy and practical action on climate change carried out by the Uniting Church, including its synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies, schools and members;
- c) request the Assembly Resourcing Unit to develop the contents of proposal 19 as brought to the 15th Assembly as a discussion paper that contributes to this ongoing commitment;
- d) work with First Peoples in Australia and our church partners in the Pacific, Africa and Asia and other faiths to together understand the impacts of climate change on traditional, spiritual and contemporary ways of life;
- e) encourage Uniting Church members, synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies and schools to:
 - i. continue to inform themselves and their communities about the causes and consequences of climate change and appropriate responses;
 - ii. advocate for government policies and political action to address climate change;
 - iii. listen to and learn from the voices of vulnerable people across the world who are experiencing firsthand the impact of climate change;
 - iv. consider ways we can reduce our contribution to climate change, individually and in our communities, set meaningful targets and be transparent with our efforts and outcomes; and
 - v. tell stories of best practice across remote, rural and urban areas;
- f) request the Standing Committee to consider specific actions, resourcing and ways of connecting practically with other councils to address issues related to climate change.

Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) August 2018

The ASC then addressed the work it had been delegated in regard to the Assembly Resolution by further resolving the following.

1. Taking into account Resolution 66 of the 15th Assembly, request the Assembly Resourcing Unit, liaising with UAICC, and Synod and Agency personnel to prepare a National Climate Action Plan and Reporting Framework, and supporting educational and theological materials, to resource the wider church to take action on climate change, and report back to the July 2019 meeting of the ASC.
2. To request the General Secretary to write to Synod General Secretaries requesting them to distribute information about the Assembly Climate Change Proposal, the National Climate Action Plan and Reporting Framework, and the availability of resources to synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies, theological colleges and schools, encouraging them to:
 - a) Continue to inform themselves and their communities about the causes and consequences of climate change and appropriate responses
 - b) Advocate for government policies and political action to address climate change
 - c) Consider ways they can reduce their contribution to climate change, individually and in their communities, set meaningful targets and be transparent with their efforts and outcomes and share their stories with the wider church

Report against the Climate Action Plan

Activity:

Since these ASC Resolutions, progress has been tracked against the three focus areas:

- Prophetic
- Practical
- Pastoral

This is documented in the Climate Action Plan attached.

In Summary:

Prophetic:

- President's Conference in Fiji
- Ongoing work through Our Vision for a Just Australia and Build Back Better
- Participation in and support for Climate Marches and other national advocacy campaigns, in particular leading up to and during COP26
- Support for climate related activities of other parts of the Church
- Utilisation of Assembly Communications channels around key events, including Season of Creation and COP26
- Resources produced and released to date and over the next few months

Practical:

- The Secretariat / UnitingWorld office relocation has created the opportunity to shift to a smaller, more efficient workplace with lower emissions
- Developed an emissions calculator for Assembly work units.
- Each work unit has measured emissions across 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years and are in the process of measuring for 2021-2022. This data will be provide a baseline for future targets for reduction.
- The Assembly Climate Action webpage has been developed:
<https://uniting.church/towards-zero-2/>
- The webpage “Towards Zero: Connecting Faith and Action” contains two emission calculators designed for household and congregation to measure emissions annually.
- Two “Towards Zero” videos have been completed. Another two videos have been planned.
- The resources are now available on the website. The resource packages include videos joining theology and praxis, emission calculators, tutorials, best practice actions for households, and examples of net-zero emission congregations.
- The resources have now been shared with other parts of the Church including Congregations, Agencies and offices. Other parts of the Church are also encouraged to share their results with the Assembly.
- Assembly staff including Agencies are developing plans for offset programs that may include UnitingWorld partners and also supporting offset through Congregations and Agencies adopting renewable energy strategies.
- Growing connection with Synod climate justice working groups who are undertaking similar work.

Pastoral:

- The President’s Conference and strong connections made with the Pacific Conference of Churches and Methodist Church in Fiji.
- Work of Frontier Services through Bush Chaplaincy.
- Work of UnitingWorld through partnerships and disaster response.
- UnitingCare Agencies are working in some contexts to help support people whose homes are not suitable.
- Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network.

The work the Assembly has been shared with Synod staff, including the offer to share resources and tools being developed.

Assembly Carbon Emissions Report

Background:

In 2019 the Assembly Standing Committee approved the Assembly Climate Action Plan. This Plan commits the Assembly to a target of net zero carbon emission by 2040. Given the approximately 20-year time frame, this represents a reduction of 5% on baseline output per year.

In order to achieve this the Assembly and Agencies have begun a process of measuring our carbon output, determining a baseline, and creating an emissions inventory. The data can then be used to develop some strategies for reducing our carbon output.

$$\textit{Emission/Offset} = \textit{Usage} - \textit{Reduction} - \textit{Production}$$

Following this principle, the next steps are to encourage good environmental behaviour, reduce energy usage and waste production, and produce renewable energies either locally or remotely.

This journey will take some years. The ultimate purpose is to change the carbon positive status of “Emission” in the present towards a carbon negative status of “Offset” in the future.

At the March 2021 ASC, the ASC requested the Assembly and Agencies to report annually, at the November ASC meeting. This Carbon Emissions Report will become a management and governance tool to see progress in relation to achieving the 2040 Net-Zero Emission target.

Process:

Rev Dr Ji Zhang has developed four spreadsheet-based carbon output calculators for individuals, households, congregations, and the Assembly.

The Assembly Carbon Emissions Report uses the Assembly Calculator to collect data from individual staff and each office and agency. The Calculator can then create a progress report and show reductions across a 3-year cycle. (See the attached Table 1).

Working with Ji, the Assembly has appointed a number of staff from across the work units to be climate champions who will drive the data collection and produce a preliminary report for each office and agency. (see the attached Table 2, 3)

These Champions are, Esther Baidar, Anna Catliffe, Suzanne Cullen, Peta Fenton, Miriam Brown and Kate Gainer.

Using the Training of Trainer (TOT) model, the champions have distributed the data collection tools and offered training to staff in how to fill them in. The champions are then the central point for collection and collation of data.

The champions have also been driving the in-office behaviour change. They have undertaken an audit of the office areas, putting reminder notes around under light switches etc, and led the transition to recyclables for all consumables.

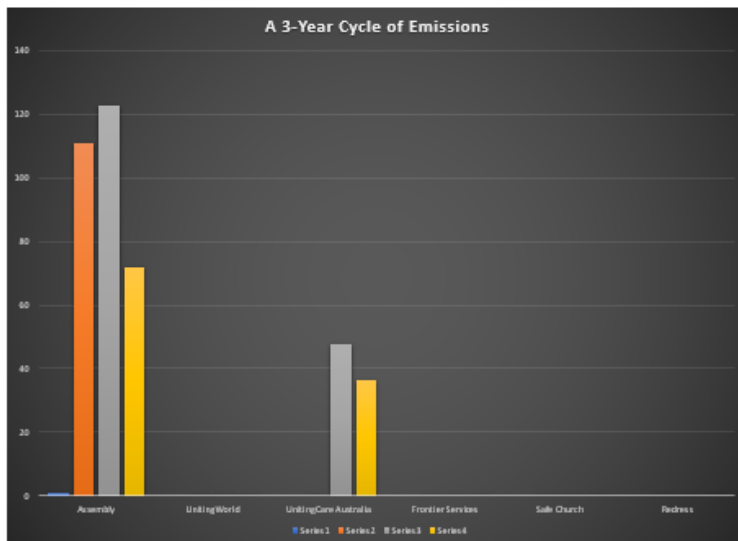
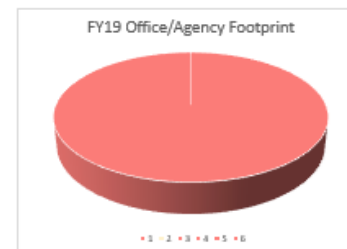
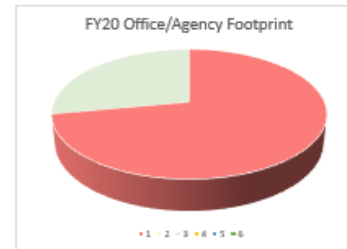
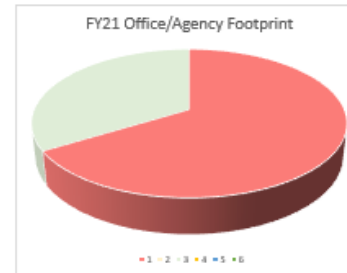
Table 1: Total Emissions Footprint – A 3-Year Cycle

Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly



TOTAL EMISSIONS FOOTPRINT - A 3-YEAR CYCLE

Office/Agency	FY19	FY20	FY21	Change from FY19	Change from FY20	Staff #	Green Champion
Assembly	111	123	72	-35%	-42%	27	2
UnitingWorld	-	-	-			20	1
UnitingCare Australia	-	48	37		-23%	10	1
Frontier Services	-	-	-			10	1
Safe Church	-	-	-			2	
Redress	-	-	-			2	
TOTAL	111	170	108	-3%	-36%	71	5



Notes

Assembly Secretariat includes President and President's EA, General Secretary and EA, Assembly Services Unit including Communications, Assembly Resourcing Unit, Disaster Recovery (discontinuing starting current FY), Archives, NSCU – beginning in FY 2019-20 and UCA Redress – yet to finalise data collection

UnitingWorld has collected most of their data but still have some significant gaps in finalising travel. This will be completed in the next few months.

UnitingCare Australia data collection for 2018-2019 will be completed over the next few months.

Frontier Services staffing turnover in the last year has delayed data collection for Frontier Services. It will be completed over the next few months.

Table 2: National Assembly Office Emission Reduction reported in a 3-Year Cycle

(Presented as indicative of the data collection and analysis)

Assembly Emissions Reduction - A 3-Year Cycle

Staff #	27				
	FY19	FY20	Baseline FY21	FY22	FY23
Energy					
Electricity (kWh)	34883.88	35957.00	13719.45		
Natural gas (MJ)	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Diesel - Generator (L)	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Total (kg)	28255.94	29125.17	11112.75		
Flights					
Short flights (#)	24.00	10.00	2.00		
Short flights distance (km)	8279.00	3262.00	681.00		
Long flights (#)	462.00	374.00	115.00		
Long flights distance (km)	562800.00	535702.00	186087.00		
Total (kg)	46091.99	43276.96	14974.81		
Accommodation					
Number of nights	348.00	207.00	55.00		
Total	10788.00	6417.00	1705.00		
Transport					
Taxi (km)	7883.60	5576.00	1956.90		
Car rental (km)	3254.60	972.00	516.80		
Car sharing (km)	1788.00	0.00	726.80		
Public transport (km)	1848.00	618.70	1314.40		
Fleet diesel (L)	89.00	0.00	0.00		
Fleet petrol (L)	245.60	40.32	112.50		
Total	1990.53	788.01	549.45		
Home Office					
Days	763.00	1533.00	2538.00		
Total (kg)	12414.01	24941.91	41293.26		
Consumables					
Paper	25.42	61.01	0.00		
Bottled water	0	0	0		
Total (kg)	33.05	79.31	0.00		
Waste (kg)					
General waste	8028.00	12040.00	1422.00		
Battery	0	20	0		
Cardboard	1140	2240	180		
Paper	25.45	0	0		
Green waste	0	0	0		
Total (kg)	11396.94	17852.80	1980.00		
Recycled %					
Landfill %					
Water (kl)	26.07	26.20	9.20		
Total (kg)	21.62	21.72	7.63		

Offset/Emissions = Usage - Reduction - Production

(Positive = Emission; Negative = Offset)

	Baseline					Reduction FY19-FY20	Reduction FY19-FY20
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23		
Energy	28.26	29.13	11.11			3%	-62%
Flights	46.09	43.28	14.97			-6%	-65%
Accommodation	10.79	6.42	1.71			-41%	-73%
Transport	1.99	0.79	0.55			-60%	-30%
Home Office	12.41	24.94	41.29			101%	66%
Consumerables	0.03	0.08	0.00			140%	-100%
Waste	11.40	17.85	1.98			57%	-89%
Water	0.02	0.02	0.01			0%	-65%
Total Emissions (t)	110.99	122.50	71.62			10%	-42%

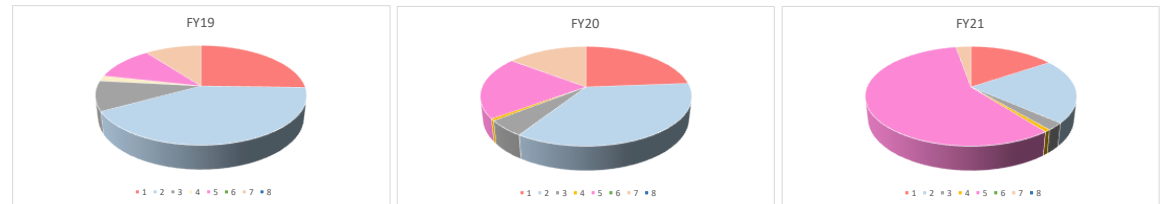


Table 3: UnitingCare Australia Emission Reduction reported in a 3-Year Cycle

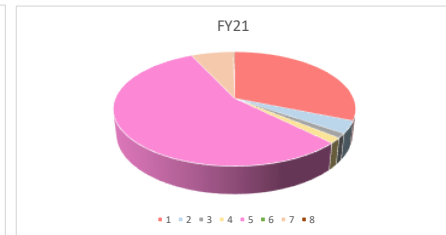
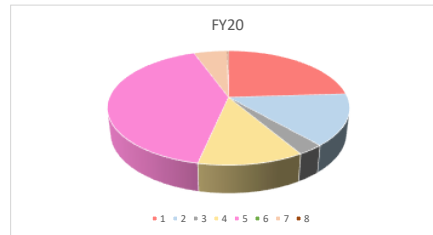
UnitingCare Australia Emissions Reduction - A 3-Year Cycle

Staff #	10				
	FY19	FY20	Baseline FY21	FY22	FY23
Energy					
Electricity (kWh)		14092.00	14061.00		
Natural gas (MJ)		0.00	0.00		
Diesel - Generator (L)		0.00	0.00		
Total (kg)		11414.52	11389.41		
Flights					
Short flights (#)		0.00	0.00		
Short flights distance (km)		11274.00	3196.00		
Long flights (#)		0.00	0.00		
Long flights distance (km)		67942.00	10740.00		
Total (kg)		6889.71	1271.48		
Accommodation					
Number of nights		46.00	15.00		
Total		1426.00	465.00		
Transport					
Taxi (km)		2248.02	131.00		
Car rental (km)		0.00	0.00		
Car sharing (km)		0.00	0.00		
Public transport (km)		483.00	15.00		
Fleet diesel (L)		0.00	0.00		
Fleet petrol (L)		3461.00	2456.00		
Total		5651.94	549.45		
Home Office					
Days		1200.00	1248.00		
Total (kg)		19524.00	20304.96		
Consumables					
Paper		62.41	12.47		
Bottled water		10	0		
Total (kg)		2.10	1.30		
Waste (kg)					
General waste		960.00	912.00		
Battery		8	8		
Cardboard		0	0		
Paper		1152	1152		
Green waste		0	0		
Total (kg)		2534.40	2476.80		
Recycled %					
Landfill %					
Water (kl)		124.00	74.00		
Total (kg)		102.80	61.35		

Offset/Emissions = Usage - Reduction - Production

(Positive = Emission; Negative = Offset)

	Baseline					Reduction FY19-FY20	Reduction FY19-FY20
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23		
Energy	0.00	11.41	11.39			#DIV/0!	0%
Flights	0.00	6.89	1.27			#DIV/0!	-82%
Accommodation	0.00	1.43	0.47			#DIV/0!	-67%
Transport	0.00	5.65	0.55			#DIV/0!	-90%
Home Office	0.00	19.52	20.30			#DIV/0!	4%
Consumerables	0.00	0.00	0.00			#DIV/0!	-38%
Waste	0.00	2.53	2.48			#DIV/0!	-2%
Water	0.00	0.10	0.06			#DIV/0!	-40%
Total Emissions (t)	0.00	47.55	36.52			#DIV/0!	-23%



Outcomes:

1. Reduction in the Assembly Secretariat emissions (Table 2) is the result of.
 - smaller and more efficient office areas for National Assembly (and UnitingWorld)
 - less travel during the COVID lockdown
 - environmental behaviour change
2. Reduction in UnitingCare Australia emissions (Table 3) is primarily the result of reduced flights accommodation and land transport.

As can be seen, the Calculator has the capacity to

- Create an Emission Inventory,
- Track reduction in a 3-year cycle,
- Drive environmental behaviour change,
- Show Emission Accountability towards the 2040 Net-Zero Emissions target.

Next Steps:

This has been the first phase of collecting data for almost 70 staff across multiple work units in five locations. In the next few months the results will be communicated back to staff with thanks and encouragement for them to continue in their efforts.

Assembly staff including Agencies are developing plans for additional reductions and the related behaviour changes. Longer term plans for offset programs will be considered as well. Some possibilities for this may include UnitingWorld partners initiatives and the possibility of supporting offset through Congregations and Agencies adopting renewable energy strategies.

The next steps will include activities which:

- complete the data collection across the Assembly,
- establish a baseline for each office and agency,
- support the champions to develop good practice to reduce emissions,
- encourage good environmental behaviour,
- seek opportunities to switch to renewable energies,
- manage the post-COVID travel,
- explore ways to offset emissions and fly carbon neutral.

The Assembly and Agencies will report again on this to ASC in Nov 2022.

Proposal:

That the Assembly Standing Committee:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Affirm the direction of the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Accountability Report

3. Acknowledge the work of Assembly Secretariat, Agency staff and the climate champions in gathering carbon footprint data to develop an Emissions Inventory.
4. Encourages all Assembly personnel to continue to work towards the 2040 Zero Emissions target.

Rob Floyd
Assembly Associate General Secretary

Ji Zhang
Assembly Theologian in Residence