



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
**ASSEMBLY**  
Assembly Standing Committee

11-13 November 2022

**DOCUMENT 15**

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 progress report
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Assembly Carbon Emissions Report Nov 2022</li><li>2. National Climate Action Plan - Update Nov 2022</li></ol>
Recommendations	That the Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Receives the Report.</li><li>2. Affirms the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Accountability Report</li><li>3. Acknowledges the work of Assembly Secretariat, Agency staff and the climate champions in gathering carbon footprint data to develop an Emissions Inventory.</li><li>4. Encourages all Assembly personnel to continue to work towards the 2040 Zero Emissions target.</li></ol>
Submitted by	Rob Floyd 0407 944 417

# Climate Action Plan Report

## Background:

### **15<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

At the 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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

Subsequently the **16th Assembly Reconvened** (held in May 2022) resolved:

### **Proposal 36 A call to action for climate justice: listening to First Peoples wisdom**

1. To acknowledge that since time immemorial the Creator gifted First Peoples to be the timeless caretakers of country and the natural environment.
2. To confess that as Second Peoples we have heard the wisdom of First Peoples, the call of our Partner Churches, and stories of communities already affected by climate change, but we have not listened. We have failed to act as a whole Church with the level of urgency needed, and have not made the fundamental behavioural changes needed to care for creation. We confess that while effort has been made to change from ways that destroy the Creator's good creation, carbon pollution continues as a direct result of our activities individually and as a Church, and global carbon pollution is now causing irreversible harm.
3. To commit anew to listen to First Peoples wisdom and knowledge, and to take practical climate action including changing our own behaviour.
4. To call on all Councils of the church, agencies and schools who have not already done so to join with the Assembly in committing to net zero emissions by 2040 at the latest, so that together we can become a zero emissions Church. We further urge all Councils to make use of the resources, stories and carbon accounting tools made available online.

5. To request the Standards for Ministry Committee to identify the most appropriate way to embed learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into formation, education and training for the specified ministries of the Uniting Church and report back to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.
6. To request the Assembly Circles, Advocates and Panels to include learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into their work for the remainder of this triennium.
7. To request the Assembly Standing Committee to:
  - a. establish a national zero emissions church working group to:
    - gather data on commitments to greenhouse gas emission reduction made across the life of the church, and progress towards those commitments
    - share stories, expertise and learnings on effective strategies and resources to reduce emissions, prioritising the wisdom of First Peoples
    - consider how the whole of the church can move together to net zero emissions by 2040; and
  - b. to bring a report on findings and recommended next steps to the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

***Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) July 2022***

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

Proposals:

That the Assembly Standing Committee

1. Request the General Secretary to write to Synods informing them of the A Call to action on climate justice: listening to First Peoples Wisdom resolution
2. Request the Standards for Ministries Committee to identify the most appropriate way to embed learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into formation, education and training for the specified ministries of the Uniting Church and report back to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.
3. Request the Assembly Circles, Advocates and Panels to include learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into their work for the remainder of this triennium.
4. Request the Associate General Secretary to work with interested ASC members to develop Terms of Reference for a Net Zero Emissions Working Group and to bring these and nominations to the November 2022 ASC Meeting.

## 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 National Climate Action Plan - Update Nov 2022 attached. **Red font indicates achievements in FY 22.**

In Summary:

### ***Prophetic:***

- President's Conference in Fiji
- Ongoing work though 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
- **A video series, "Towards Zero" produced**
- **First Peoples and Assembly Circles of Interest lead series for "Season of Creation 2022".**
- **Sharing leading up to COP27 has begun including the President being part of a wider interfaith letter action to the Government.**

### ***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, 2020-21 and **2021-22 financial years** and are in the process of measuring **for 2022-2023**. This data will provide **a basis 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.
- **Four "Towards Zero" videos have been completed.**
- 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.
- **The work of the Net Zero Emissions Working Group will begin following ASC in November 2022.**

***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.
- **Promotion of a range of events that have considered the psychological impacts of Climate Change and how to support people experiencing negative effects.**

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

## Attachment 1

### 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 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. Esther Baidar and Anna Catliffe coordinate this work across the Assembly.

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

Office/Agency	Tonnes of Carbon Emitted			
	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22
Assembly	111	123	72	141
UnitingWorld	93	86	53	75
UnitingCare Australia	29	43	37	37
Frontier Services	27	39	37	63

Notes:

Assembly Secretariat includes President and President’s EA, General Secretary and EA, Assembly Services Unit including Communications, Assembly Resourcing Unit, Archives and National Safe Church Unit – beginning in FY 2019-20.



Table 2: National Assembly Office Emission FY22

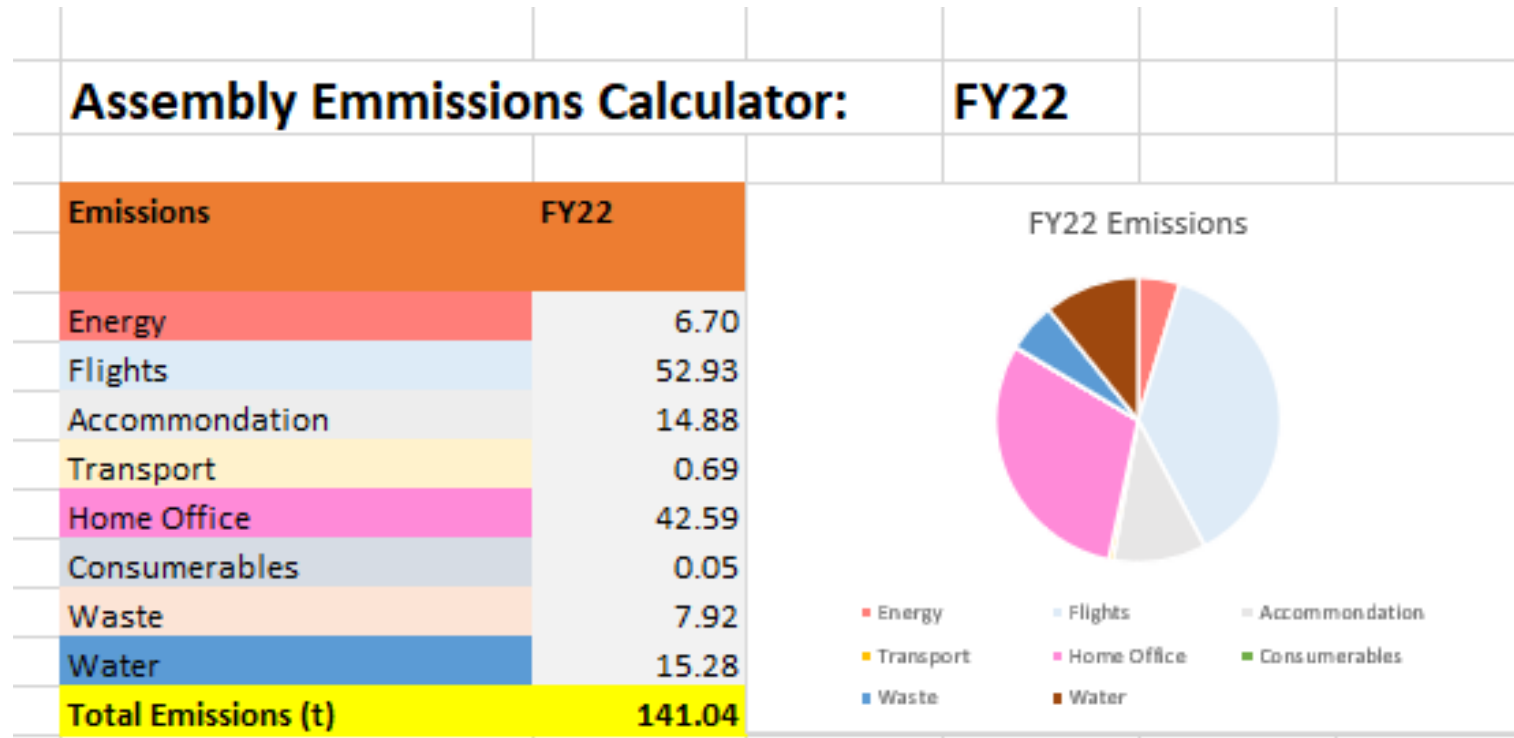


Table 3: UnitingWorld Emissions FY 22

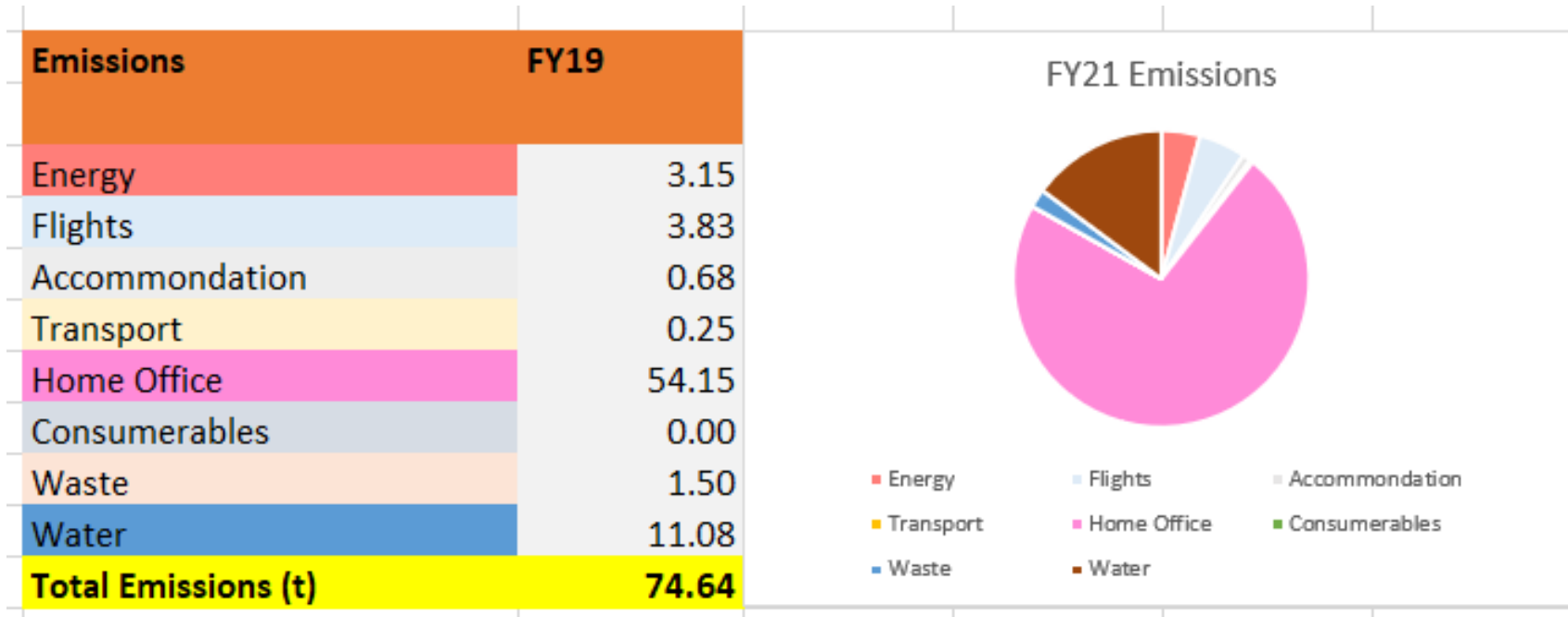


Table 4: UnitingCare Australia Emissions FY 22

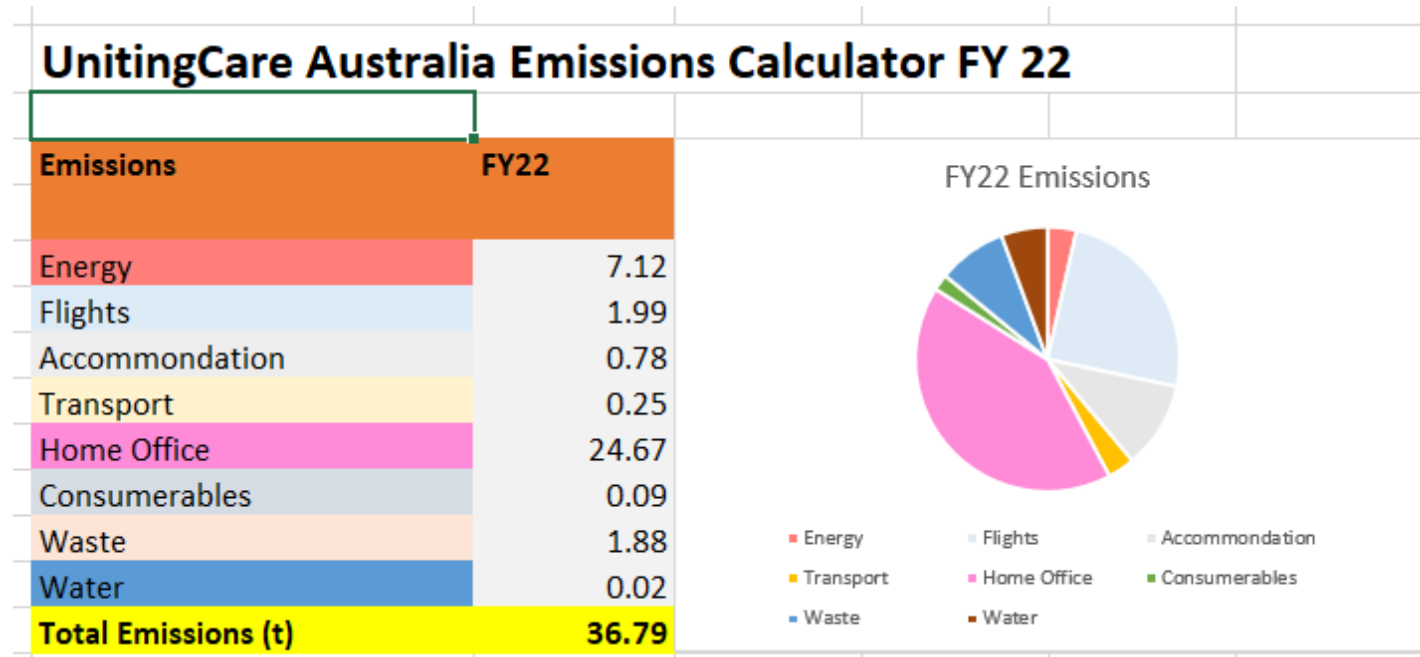
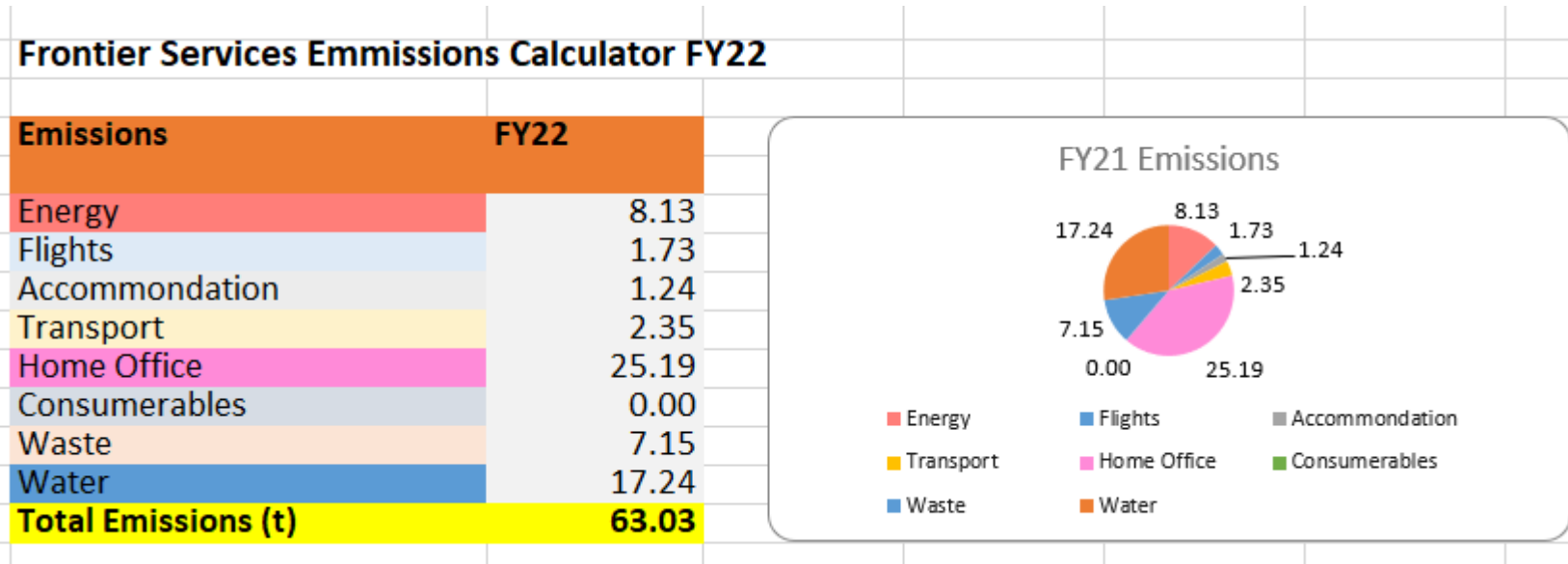


Table 5: Frontier Services Emissions FY 22



#### Observations:

- The significant increase in Assembly Emissions comes from the travel and accommodation costs associated with the Reconvened Assembly and the return to face-to-face meetings of the ASC. Some staff travel has also resumed but remains at low levels.
- UnitingWorld has seen significant reductions in emissions due primarily to almost no travel through the COVID period. This will resume in the current FY.
- UnitingWorld was not measuring waste, water or consumables until the FY22. This, along with home office usage accounts for the rise in emissions from FY21
- Frontier Services increase in FY 22 is due primarily to home office work. Staff were working from home for much of the latter half of 2021, continuing in to 2022.
- All areas have seen a growth in home office emissions over the four years.

#### Next Steps:

Staff including Agencies are developing plans for additional reductions and the related behaviour changes.

Staff and agencies are aware that as travel resumes in the various work areas that additional steps will need to be taken.

An Assembly-wide conversation on offsets will need to take place during this current FY.

#### Future activities:

- complete the data collection across the Assembly
- 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 to ASC again in Nov 2023.

**Proposal:**

That the Assembly Standing Committee:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Affirm 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.



## Attachment 2

# National Climate Action Plan

## Update – November 2022

(Red text represents updates)

### Our Vision

*We seek the flourishing of the whole of God's Creation and all its creatures. We act to renew the earth from the damage done and stand in solidarity with people most impacted by human-induced climate change. Government, churches, businesses and the wider community work together for a sustainable future.*

**Acting to make this vision a reality, we will work with all parts of the Uniting Church to reduce emissions by 5% per annum and become a net zero emissions church by 2040.**

### The Challenge

Global temperatures are rising as human activity pollutes the atmosphere with greenhouse gases. Australia faces significant climate change impacts: rising sea levels, extreme heat and storms, longer droughts and bushfire seasons and the loss of coral reef<sup>1</sup>. Our neighbours in the Pacific and elsewhere are also suffering with the impacts of climate change. We recognise that the impacts of climate change fall disproportionately on those who have contributed least to human induced greenhouse emissions.

Despite this, most of Australia's energy continues to rely on fossil fuel sources. In 2019, coal and gas still account for about 79% of electricity generation, whereas 21% was from renewable energy sources<sup>2</sup>. We acknowledge that in **2022** most of the energy used for Uniting Church Assembly, Synod, Presbytery, Church, and Agency needs and activities **continues to be sourced from fossil fuel.**

**The recently elected Australian Federal Government has committed to an emissions reduction target of 43% by 2030 on 2005 levels. This has been a positive change from previous policies. We have continued to advocate for a higher target of 45-60% in order to do our fair share toward the Paris target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius<sup>3</sup>. Federal Government policies need to do more to support the necessary transition to renewables, especially for communities who are currently reliant on coal and other fossil fuels as their main industry and source of employment.**

Australian local and state governments have committed to greenhouse emission reductions within their jurisdictions. **All** the states of Australia have committed to net zero emissions by 2050, while the Australian Capital Territory has committed to net zero emissions by 2045. Australian local governments are also committing to local action, with over **150 local**

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy, Understanding Climate Change <https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-science-data/climate-science/understanding-climate-change>

<sup>2</sup> Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources 2021, <https://www.energy.gov.au/government-priorities/energy-supply>, f

<sup>3</sup> Climate Council: Weather Gone Wild, Climate Change Fuelled Extreme Weather in 2018

governments, representing 60% of the Australia population, have signed up to the Cities Power Partnership, which connects cities and towns who are making the switch to clean energy.

Large Australian companies and universities are also making zero carbon or 100% renewable energy commitments as a part of their corporate social responsibility programs. When this plan was developed in 2019, the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly also committed to net zero carbon.

There is a growing fossil fuel divestment movement in Australia<sup>4</sup>. The UCA Assembly took steps to divest from fossil fuels in 2014, following the lead from the NSW/ACT Synod. At the same time, there is significant private investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives<sup>5</sup>. Over 2 million Australian households have now installed solar panels<sup>6</sup>, but there is a need for more equitable access for all Australians<sup>7</sup>.

## Purpose

The Uniting Church has spoken out about the need for action on climate change and to care for creation for many years. Our statements in 1977, 1991, 2006, 2018 and 2022 have outlined the genuine desire of the Uniting Church in Australia to see change. We also acknowledge that our words are not enough. It is time to move from resolutions to urgent, church-wide action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our own activities and build credibility in our continuing advocacy work. This Climate Action Plan is intended to drive that action.

This Plan is intended to apply directly to the Assembly including Assembly Agencies, and by invitation, encouragement and resourcing to all other parts of the Uniting Church including Synods, Church Schools, Agencies, Presbyteries and Congregations.

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<sup>4</sup> Climate Council, What you need to know about fossil fuel divestment, 17/05/17

<sup>5</sup>Over 2 million Australian households now have solar panels: Clean Energy Council, Number of Australian Homes with Rooftop Solar tops 2 million... and counting, 03/12/18 <https://arena.gov.au/renewable-energy/solar/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://arena.gov.au/renewable-energy/solar/>

<sup>7</sup> McLoughlin, Chris, Solar panels not benefiting poor who can't afford them, SACOSS, ABC News



## Alignment

Our action plan has been prepared to ensure strategic alignment between the statements of the Uniting Church and other national and international plans.

Document	Summary	Alignment
<p>Statement to the Nation 1977</p> <p>Assembly Resolutions: The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations 91.14.18</p> <p>For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change 06.101</p> <p>For the Whole of Creation 18.12.01</p> <p>A call to action for climate justice: listening to First Peoples wisdom</p>	<p>Assembly Statements made in 1977, 1991, 2006<sup>8</sup>, 2018 and 2022 have called on the Australian government and the Australian community to commit to the wise use of energy and the protection of the environment.</p> <p>In 2018, the Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to understanding climate change and addressing its causes and called on the church to 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.</p> <p><b>In 2022, the Assembly committed to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to First Peoples wisdom and knowledge, and to take practical climate action including changing our own behaviour.</li> <li>• To call on all Councils of the church, agencies and schools who have not already done so to join with the Assembly in committing to net zero emissions by 2040 at the latest</li> <li>• establish a national zero emissions church working group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gather data on commitments from across the church, and progress towards those commitments</li> <li>• share stories, expertise and learnings on effective strategies and resources to reduce emissions, prioritising the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>This Action Plan has been prepared with reference to the various Assembly resolutions, setting out practical and meaningful actions for change. It includes a single, clear target for emission reduction, and commits to the development of a reporting framework by 2020. Our action plan has been prepared to ensure we ‘walk the talk’ of the Assembly resolutions and take urgent action.</p>

<sup>8</sup> Coghill, C. and Poulos E. 2016 (eds) For a World Reconciled: Justice Statements from the Uniting Church in Australia 1977-2015

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>wisdom of First Peoples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>consider how the whole of the church can move together to net zero emissions by 2040</b></li> </ul>	
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	<p>Provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – while tackling climate change, increasing affordable clean energy, and working to preserve our oceans and forests.</p> <p>SDG 13 is to take action to combat climate change and its impacts. This includes integrating climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning, strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity and improving education, awareness and capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.</p> <p>SDG13 also sets a clear goal for increasing affordable clean energy to sustain the development.</p>	<p>SDG13<sup>9</sup> has been incorporated into our plan through the inclusion of an emission reduction target and practical action to achieve this goal, advocacy to government to show national leadership in this area, prioritisation of First Peoples voices and the voice of those most affected by climate change, and commitment to ongoing educational and pastoral actions to support the community to both mitigate and adapt to human induced climate change.</p> <p>SDG13 also sets a goal to increase affordable clean energy through various technologies available today.</p>
Australian State Net Zero Emissions Commitments	<p>The states of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland and Northern Territory have committed to net zero emissions by 2050, while the Australian Capital Territory has committed to net zero emissions by 2045.</p>	<p>This plan makes a commitment to net zero emissions from Assembly operations by 2040. This is more ambitious than the Australian State targets because we need to show leadership to the Australian community. It further seeks</p>

<sup>9</sup> United Nations 2015, United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13>

		to work with all parts of the Uniting Church to make this commitment a reality across the whole church.
ClimateWorks <sup>10</sup> pathway to decarbonisation	Modelling work conducted by ClimateWorks Australia in partnership with the Australian National University, CSIRO and Centre of Policy Studies at Victoria University found that Australia can achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and live within its recommended carbon budget, using technologies that exist today, while maintaining economic prosperity. Major technological transitions and many activities are needed in some industries, but no fundamental change to Australia's economy is required.	Our Action Plan makes a commitment to net zero emissions from Assembly operations by 2040. Our offset involves calculation of usage, reducing waste, and producing renewable energies. It further seeks to work with all parts of the Uniting Church to make this commitment a reality across the whole church. While this is more ambitious than the scenario modelling conducted by ClimateWorks Australia we believe it's possible due to the nature of our activities and the potential to utilise new technologies to produce affordable clean energy.

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<sup>10</sup>ClimateWorks et al 2014 Pathways to Deep Decarbonisation 2050  
[https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/climateworks\\_pdd2050\\_initial\\_report\\_20140923.pdf](https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/climateworks_pdd2050_initial_report_20140923.pdf)

## Principles for Climate Action

**Spiritual and Theological Grounding** - Care for creation is a spiritual and theological imperative embodied in Christ in whom all things live and move and have their being. Our climate action will be grounded in and connected at all times to this theological context.

**Prioritising the voices of First Peoples and those most affected by climate change** - We acknowledge that First Peoples, our Pacific and Asian neighbours and other vulnerable groups across the world are disproportionately affected by climate change, despite contributing little to human induced greenhouse emissions. We recognise that Indigenous knowledge plays a significant part in understanding and responding to climate change. We also acknowledge that the voices of First Peoples and those most affected by climate change are marginalised. In prioritising those voices we will work towards relational and inclusive justice for all.

**Whole of Church responses** - While the unique structure of the Uniting Church in Australia can make whole of church responses challenging, we believe our polity is a gift given by God to allow us to work in ways that are prophetic. We will work across the life of the Uniting Church in respectful dialogue with synods, agencies, schools, presbyteries, congregations and members to demonstrate that change is possible, and an enormous opportunity for renewal.

**Working in collaboration** - the causes of, and responses to, human induced climate change are many and complex, and we recognise that no single person, organisation or country holds the whole solution. We will take approaches that pool the resources of like-minded organisations and support the work of our international partner churches.

**Every member ministry** - the Uniting Church has many talented lay and ordained people in ministry within our communities. This includes those who are working in ministries that are not specified by the church such as teaching, social work, disability support, engineering, architecture, science, medicine, law, psychology, urban design, construction and maintenance, the arts and activism to name a few. The gifts and skills of the whole body of Christ are needed to bring about the vision we strive for. We will therefore seek ways to develop and support every member ministry in implementing this action plan.

**Supporting Our Rural Farming and Mining Communities** - The Uniting Church has many talented and gifted members in regional, rural and remote communities, many of whom are engaged in carbon emitting industries such as agriculture and mining. They are committed to bringing abundant life to their communities and an economically and environmentally sustainable future for Australia and many are also feeling the impacts of climate change through extended drought, prolonged fire seasons, higher summer temperatures and increased storminess. We will listen, support and advocate for our rural farming and mining communities to develop and implement long-term, sustainable and just transition plans where this is necessary, and share stories of best practice.

## Action Plan

(Green text represents progress in previous periods, red text represents recent updates)

The Uniting Church is a member of the Pacific Conference of Churches with whom we will work closely in implementing this plan. Aligning our strategies with the Churches in the Pacific, we have identified three main areas of focus to achieve our vision, Prophetic, Practical and Pastoral. These areas of focus are supported by achievable actions to be implemented over the next five years.

### ***Focus Area 1 – Prophetic – Raising our voice for stronger action***

We will speak with a prophetic voice, advocating to government and the church to bring about practical and just climate action. This includes the development and dissemination of theological and educational resources that place care for creation in its spiritual and theological context.

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Indicator (SMART)*	Progress
Invite, collate and share stories of lived experience from First Peoples and people living with the impacts of climate change	Annually	Uniting World, ARU and Synod Communicators	Number of new stories from UAICC and our partner churches uploaded each year to the Assembly website. Number of features in National Update and social media channels	<p>The proposal that went to 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly had two such reflections. These were published on Assembly Website.</p> <p>In July 2020 Rev Tim Matton-Johnson provided a reflection for an NCCA event which we publicised.</p> <p>Our Vision for a Just Australia, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition, acknowledges the wisdom and experience of First Peoples and seek their “regular direct involvement in the management of land and waters, and in environmental practices”.</p> <p>The Assembly along with UnitingWorld continue to share stories from the Pacific, Asia and Africa which reflect the impacts of climate change on partner church communities</p>
Invite, collate and share stories of best practice from rural, regional and	Annually	ARU, Frontier Services and Synod	Number of new stories uploaded, featured and shared each year	Have communicated on the “rest” the environment has had during COVID-19.

remote areas		Communicators		<p>The proposal that went to 15th Assembly had several such reflections. These were published on Assembly Website.</p> <p>More broadly, the significant drought and bushfires media which generated significant conversation across the country and the UCA about best practice in land management.</p>
Develop theological, educational and worship resources and distribute widely throughout the church	2020	Theologian in Residence, Growing in Faith, Working for Justice and Transforming Worship Circles, Synod Justice teams, including UnitingEarth	<p>Resources are available via Assembly website</p> <p>Number of awareness raising actions, workshops, liturgical activities conducted</p> <p>Number of hits on website</p>	<p>Educational resources have been part of the Vision document and our national engagement in Climate Marches.</p> <p>A significant national effort by the Assembly and UnitingWorld, along with Synods has been put into promoting and supporting Climate Marches. In 2019 (pre COVID) it was estimated that 1000 UCA members took part in the action.</p> <p>Participation in and resources provided through the 2020, 2021 and 2021 Season of Creation. This was distributed in the National Update email every week of September 2020, 2021 and 2022. There were 400 unique hits to these links. Theological resources and practical resources have been developed and collated during 2021 and additional resources will be completed by late 2021.</p> <p>Further resources have been made available in 2022</p>
Include the context for climate change action and reference to the Climate Action Plan as a part of all UCA Assembly conferences and events	Ongoing	All Assembly agencies	% Assembly events include context and plan for climate change action	<p>Successful President's conference in Fiji in 2019</p> <p>COVID-19 has had dramatic impact on travel and all parts of the Assembly and the UCA are moving to a lower travel work and meeting context.</p> <p>Otherwise, yet to be formally enacted.</p> <p>In other initiatives, the Assembly is ensuring that recyclable materials are used in our office and events we organise with participants being made aware of the reasons.</p> <p>Frontier Services and UnitingWorld communicate regularly,</p>

				recently through online events, that acknowledge the impacts of climate change
Resource the church through Walking on Country and Pacific Islands awareness trips which include a climate change focus	As available	UAICC, UnitingWorld, Frontier Services Synods	Number of participants on trips which include a climate change focus	<p>NYALC 2019 incorporated a Walking on Country although climate wasn't a major theme.</p> <p>FS is organising such an event.</p> <p>Assembly had planned for a NYALC related Walking on Country but it will be postponed.</p> <p>Other such events in remote communities and overseas are severely impacted by COVID-19</p>
Promote existing theological resources throughout the church	Ongoing	ARU	Number of stories, letters, social media posts etc	<p>These resources have been developed and compiled for 2021 availability. Some additional resources are still in progress.</p> <p><b>Additional resources completed in 2022</b></p>
Advocate to the Western Australian government to adopt an emissions reduction target of net zero by 2050	Ongoing	President, all Assembly agencies, Moderators, Synod justice teams and Members	Number of letters, meetings and other engagements with government	This has now been achieved
<p>Advocate to the Australian federal government to adopt:</p> <p>1. A national climate policy that drives down greenhouse gas pollution, including no new coal or gas mining</p>	Ongoing	President, all Assembly agencies Moderators, Synod Justice teams Members, Congregations, individual	Number of letters, meetings and other engagements with government	<p>We have communicated this through Our Vision for a Just Australia, now in its 4th edition, which has been sent to and personally given to a significant number of MPs including the PM and Opposition Leader</p> <p>Our Post-COVID-19 Vision also reflected some this</p> <p>Our participation in the Climate Marches through 2020 and 2021 encouraged member advocacy action. During COVID we</p>

<p>in Australia and investment in renewable energy.</p> <p>2. Just and sustainable transition planning for communities currently dependent on fossil fuel industries for employment, towards more environmentally sustainable sources of income.</p> <p>3. Strategies that ensure equitable access to renewables for all Australians.</p> <p>4. Policies which support people and nations that are most vulnerable to climate change</p>		<p>Church members</p>		<p>have we encouraged participation in the Marches over social media due to COVID restrictions. More than 50 posts were collated on our social media channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior UCA leaders have undertaken Climate Change media training through the Climate Media Centre Additional training is planned for a wider group</li> </ul> <p>Significant advocacy initiated by the Assembly and UnitingWorld led to an ecumenical church-leader letter to the Prime Minister which was picked up by media.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with the new Federal Govt has begun leading up to COP27</p>
<p>Engage Councils of the Church and Uniting Church members in ecumenical and other Civil Society initiatives (e.g. Climate March)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ARU and other Assembly Agencies, Synod Justice teams</p>	<p>Promotion and participation in Climate Marches and other advocacy actions</p>	<p>Significant national engagement in the Climate Marches. President involved in several online events.</p> <p>UCA President and staff participated in (and helped facilitate) the NCCA webinars on climate change. UCA staff are continuing this work as the NCCA develops an Ecumenical Environmental Action Group.</p> <p>Resources promoted</p> <p>Promotion of and participation in Climate Marches</p>



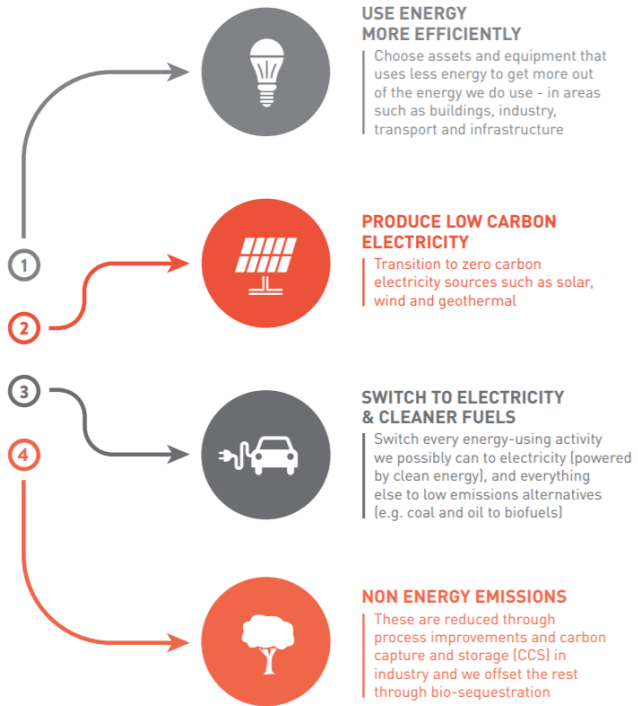
**Focus Area 2 - Practical - Walking the Talk through Emissions Reduction and Adaptation Responses**

We will walk the climate action talk through emissions reduction and adaptation responses associated with our own Assembly operations and call on all parts of the church to join us in this endeavour. This will allow us to restore our broken relationship with creation and become a credible voice for climate justice nationally and internationally. To support this, we will follow a ‘four pillars of decarbonisation’ approach as described by Pathways to Decarbonisation in 2050 ClimateWorks et al (2014).

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Indicator (SMART)	Progress
Decarbonise Assembly operations at 5% per annum from 2019-2020 levels to net zero by 2040	Ongoing	ARU and Agencies	% greenhouse gas emissions reduction	<p>We are finalising our baseline carbon footprint from across the three FY 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21.</p> <p>Office move has incorporated carbon reducing strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smaller floorplan</li> <li>- Reduced lighting and heating</li> <li>- Focus on recycling</li> </ul> <p>Budgets reflect reduced travel, enhanced by COVID-19 learnings and uptake of technology solutions</p> <p>Corresponding investment in video-conferencing technologies</p> <p>Assembly secretariat and agencies have developed a policy for measurement and reduction of carbon consumption. Commencing at the Nov 2021 ASC meeting, all Assembly Units will report annually on their progress towards the 2040 net zero target.</p> <p>Reporting continues in 2022</p>
Develop a voluntary, online tool for church agencies, schools, presbyteries, synods and individual members to: 1. support them to	2020	ARU to facilitate	Emission calculators have been developed for the Assembly/staff, congregations, and household.	<p>The Assembly has developed the first version of the calculators. They are able to measure usage, track reduction, and increase renewable energy through direct production and/or indirect offset.</p> <p>Some interaction with NSWACT, QLD, and VicTas in their development of climate action and environmental</p>

<p>make a climate action commitment, 2. gain access to resources to put their commitment into action, and 3. connect with other parts of the church and other organisations who are also engaged in this endeavour.</p>			<p>Tool developed and available</p> <p># of church agencies, schools, presbyteries, synods and individual members who have signed up to the tool</p>	<p>sustainability</p> <p>Conversation is in place with UnitingCare in Queensland, Uniting in VicTas, and Uniting Communities in SA to study large-scale emissions reduction strategies.</p> <p>Tools have been tested and made available to the Church.</p> <p>Sharing to agencies and schools will be made available as appropriate, noting that many agencies and schools are further progressed than other parts of the Church.</p> <p>Assembly has begun sharing its calculations and progress as well.</p> <p>Feedback from different parts of the church has been received. Opportunity to work ecumenically on this through NCCA is being explored. This began at the July 2020 NCCA online forum. Assembly and Synod staff are part of a group developing an ecumenical focus group.</p> <p>The Net Zero Emissions Working Group formed to carry this forward</p>
<p>Prepare a voluntary scorecard and annual reporting mechanism for consistent greenhouse gas emissions reporting across the life of the church</p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>ARU to facilitate</p>	<p>Scorecard and reporting mechanism available</p> <p># of church agencies, schools, presbyteries, synods who are reporting</p>	<p>The Calculator tool has the capacity to track the net-zero emissions target over the next 20 years.</p> <p>How we encourage reporting from other parts of the Church is still under development.</p>
<p>Seek commitment to meaningful climate</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>President, all Assembly</p>	<p>% Synods, agencies, presbyteries and</p>	<p>Not yet done nationally.</p>

action across the life of the church		agencies Moderators, Heads of Schools and Agencies, ARU to collate	congregations making commitments	There is strong and growing engagement in this but it is not coordinated nationally.  Net Zero Emissions Working Group is in place
Annual conference - virtual and in person for church climate action	Annually from 2020	ARU to facilitate	# conferences held  # of participants	Support NSWACT event on Pastoral care in the face of climate change  Support NSWACT workshop on solar panels installation  We have promoted other Synod events of this nature
Share stories of greenhouse gas emission reduction from across the life of the church, including remote, rural and urban contexts via Assembly communication channels.	Ongoing	ARU, Assembly and Synod Comms	# new stories from across the life of the church uploaded each year to the Assembly website	This happened at the President's conference in Fiji (Jessica Morthorpe) Resources produced that were first made available during Season of Creation 2021 highlighted good stories and examples at the congregational and agency level. They have accompanied the theological resources.  9 stories have been collected: 3 households, 2 congregations, 1 agency achieving net-zero emissions, 1 agency receiving national and international awards, 2 agencies with strategies for environmental sustainability.



**Figure 1 - Four Pillars of Decarbonisation (ClimateWorks et al 2014)**

**Figure 2 - A Formula for Achieving Net-Zero Emissions Target**

## **Offset = Usage – Reduction - Production**

Offset: the result of total emissions offset within a FY

Usage: the collective measurements of annual emissions footprint (electricity, gas, fuel, travel, accommodation, etc)

Reduction: the collective measurements for annual capacity of emissions reduction (energy saving, behaviour change, waste reduction, etc)

Production: the collective measurements for annual capacity of producing renewable energies

All measurements are translated and presented as equivalent to CO2 in tonnes.

Two examples of offset:

1) Increase renewable energy production:

1. Currently Australia has 21% of renewable energy capacity within the total energy generation. To offset to net-zero emission requires a major plan for 80% production. One practical step for church communities is to use Government rebates to install of rooftop solar panels and installation of heat pumps or solar hot water systems. The Assembly footprint could be offset by installing a 40kW PV system.

2.

2) Offset projects in Australia and overseas:

3. Currently Australia does not have a national carbon-trading scheme. However, the Government supports carbon capture programs through carbon credits. The price of offset has increased in the recent years due to short of supply. Assembly will look into two offset programs: a) buy offset credits from carbon capture programs involving the First People's management of the land, b) support UnitingWorld partners, particularly in the Pacific, to develop carbon capture programs.

**Focus Area 3 – Pastoral – walking alongside those most impacted**

We will prioritise pastoral care for those within the community who are most affected by the impacts of climate change.

Action	Timing	Responsibility	Indicator (SMART)	Progress
Run climate change and mental health awareness courses - requires input from UnitingCare		UnitingCare	# courses run	Promoted Uniting NSWACT initiative on Pastoral Care  Planning to gather information through the network on climate action and environmental sustainability
Regional area ministries continue to support farmers affected by ongoing drought - requires input from Frontier services	Ongoing	Frontier Services	Annual Reports and reports to ASC?	FS is growing in its ministry in this regard. In 2021 some areas remaining in drought and others impacted by mouse plague were highlighted through media nationally by FS. This continued in 2022 with flooding also becoming an issue
Action relating to solidarity and support for partner churches in the Pacific - requires input from Uniting world	Ongoing	UnitingWorld, Assembly, Congregations, Uniting Church Members	Communication shared on how Uniting Church congregations and members can show solidarity and support, including through prayer an action	Strong advocacy from UnitingWorld in regard to Pacific Step Up. ARU facilitated UAICC involvement in this. UnitingWorld funding of Pacific partners has a strong Climate component Continuing to engage Pacific Conference of Churches – including as a key note in an NCCA event  President’s Conference in Fiji with focus on climate change reinforced UCA solidarity with Pacific expressed through a statement from Participants. Resources from the conference shared via Assembly website and National Update
Consider	Ongoing	UnitingCare	?	Planning to gather information through the network on climate

<p>opportunities to support the elderly and other marginalised sections of the community in making changes to their homes and living arrangements to cope with the impacts of climate change relevant to their location</p>				<p>action and environmental sustainability</p>
<p>Consider linking local congregations and agencies with resources to support community adaptation to changing climate (one simple example could be making churches available as “heat refuges”)</p>				<p>Not yet done – possible FS and Synod initiative</p>

## **Monitoring**

We will monitor implementation of this action plan on an ongoing basis using the indicators listed above to track our progress. Reporting on the progress of the Assembly and the broader church will occur annually to Assembly Standing Committee, and to the wider public via the Assembly website.