

Business fact sheet 7

Reducing your carbon footprint



A step by step approach to emissions reductions

Once you've measured your carbon footprint (see Business fact sheet 6), you can focus on reducing your greenhouse gas emissions and, as a result, your carbon footprint. There are a number of steps that will help you reduce your carbon footprint.

Set reduction targets

Establishing a reduction target and time frame for your business will help you reduce your emissions, particularly if it is endorsed by business staff. In the first instance, focus on reducing emissions through measures such as energy and resource efficiency, for example by using less paper and stationary products.

Carbon offsets can be used to reduce the remaining carbon emissions, but should only be used after all other reasonable efforts to eliminate and reduce emissions have been made.

Develop strategies

Prioritise strategies according to the largest sources of emissions and technical and economic feasibility. Examples of actions are outlined below and in Business fact sheets 8 and 9.

Implement reductions

It is important to allocate resources and staff to carry out the strategies that are identified and to encourage participation by everyone in the business. This can be encouraged by appointing a leader to steer the process and providing information and training to staff.


Displaying posters, providing information packs and a suggestion box are also good ways to get staff on board to reduce emissions, as well as regularly monitoring and reporting results and sharing news of the cost savings.

A report should be prepared, preferably annually, which outlines:

- ★ sources and amount of emissions categorised by activity (for example air travel)
- ★ impact of any emission reduction efforts and details of emission savings and cost savings if relevant
- ★ future emission reduction opportunities
- ★ risks, challenges and lessons learned.

Carbon offsets and becoming carbon neutral

'Carbon offsets' generally refers to an activity that reduces or removes greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere to counterbalance equivalent emissions elsewhere. A growing number of businesses are aiming for 'carbon neutral' status. This can usually only be achieved through the purchase of carbon offsets.



The Australian Government [Greenhouse Friendly™](#) program provided a verifiable methodology for assessing carbon offsets and accrediting corporations. This program ceased on 1 July 2009 due to the likely implications of the introduction of an emissions trading scheme.

The likely introduction of an emissions trading scheme (refer to Business fact sheet 2) will also impact on other carbon offset providers. More information is provided on this matter in the [Australian Government's National Carbon Offset Standard](#).

Consider your overall environmental footprint and business sustainability

Business and industry has a crucial role to play in helping Australia to become more sustainable and competitive. As a result, many Australian organisations and industries are responding by reducing their environmental impacts and risks through improved environmental management practices and efficient use of natural resources.

Further information on reducing your carbon footprint

★ Carbon Offsets Guide

[The Carbon Offsets Guide website](#) was developed by the Victorian EPA and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, and lists the majority of offset providers in Australia.

★ Carbon Offsets Watch

[The Carbon Offsets Watch](#) is a non-government partnership that assesses offset providers in Australia.

Further information on business sustainability

★ World Business Council on Sustainability (WBCSD)

[WBCSD](#) provides a platform for businesses to explore sustainable development, share knowledge, experiences and best practices.³

★ Corporate Sustainability online resources

The [Corporate Sustainability](#) website run by the Australian Government's Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts provides resources and programs to help businesses adopt sustainability practices.

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