



ECOSmart[®]
BUSINESS

Making your Business Carbon Neutral

EcoSmart Business Program – Fact Sheet



Congratulations on being an EcoSmart Business. As an EcoSmart Business we know that you have already taken important steps to reduce the environmental impact of your business operations. Now that you have taken these important first steps you may want to consider becoming carbon neutral

What exactly does carbon neutral mean?

Every time energy is used from a source such as fossil fuel based electricity, gas or petrol; greenhouse gases are created and are released into the atmosphere. Our consumption of water and the processing of rubbish also add to these emissions. Increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is causing climate change.

As a business you can't avoid using energy; however you can become carbon neutral. Carbon neutral is when the net amount of greenhouse gases emitted by your business is zero. You can consume energy and be carbon neutral – let us show you how.

How does being carbon neutral benefit my business?

There are significant benefits for both your business and the environment when you become carbon neutral, including:

- Increasing the efficiency of your business,
- Having access to a great marketing tool,
- Differentiating your business from your competitors,
- Demonstrating your environmental commitment to your customers,
- Be confident that you are emitting no greenhouse gases.

How do I become carbon neutral?

There are three key steps to becoming carbon neutral.

1. Increase energy efficiency – start by reducing the amount of energy you use
2. Purchase renewable energy – purchase energy that does not emit greenhouse gases
3. Purchase carbon offsets – any remaining greenhouse gases you will need to offset

Increasing energy efficiency

Become efficient; reduce the amount of energy you use wherever possible. Energy costs money and it will cost even more money if you need to offset it – so being energy efficient will save you money and makes good business sense.

Your EcoSmart Business Action Plan will have outlined some great ways to increase the energy efficiency of your business.

Purchasing renewable energy

Not all sources of energy create greenhouse gases – electricity from solar or wind power creates no greenhouse gases. If you purchase renewable energy for some or all of your energy needs you won't need to offset it.

If purchasing renewable energy make sure you purchase Government Accredited GreenPower™. GreenPower™ energy is accredited by the Federal Government and has to adhere to strict guidelines and conditions. This way you can ensure that you are receiving the best product for your business and the environment.

For more information on GreenPower™ and where you can purchase it, visit

www.greenpower.gov.au.

Purchase carbon offsets

The last stage to becoming carbon neutral is to offset any greenhouse gas emissions remaining after you have taken the first two steps. Essentially, when you are purchasing offsets you are paying for something or someone else to make a reduction in greenhouse gases that is equivalent to the amount you are producing.

Traditionally this has been done by planting trees which absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, however carbon offset providers are also providing offsets that support renewable energy or energy efficiency projects.

Again it is important that you purchase offsets through a reputable provider. The website www.carbonoffsetguide.com.au provides an independent directory of Australian carbon offset providers.

How do I know if my business is carbon neutral?

To know if you are carbon neutral, or how much you need to reduce to become carbon neutral you need to have an understanding of how many greenhouse gases you are emitting. There are many online calculators available to help you calculate your emissions based on your energy bills.

It's a good idea to calculate your emissions before you start step 1 & step 2 and after you have completed them. To become carbon neutral and have zero net emissions you will need to offset those emissions.

What if my business is not ready to become 100% carbon neutral?

Becoming carbon neutral is a big undertaking and you may not be prepared to take that step yet. That's okay start with step 1 and build on it. If purchasing renewable energy or offsets you can choose how much you purchase. For example, if you can't afford to buy all of your electricity from a renewable energy provider you can buy 10%, 50%, 75% or any percentage you choose.

As part of the EcoSmart Business Program we will recognize you for what you achieve even if it is not 100% through our Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum ratings.