



Australian Government



# Guide to Developing a Climate Change Policy

**A climate change policy supports arts and cultural organisations to articulate their commitment to addressing climate change and implementing sustainable practices.**

**This factsheet provides guidance on how to develop a climate change policy. It includes an example policy.**

*This guide and template may assist boards and board members of all arts organisations to engage in better practice and meet their legal obligations. All organisations should check relevant state, territory and federal legislation for any specific legal requirements.*

A climate change policy establishes an organisation's position on climate action along with guidelines and principles for decision-making. It provides clear direction, sets standards, manages risk, ensures compliance, promotes consistency and facilitates effective communication, ultimately aligning organisational behaviour with its mission and values.

Organisations are encouraged to customise the example policy below to outline their principles, goals and actions related to mitigating the impact of climate change, raising awareness and continually improving their environmental impact. At the end of this resource, you will find a collection of initiatives and resources designed to help the arts and cultural sector engage with, share knowledge about and enhance their climate change adaptations and actions.

As with all policies, arts and cultural organisations should evaluate the necessity of a climate change policy within their operational context, taking into account their size, capabilities and environmental impact.

## Steps to develop a climate change policy

### Step: 1

#### Assess current environmental impact

- Assess the organisation's current environmental impact, which includes:
  - energy consumption
  - waste management
  - transportation
  - water usage
  - energy
  - touring and travel
  - program, project or events planning
  - digital footprint
  - materials
  - sponsorship and funding
  - collaborations and partnerships.
- Various assessment tools are available for arts and cultural organisations to gain a better understanding of their environmental impact. (Refer to the resources below for more information).

- Identify areas where your organisation wants to make commitments to minimising impact, improving practices, or how it will integrate climate change action into the organisation and its activities. This should extend to organisational decisions regarding funding sources, collaborations and partnerships. Consider developing a dedicated organisational policy to guide the evaluation and implementation of these decisions. You can refer to Creative Australia's *Guide to Developing an Ethical Decision-Making Policy* for further information here.

### Incorporate a human rights-centred approach

- Responsible climate and environmental action should also incorporate a human rights-centred approach that acknowledges the vital role of First Nations leadership in climate response and action.

#### Step: 2

### Engage and consult

- Organisations may involve staff, artists, communities and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of their climate policy. Encouraging collaboration and active participation can foster a shared sense of responsibility and ownership.
- Look to where the organisation has specific implications or challenges in relation to the communities you work with and their experience or proximity to climate emergencies, considering if and how the organisation may have capacity to address or support these.

#### Step: 3

### Make commitments

- Set clear and measurable commitments for the areas in which the organisation has identified it can reduce its impact, improve practices or embed change. Align these commitments and goals with the specific needs and capacity of your organisation, taking into account its size, resources and art form. This may include how your organisation will make information relating to climate change action available to staff to help broaden awareness of the potential for individual and organisational actions.
- Your policy might also state how your organisation will work collaboratively with other arts organisations, industry bodies and community partners to share resources and coordinate approaches to climate change policy and actions, thereby strengthening overall impact and efforts.

#### Step: 4

### Monitor and report

- Establish mechanisms to monitor and track progress towards environmental goals. Regularly report on your organisation's environmental performance and communicate achievements and challenges transparently.

#### Step: 5

### Make continuous improvement

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and updating the climate change policy. Stay informed about emerging sustainability practices and technologies and adapt key climate documents and strategies accordingly.

## Example: Climate change policy

The following is an example climate change policy.

Author:

Review period:

Date published:

Next review:

### Introduction

[Organisation name] recognises the urgent need for all organisations and individuals to address the climate crisis and acknowledges the unavoidable impact it has on our environment and communities. This policy outlines our commitments, goals and actions towards addressing climate change.

### Commitment

#### We will mitigate our impact

As an organisation, we are committed to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. [Organisation name] will take proactive measures to mitigate our carbon footprint, promote sustainability and contribute to the safest possible future in the changing climate.

To mitigate climate change, we will prioritise the use of renewable energy in all operations and activities. Planning and management will help ensure [Organisation name] has as much use of sustainable materials in our operations, events and productions as possible, with waste management considerations and processes required at the start of all projects.

[add in any other commitments you wish to make here]

Supporting this policy, [Organisation name] will develop and implement an environmental action plan, outlining and measuring our specific targets and milestones.

#### We will raise awareness and advocate

[Organisation name] will provide opportunities for staff, stakeholders and peer companies to share and increase knowledge of our sector's impact and role in climate change action. We aspire to collaborate with peer organisations for actions and initiatives that advocate for bold action within the arts and cultural sector and beyond.

#### We will continuously improve

We will regularly review and update this policy along with all business activity to align with emerging best practices and sector knowledge. We will monitor and report on progress annually, including capturing of stakeholder feedback and sharing of results.

### Embedding climate change initiatives

#### Our leadership commitment

Senior leadership will be active champions of climate change and sustainable practices within the organisation. The board and directors will work together to integrate clear climate change goals into our organisation's strategic planning process and objectives.

#### Our staff engagement

[Organisation name] will foster a culture of sustainability and knowledge sharing of climate change within our sector and community. We will encourage staff participation in implementing climate change initiatives and will provide access to resources to increase staff awareness and knowledge of climate change, and our organisation's impacts and role in contributing to change.

*Example: Climate change policy (continued)*

### **Our suppliers, partners and funding**

[Organisation name] will use clear criteria for all procurement processes for our events, operations and services.

[Note: Depending on the size of the organisation, these may be specific procurement criteria and practices that consider suppliers' and products' certifications, track record and lifecycle assessments. For smaller organisations, it may be as simple as ensuring partners, funders and suppliers have at minimum a current climate or environmental policy, action plan or equivalent commitment.]

Transparency of funding and all donors will be disclosed to all stakeholders, as per [Organisation Name]'s Ethical Decision Making Policy.[Note: see Creative Australia's *Guide to Developing and Ethical Decision-Making Policy*]

### **Breaches and misconduct**

Any acts of misconduct, including non-compliance with the policy will be investigated and reported on [for example, an incident report] to ensure accountability, adherence and continuous improvement on our commitment towards climate change mitigation.

### **Evaluation and review**

[Organisation name] will monitor our progress in achieving the goals and targets outlined in this policy. Actively seeking feedback from stakeholders, including staff and the community, allows us to gather diverse perspectives and make necessary adjustments to enhance our climate change mitigation efforts. Annual reports will disclose results and progress transparently, fostering accountability and ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement. In future, this will be managed through the [Organisation Name] Environmental Action Plan.

[Note: Gathering feedback and measuring the policy might be a yearly informal check-in, internal surveys or defined metrics or criteria for evaluation or external assessment.]

## Future planning: A climate action plan

Arts and cultural organisations might consider developing a climate action plan to help implement their climate change policy. An action plan provides a more detailed roadmap for achieving the goals outlined in the policy. It sets specific targets, timelines and strategies tailored to the organisation's unique circumstances and strategic objectives. Developing an action plan enables organisations to track progress, allocate resources effectively and engage stakeholders in meaningful sustainability initiatives. It demonstrates a proactive approach to climate change and enhances transparency and accountability in the organisation's sustainability efforts.

The following is a brief introduction to what organisations might consider when developing a climate action plan.

### Steps to develop a climate action plan

#### Step: 1 Conduct a climate change impact assessment

- Assess the organisation's current footprint, energy usage, waste generation, touring mileage and other relevant factors.
- Identify areas where this footprint can be reduced, where resource consumption can be minimised and sustainable practices implemented.

#### Step: 2 Set specific and measurable goals

- Establish realistic targets and timeframes for reducing emissions and adopting sustainable practices.
- Align these goals with the organisation's strategic objectives and regularly track progress against key metrics through board reporting.

#### Step: 3 Develop strategies and implementation steps

- Identify strategies and actions that will help achieve the defined goals.
- Allocate responsibilities and resources necessary for implementing the action plan.
- Create a timeline that outlines the sequence of activities and milestones.

#### Step: 4 Monitor, evaluate and communicate progress

- Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan.
- Measure and report to the board on key performance indicators to track progress.
- Communicate achievements and challenges to stakeholders, promoting transparency and accountability.

## Resources

### **Climate Governance for NFP Directors**

A guide with examples and practical resources to support not-for-profit directors to take action to address climate change. Published by the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **State of the Environment Report**

A holistic and collaborative assessment of Australia's environment by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, published by the Australian Government. The report outlines outlook and impact, environment and pressures, management of Country and key resources.

### **Julie's Bicycle**

A leading cultural and environmental not-for-profit delivering initiatives, programs, tools and resources responding to the climate crisis.

### **Climate Council**

An independent, evidence-based organisation with key resources and up-to-date information on climate science, impacts and solutions.

### **350 Australia**

A not-for-profit with a core mission of aiming to rapidly end fossil fuels by building a global climate movement.

## Tools and training

### **NAVA: Climate Adaptation and Environmental Action**

A summary of good practice recommendations with accompanying discussion and resources.

### **Institute of Community Directors: Environmental Sustainability Policy**

A sample policy template for developing an environmental sustainability policy.

### **A Climate for Art**

A union of arts organisations, art-workers committing to climate crisis action, including key divestment resources.

### **Creative Climate Action**

An environmental action course for building frameworks and setting goals for sustainability in the arts.

### **Embedding Project: Resources for Embedding Sustainability**

An internationally relevant curated selection of resources and tools to help organisations better embed sustainability within core strategies.

### **Website Carbon Calculator**

A summary of good practice recommendations with accompanying discussion and resources.

## **Initiatives**

### **Climarte**

Climarte collaborates with a wide range of artists, art professionals and scientists to produce compelling programs that advocate for immediate, effective and creative action.

### **Seed Mob**

An Indigenous youth--led climate network, building a movement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people for climate justice.

### **Creative Recovery Network**

A not-for-profit working to connect the creative sector, disaster management and communities, advocating for and developing specialist skills to support and strengthen communities through climate disasters.