



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Emissions Reduction Plan

2024-25



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Health and Aged Care acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Accountable Authority Sign Off

The Australian Government released the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy in November 2023, setting out the overall approach and action required by Commonwealth entities to achieve the APS Net Zero 2030 target.

The Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy represents a strong commitment by the Australian Government to lead by example on emissions reduction and contribute to the decarbonisation of Australia's economy.

The Department of Health & Aged Care (the Department) is committed to implementing the Government's APS Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the APS Net Zero 2030 target in full.

This Emissions Reduction Plan describes the 2024-25 priorities and actions the Department is taking to reduce our operational emissions and contribute to the APS Net Zero 2030 target.



Rachel Balmanno

Chief Sustainability Officer

Department of Health & Aged Care

6 September 2024

Emissions Reduction Plan

Purpose

The Department is responsible for managing and implementing emissions reduction initiatives set by the Australian Government's Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy (the Strategy) developed by the Department of Finance. The Strategy sets out the Australian Government's approach to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions from its operations by 2030 and reinstates public emissions reporting.

The goal of this Emissions Reduction Plan is to outline how the Department will contribute to the achievement of the APS Net Zero 2030 target through emissions reduction activities in 2024-25. This plan encompasses existing and new priorities and actions within the Department to reduce emissions.

This Emissions Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with the Strategy, associated guidance and reporting standards for annual emissions reporting.

Net zero greenhouse gas emissions

APS Net Zero 2030 is the target set by the Australian Government to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by the year 2030. It includes scope 1 and scope 2 emissions from activities in Australia and its territories, as described in the Strategy. The APS Net Zero 2030 target applies at the aggregate level to non-corporate Commonwealth entities and generally covers the entirety of the entity's organisation. From an organisational perspective, this means minimising the greenhouse gas emissions that are within our control.

Governance and reporting

The Department has implemented interim governance arrangements, including establishing the role of Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), to support current activities and drive improved risk identification, quality of data and reporting capability. The Department expects to the governance arrangements as our emissions reduction efforts broaden in future years.

Progress against actions identified within this Emissions Reduction Plan, and any additional measures adopted, will be included in our Annual Reports. This, combined with annual emissions reporting, will be used to measure our progress towards reducing our emissions.

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Report, the Department of Finance will provide whole-of-Australian Government emissions reporting.

The Department's operational context

The Department operates across all Australian states and territories, with approximately 7,2961 personnel working across these jurisdictions. Our facilities including 12 office spaces within a mixture of sole-tenanted and multi-tenanted buildings, and a specialised laboratory site. This presents unique operational challenges that add complexity to our emissions reduction strategy.

In the 2024-25 Budget, the Government announced that, as an interim step in the reform of the National Mental Health Commission, the Commission's functions, resources, and associated appropriations will transfer into the Department of Health and Aged Care as a non-statutory office on or before 1 October 2024.

As of 1 August 2024, the Commission has 39 staff based across NSW, ACT, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. Its facilities consist of 2 office spaces, one in Sydney and one in Canberra. Each office space is part of a multi-tenanted building.

The Department has shared tenancies with and provides corporate services to several agencies and statutory office holders within the Health and Aged Care portfolio. The Department works cooperatively with these entities to initiate net-zero emissions pathways aligned to the goals of the Strategy. Key activities include:

- consolidating leased premises, preferencing energy-efficient buildings for new lease arrangements and incorporating sustainable design in our workspaces
- rationalising our vehicle fleet and transitioning to low emissions and electric vehicles
- minimising travel, and
- procuring renewable energy sources and reducing waste.

Baseline emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of greenhouse gases that have been produced in the past and were produced prior to the introduction of any strategies to reduce emissions. The baseline emissions from financial year 2022-23 are the reference point against which emissions reduction actions can be measured.

The baseline emissions for this plan focus on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, consistent with the APS Net Zero 2030 target. Electricity-related emissions were calculated using the location-based method.

The Australian Public Service has committed to achieving Net Zero emissions by 2030, initially focusing on Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Scope 1 emissions are direct greenhouse gas emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organisation, while Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam, heating, and cooling. The Department's 2024-25 plan does not include Scope 3 emissions, indirect emissions not covered in Scope 2. These will be considered as more data becomes available.

¹ Serraview Accommodation Report 19 July 2024.

Table 1 Department of Health and Aged Care's baseline emissions data*

Baseline year	Financial year 2022-23 – location based
Scope 1 emissions	736,448 kg CO2e
Scope 2 emissions	4,819,297 kg CO2e
Total emissions	5,555,745 kg CO2e

Baseline year	Financial year 2022-23 – market based
Scope 1 emissions	736,448 kg CO2e
Scope 2 emissions	1,021,183 kg CO2e
Total emissions	1,757,631 kg CO2e

* This Table includes 2022-23 emissions data for the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC) pending a Machinery of Government change, effective 1 October 2024.

Time Series Consistency

Tracking emissions trends and the impact of emission reduction strategies is essential for understanding progress over time. The Department will endeavour to use consistent data collection methods and data sources each year.

Methodological Consistency and Transparency

Key to ensuring confidence in the time-series consistency will be the diligent documentation of approaches to estimate emissions, including methodologies and data sources. This will be detailed in the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Reports. The Department will adhere to best practices in emissions accounting, following guidelines from reputable sources such as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting scheme, and other relevant frameworks.

Continuous Improvement

The Department is committed to continually improving its emissions data accuracy and reporting transparency. This includes adopting advanced data collection technologies, engaging in regular audits, and aligning with international standards and practices. By doing so, the Department aims to set a leading example and continue to support our portfolio agencies in emissions reduction and sustainability.

Engagement

In developing this plan the Department worked with:

- Department of Finance
 - Climate Action in Government Operations –to ensure this plan aligns with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements.
 - Fleet Team – to discuss options associated with low emissions vehicles.
 - Travel Team – to discuss options and considerations for lowering travel emissions.
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Whole of Australian Government Property Service Provider – Evolve FM
- National Mental Health Commission (NMHC)

Emissions reduction targets

Using the baseline emissions data, we will seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a combination of:

- a reduction in our overall footprint of commercial office accommodation
- implementing sustainable design principles for new fit-outs
- energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, and
- other measures, including the use of offsets.

We have relocated our largest energy-consuming site, the Therapeutic Goods Administration’s laboratories from an ageing building in Symonston to an all-electric office and laboratory facility in Fairbairn. This move has led to a significant reduction in gas consumption across our portfolio.

The associated office facility was also relocated to a new building, reducing our environmental footprint through robust sustainability practices, including energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, sustainable transportation, and community engagement.

The Department’s Property Service Provider will undertake a desktop review of our sites to identify the top energy-consuming sites and energy efficiency opportunities based on the energy consumption data and the existing base building sustainability credentials. Following this, the need for a detailed study of our highest-emitting sites can then be considered to assess achievable emissions reductions and associated costs.

Prioritise and action

The Department will contribute to achieving the APS Net Zero 2030 target through existing emissions and new reduction measures.

Actions already underway include:

- Ensuring we take an overarching view of our emissions through the Chief Sustainability Officer role and related governance arrangements.
- Undertaking an internal audit of the Department’s readiness for Net Zero requirements to identify areas for improvement.
- Implementing the National Health and Climate Strategy which sets out a whole-of-government plan for addressing the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change

and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the Australian health system. The Strategy's vision is 'Healthy, climate-resilient communities, and a sustainable, resilient, high-quality, net zero health system'.

- Engaging in sustainable procurement, including procuring renewable electricity under the Department of Finance's whole-of-government electricity contract, to enable investment in renewable energy, improve energy efficiency and optimise supply chains.
- Ensuring a minimum 5.5 NABERS rating for current and new lease arrangements, wherever possible.
- Transitioning 80% of fleet vehicle leases to low emission vehicles or electric vehicles by January 2026.
- Engaging with building owners to establish electric vehicle charging at office spaces with allocated parking for electric vehicles by January 2026, where possible.
- Engage employees (eg fleet users) and shared-services customers in sustainability initiatives to build a culture of environmental responsibility.

In addition, we will:

- Establish clear, science-based emission reduction targets and regularly tracking progress towards these goals.
- Promote sustainable practices among our service providers and employees, such as reducing waste, recycling, using public transportation and considering climate impact when planning travel.
- Work with incumbent providers on maximising emission reduction opportunities.

Building

During 2024-25, the Department will continue to consolidate leased premises, reducing our overall leased office-space, and preferencing all-electric buildings with 4.5-star minimum National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) ratings.

We will continue to implement refit our premises, under the New Ways of Working program, to optimise our use of space. By reducing and optimising our office space we are:

- decreasing atmospheric emissions, particularly through HVAC systems
- decreasing electricity and water consumption (HVAC, Lifts, hot water services and other services, plant & equipment)
- decreasing cleaning demand and waste disposal
- avoiding the need to upgrade lighting, and
- decreasing the impact of ongoing minor capital works, R&M, eventual full re-fit and associated waste.

In addition, the program's design principles include a focus on sustainability including:

- using sustainable building materials, optimising natural light, and improving insulation
- installing energy efficient lighting and appliances
- purchasing goods and services through suppliers who prioritise sustainability, including purchasing recycled or recyclable products
- where possible, implementing recycling bins for better waste management and landfill diversion, and

- embedding sustainable staff practices, such as paper-lite, minimising the waste of office supplies and a printer cartridge recycling program.

Action

- Continue to consolidate the Department's property footprint.
- Continue to implement the New Ways of Working Program.
- Future opportunities include transitioning to renewable energy sources such as installing solar panels on buildings, purchasing green power, or participating in renewable energy programs and carbon off-setting.

Electricity

The Department's energy contracts are managed by our Property Service Provider. The Department has committed to transitioning electricity contracts to renewable sources where available.

The Department of Finance are approaching the market for new whole-of-government renewable electricity arrangements. The department will migrate to these arrangements as they are rolled out, and existing contracts cease.

Action

- Participate in new whole-of-government electricity arrangements to replace electricity contracts with renewable electricity.
- In locations where the whole-of-government arrangements will not be available, work with our Property Service Provider to transition contracts to renewable sources where possible.

Fleet

The Department has committed to replacing its vehicle fleet with low emission vehicles or electric vehicles as existing leases end, in line with the Commonwealth Fleet Vehicle Selection Policy.

Currently the Department has 20 leased fleet vehicles with five additional vehicles expected to arrive by the end of 2024 taking the fleet to 25 vehicles. All are passenger cars subject to low emission vehicle targets.

A review of fleet vehicle utilisation has been undertaken to determine vehicles suitable for replacement with low emission and electric vehicles, including battery electric vehicles. The initial focus will be on vehicles used primarily in metropolitan areas with ready access to charging infrastructure, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles where usage involves long-distance travel and extends to regional areas where access to charging infrastructure may be limited.

Action

- Progressively transition the Department's vehicle fleet to low emission or electric vehicles:
 - 25% by January 2025 (pending delivery of vehicles currently on order)

- 80% by January 2026, and
- 100% by 2030.
- Develop a Fleet Strategy, including an EV charging plan, to support these forward targets.

Involved participants

Table 2: Areas of the Department involved in the development of this plan

Division	Branch
People, Communication and Parliamentary	Workplace and Change
Integrity and Assurance	Assurance
Financial Management	Strategic Procurement
Information Technology	Service Operations and Infrastructure
Office of Health Protection Policy and Surveillance	Interim Australian Centre for Disease Control
National Mental Health Commission	Corporate

Title	Emission Reduction Plan (ERP)
Created By	Michelle Paschkow, Workplace & Change Branch, PCPD
Date Created	25 July 2024
Maintained By	Michelle Paschkow, Workplace & Change Branch, PCPD

Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date Modified	Status
1.0	MP	Initial draft release	July 2024	V1
1.1	JM	Text and formatting	Aug 2024	Draft
2.0	MP	Format	Aug 2024	V2
2.1	RB	Content changes	Aug 2024	V2.1