

ARC Emissions Reduction Plan

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Research Council (ARC) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connections to lands, waters and community. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Declaration and sign off

Introduction

Climate change will continue to have significant effects on the environment, society and economy, with impacts felt across the government's operations. The ARC acknowledges that human behaviours, pollution and consumption patterns have both immediate and future impacts on the climate and environment, and that as a Commonwealth entity it is part of our role to mitigate and manage these impacts on our community.

This Declaration establishes our position and commitments to reduce emissions.

The ARC supports the environmental, social and economic benefits of addressing climate change immediately, and we see an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in emissions reduction.

Commitment to achieving net zero

The ARC is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

The ARC recognises that climate change is occurring, and that climate change will continue to have a significant effect on the Australian environment, society and economy.

We acknowledge the central role of government in driving a successful climate response. Hence, we declare that we are committed to reducing operational emissions, through the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Our overall objectives align with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy to reduce our operational emissions.



Dr Richard Johnson, Acting Chief Executive Officer

Date: 24 June 2024

Emissions Reduction Plan

Introduction

International scientific consensus is that climate change is occurring and that it is driven by anthropogenic causes, with human activities having a profound impact on the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. Ultimately these activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, land clearing and agriculture, have increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, leading to changes in the climate system.

For the ARC, projected changes to our climate between now and 2030 include:

- further increase in temperatures, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days
- more heat waves that will be longer and hotter
- more frequent, longer and more intense droughts across southern Australia
- more intense heavy rainfall throughout Australia, particularly for short-duration extreme rainfall events (storms).

Purpose

The ARC has an essential role in managing and implementing emissions reduction initiatives set by the Australian Government's [Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy](#) (the Net Zero Strategy) developed by Department of Finance. The Net Zero Strategy is the first of many steps in Australian Government's approach to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions in its operations and reinstatement of public emissions reporting.

This plan sets out the steps that the ARC will take to achieve APS Net Zero by 2030. This plan encompasses new and existing initiatives within the ARC to reduce emissions and contribute to the APS Net Zero target by 2030.

The goal of this plan is to provide a pathway for the ARC to meet net zero emissions targets through emissions reduction activities.

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. Net zero is achieved when consumption of resources, such as electricity, is reduced as far as possible, and energy is supplied from renewable sources. Where unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions remain, they are balanced through carbon offsetting.

From an organisational perspective, this means minimising the greenhouse gas emissions that are within our control.

Scope

Inclusions

Emissions reduction activities will align with the Net Zero Strategy, with the initial focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions. Future reviews will consider additional inclusions to align with the Net Zero Strategy and organisational activities, including the consideration for Scope 3.

Exclusions

Activities by Commonwealth entities that take place outside of Australia or its territories, including international air and marine travel, are not included in Australia's Nationally Determined Contribution and are not included in the APS Net Zero 2030 target or subject to the Strategy. Entities that undertake these activities will act as appropriate to reduce their emissions in the relevant local context as an aspirational goal for the Australian Government to demonstrate leadership and advance Australia's climate diplomacy objectives.

Governance

This plan will be updated annually, with a summary to be incorporated into our annual report. Progress against actions identified within the Emissions Reduction Plans are to be included in our annual reports. This, combined with annual emissions reporting, will be used as a measure of the ARC's progress towards reducing its emissions.

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Report, the Department of Finance will aggregate these measures to provide the Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) aggregated emissions reductions activities.

Future iterations of this plan will align with the Offset strategy and Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements that are currently under-development by the Climate Action in Government Operations Unit within Department of Finance.

ARC operational context

The ARC operates within the Australian Capital Territory, with approximately 190 staff working in 2,543m² of leased office space at 11 Lancaster Place, Canberra Airport, Canberra. The building has a 4.5-star NABERS rating and utilises tri-generation technology which captures excess energy that would have been lost during the production of electricity and uses it to heat the buildings in winter and cool them in summer.

The ARC leases a rack within a data centre facility. Our provider is a supplier under the Digital Transformation Agency's Data Centre Panel which includes a strengthened range of measures for data centre providers to identify, manage and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The ARC has already commenced its net zero emissions pathway in line with the direction set in the Net Zero Strategy. This includes the following key activities:

- minimising surplus office space requirements where possible as per the Commonwealth Property Management Framework
- electrical audits of personal devices to be used on ARC premises is undertaken. A reasonableness test is applied that considers key priorities including cost, productivity, and environmental impact. Devices that do not pass the requirements of the test cannot be used on ARC premises
- engaging in sustainable procurement activities. For example, using recycled office paper and ensuring appropriate resource reuse or recovery for mobiles, toner cartridges and ICT equipment
- providing modernised hardware with lower power consumption and electronic tools to facilitate a paperless office
- managing waste (for example, ensuring e-waste is used or recycled and ICT packaging is recycled)
- managing resource consumption and demand (for example, monitoring computer to printer ratios)
- providing electronic tools to facilitate a paperless office.

ARC baseline emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of greenhouse gasses that have been produced in the past and were produced prior to the introduction of any strategies to reduce emissions. The baseline emissions are the reference point against which emissions reduction can be measured.

At this stage, the APS Net Zero 2030 target includes Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. Decisions on Scope 3 will be made in the future as further data becomes available. The baseline emissions for this plan will focus on those emissions.

Baseline year	Financial year 2022–23
Scope 1 emissions	0 tCO ₂ e
Scope 2 emissions	81.829 tCO ₂ e
Total ARC emissions	81.829 tCO₂e

CO₂-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.

Time series show historical emissions trends and track the effects of emission reduction strategies. Efforts will be made to calculate the time series using the same methods and data sources in all years. However, as emissions measurements, data collection methods, methodological refinements and reporting requirements are expected to be continually added and improved upon, strategies to ensure time-series consistency are being implemented from the outset. Key to ensuring confidence in time-series consistency will be the diligent documenting of approaches to emission estimated, including methodologies and data sources, in the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Reports.

Engagement

In the development of this plan the ARC has been working with the:

- Department of Finance Climate Action in Government Operations team – to ensure that this plan aligns with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements
- ARC Facilities team – to discuss options for lowering emissions within the scope of the building lease
- ARC Chief Information Officer – to discuss external data centre facilities and its compliance with Data Centre Panel sustainability requirements.

Emissions reduction targets

In order to achieve net zero by 2030, the ARC has adopted the following carbon reduction targets.

We project that greenhouse emissions will decrease over the next 6 years from 81.829 to 0 tCO₂e by 2030. This is a reduction of 100%.

We anticipate that greenhouse emissions will remain constant until the ARC signs up to the WoAG electricity contract, at which time emissions will reduce to 0 tCO₂e.

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

Priorities and actions

The ARC current sustainability measures are not sufficient to achieve net zero by 2030. To achieve net zero the ARC will sign up to the WoAG Electricity Contract arrangements when in place.

Further targeted action on existing measures and the introduction of further or new measures includes:

- continuing to engage in sustainable procurement practices across the organisation and when undertaking procurement processes
- ensuring the ARC procurement policy aligns with the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy and the procurement requirements outlined in the Net Zero Strategy
- ensuring the ARC travel policy aligns with the Net Zero travel requirements outlined in the Net Zero Strategy
- transition to energy efficient lighting.

Buildings

The ARC's current lease at 11 Lancaster Place, Majura Park will conclude in September 2025. The ARC will comply with all relevant procurement and sustainability requirements when undertaking the procurement process to enter a new lease. Compliance with these requirements will ensure future emissions are kept to a minimum and where possible, will contribute to an overall reduction in WoAG emissions targets.

ACTION: The ARC Facilities team will ensure compliance with relevant sustainability and procurement rules when considering lease options at the end of the ARC's current building lease period.

Electricity

Renewable electricity

The ARC will participate in the WoAG electricity procurement process when it is established. This supports the WoAG target that by 2030, all procured energy that is generated offsite is renewable.

ACTION: The ARC Facilities team will consult with the Department of Finance to ensure participation in WoAG electricity procurement as per the Net Zero Strategy to replace all electricity contracts with renewable electricity.

Energy efficient lighting

There is currently fluorescent lighting throughout the ARC building. In an effort to move towards more efficient resource usage the owners of the building, the Canberra Airport Group, have plans in place to transition to a more energy efficient lighting alternative within 2 years. Not only will this reduce emissions, it will also reduce costs to the ARC.

ACTION: The Canberra Airport Group will install energy efficient lighting throughout the ARC office by mid-2026.

Contact details

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Document control

Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
1.0	24/06/2024	Acting CEO (accountable authority)	New plan introduced