

Australian Government  
Carbon Neutral Program  
Public Disclosure Summary



NAME OF CERTIFIED ENTITY: Uniting Communities Incorporated

REPORTING PERIOD: 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

### Declaration

To the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this Public Disclosure Summary is true and correct and meets the requirements of the National Carbon Offset Standard Carbon Neutral Program.

	31 October 2019
Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive	
Carbon neutral certification category	Organisation
Date of most recent external verification/audit	31 October 2017
Auditor	EY
Auditor assurance statement link	<a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>



**Australian Government**  
**Department of the Environment and Energy**

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## 1. Carbon neutral information

### 1A. Introduction

Uniting Communities is an inclusive not-for-profit organisation working alongside more than 30,000 South Australians each year as they strive for bright futures and great lives. We operate more than 100 community programs, travel over three million kilometres per year and have a team of over 1,500 staff and volunteers.

Uniting Communities seeks to reduce inequality and improve wellbeing for all who are striving to overcome disadvantage – individuals, their families and communities – so that they can realise their potential and live the best lives they can. Our service delivery, advocacy and community building activities are central to achieving this.

We offer more than 90 services to support the needs of individuals and our community including mental health and counselling; residential aged care and support for independent living; housing crisis and emergency support; disability services; services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people; financial and legal; drug and alcohol counselling; family relationships; and respite and carer support.

Uniting Communities has been committed to reducing its impact on the environment since 2010 when the Board of Uniting Communities determined its goal of becoming a carbon neutral certified organisation by 2015. Our carbon program, Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN) is now a core organisation commitment across all operations including our central administration and services.

In 2015 we became the first registered charity in Australia to become certified carbon neutral and the very first organisation in South Australia to do so. In 2016, Uniting Communities became a founding partner of Carbon Neutral Adelaide and in 2017 were named the first Ambassador of Carbon Neutral Adelaide. We are proud of our leadership position and of the additional benefits that we have attained by being carbon neutral, including financial savings, enhanced reputation, employee satisfaction and delivering on contractual requirements for grant funding.

BCN has been led by our consultant adviser and program manager and a committee of employees and management from across the organisation. Together they develop emissions reduction plans and initiatives, monitor progress and report to the executive team and Board. Across the organisation, each site has a BCN Representative, performing the on-ground role of facilitating carbon reduction discussion and actions at their sites.

Uniting Communities' carbon account has been prepared in accordance with NCOS for Organisations and other standards referred to within that document including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Standard and the National Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reporting Act 2007. Uniting Communities has used the Operational Control method of consolidation and has considered the following greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) and hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs). The organisation does not cause emissions of any synthetic greenhouse gases.

### 1B. Emission sources within certification boundary

#### Quantified sources

In 2018/19 Uniting Communities operated its services from approximately 70 sites, five of which were owned and the remainder leased. The emissions data from these facilities is entered into a carbon management system for which Uniting Communities owns a license. The data is used to calculate the carbon emissions from each emissions source and is then aggregated. All data is maintained in this system and regular reporting is provided from this source to the organisation's leaders as well as to the Board. There have been no changes in emissions scope this year other than an expansion of employee commuting to include public transport.

Also private travel was removed from fleet vehicle data to more accurately reflect business travel. Counteracting some of this was the transfer of commuting in fleet vehicles to the employee commuting category.

Table 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Sources

Scope	Emissions source
Scope 1	Natural Gas
	Refrigerant
	Transport Fuel - Company Fleet
Scope 2	Electricity
Scope 3	Business Travel – Air
	Business Travel - Employee Commuting
	Business Travel - Grey Fleet
	Copy Paper
	Stationery
	Waste to Landfill
	Water

### Non-quantified sources

The impact of excluding the following sources is not expected to materially affect the overall emissions.

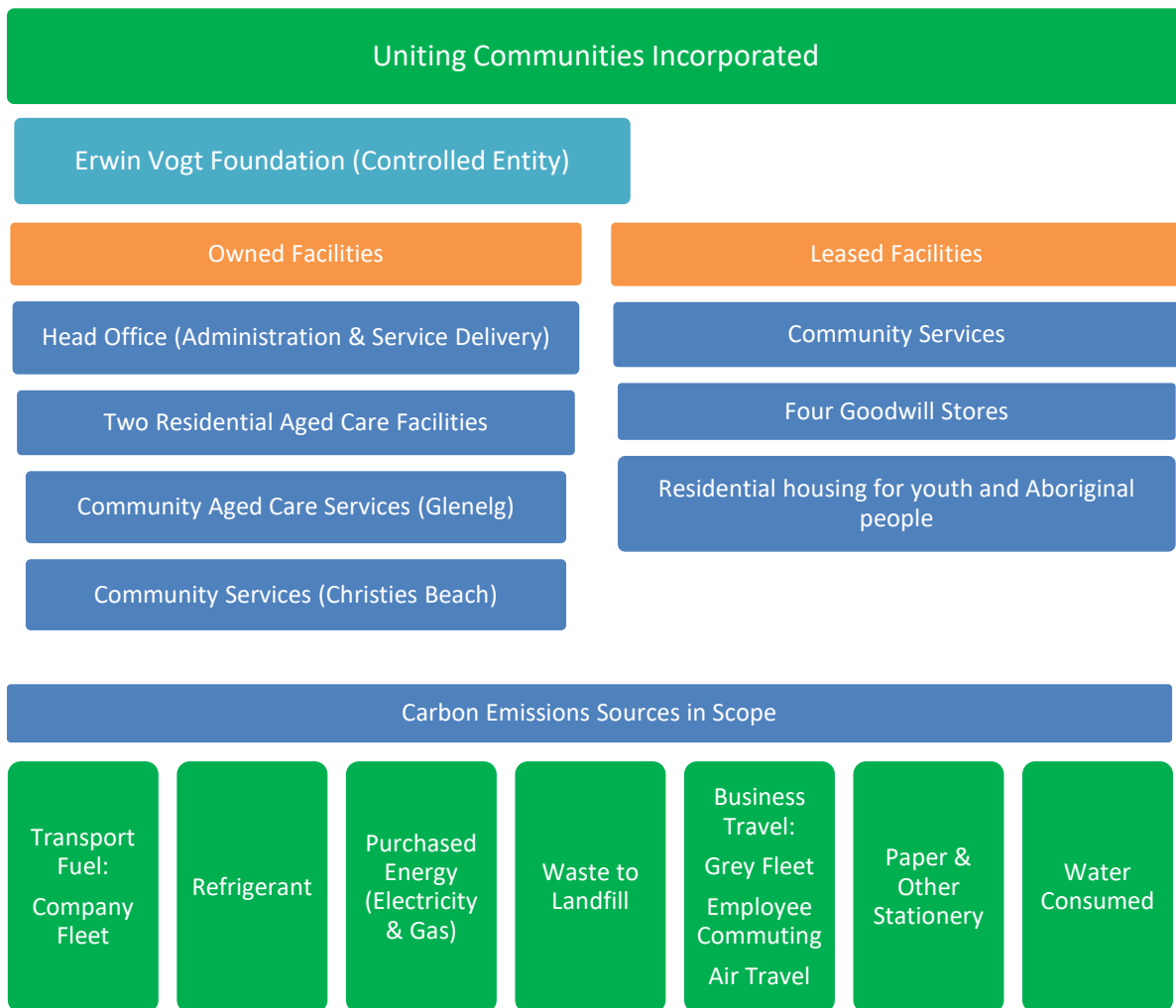
As a public benevolent institution Uniting Communities relies to some extent on volunteers for the provision of its services. Emissions from their travel are currently unquantifiable as volunteers do not usually claim compensation for their travel. Some services for particular programs are brokered to external providers, for example independent living services for the elderly. These services are paid for through a set fee that does not include the breakdown of fuel or other emissions sources. As such it cannot be quantified easily.

Sometimes Uniting Communities finds it necessary to engage contractors and consultants however the expenses associated with these services are immaterial from an emissions perspective, as are the provision of food and beverage and medical supplies which are part of our residential aged care services.

Other immaterial or hard to measure activities include some purchased goods and services, accommodation, taxi travel and capital goods.

### 1C. Diagram of the certification boundary

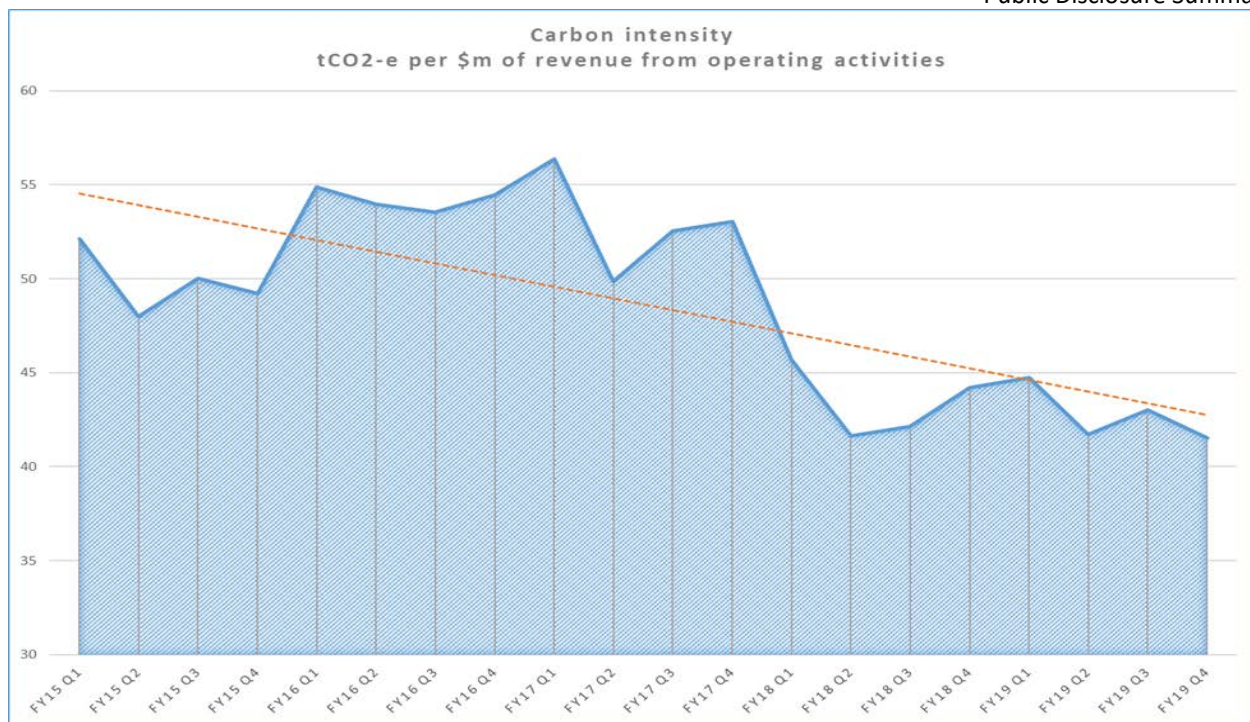
The diagram below shows the facilities and operations that Uniting Communities operates along with the emissions sources included in its carbon account.



## 2. Emissions reduction measures

### 2A. Emissions over time

Overall emissions have increased this year by just over 3% and, in terms of operating revenue, have decreased by 2%. The largest contributors to the overall increase in emissions are a combination of two factors. First, a rise in the grid electricity emissions factor for SA was largely the cause of a 6% increase in electricity emissions thereby masking a small increase in consumption of 0.5%, despite organisation growth this year. Second, there was a four-fold increase in refrigerant use resulted from a timing anomaly in relation to regassing. There were increases in emissions in other activities reflecting the growth and innovation that has occurred throughout the year however the continued reduction in emissions intensity is of note – see graph below.



Plausible reductions were made in copy paper (20% reduction) and natural gas (4% reduction). These are the direct result of continued efforts to reduce energy use, to automate processes and also reflect the upgrade of multi-function devices. Many of our sites have reduced their electricity emissions and waste to landfill including the two aged care facilities, which are the largest contributors to the carbon inventory.

The fleet of company owned vehicles has grown in response to an increase in services however the vast majority are hybrid petrol-electric vehicles. As a result, the overall fuel efficiency has improved again this year. Five new site leases have been taken up this year and three have been closed in response to changes in program services and funding. Overall the difference in emissions is immaterial from these small sites.

Two employee commuting surveys were conducted and as a result of improvements to the data collection, for the first time we have included public transport emissions. A restatement back to base year has been made accordingly and is reflected in Table 1.

<b>Table 1. Emissions compared with base year and prior year (after restatements)</b>					
	Base Year 2014/15 tCO2-e	2017/18 tCO2-e	2018/19 tCO2-e	Change on Prior Year (%)	Change Since Base Year (%)
Scope 1	372	327	365	11.7	-1.7
Scope 2	1,198	892	934	4.7	-22.0
Scope 3	1,585	1,629	1,644	0.9	3.7
Total	3,155	2,848	2,943	3.3	-6.7
Per \$1m operating revenue	55	44	43	-2.2	-22.3

## 2B. Emissions reduction strategy

Uniting Communities' Beyond Carbon Neutral (BCN) Committee develops an annual emissions reduction strategy and a detailed plan of initiatives. This is reviewed and contributed to by the organisation's leadership team. The plan is also reviewed quarterly by the BCN committee both to monitor progress and to discuss new ideas that may have arisen. Emissions reduction is supported by annual capital and operating budgets thereby allowing building and equipment upgrades and behaviour change to contribute to carbon reduction.

2018/19 saw the construction of Uniting Communities landmark vertical community building U City. This community is the first of its kind in Australia and now houses many Uniting Communities services and administration, a state-of-the-art function centre, a retirement village, both short term and long term disability accessible accommodation, commercial tenants including offices, cafes and a Goodwill store. There is no doubt that this building will increase the organisation's overall carbon emissions in 2019/20 however continual reduction of our carbon emissions by revenue remains the main target. Notably U City has been rated Adelaide's greenest six star green star building and there are aspirations for it to be a carbon neutral certified building at some point in the future.

## 2C. Emissions reduction actions in 2018/19

As the largest contributor to the organisation's carbon emissions, electricity was a key area of focus this year, in particular the installation of 100kW solar arrays on both of the residential aged care facilities. This project was completed at the end of the year and is expected to cut electricity and the organisation's emissions by around 10% and overall carbon emissions by around 5%. The U City building also has a 60kW solar array.

The BCN Committee performed reviews of both of the aged care facilities resulting in action lists of initiatives, some of which were implemented during the year including LED lighting. Our Felixstow facility reduced its overall emissions by 6%, including a 2% reduction in electricity, a 16% reduction in natural gas and a 6.5% reduction in waste to landfill. The Glenelg facility reduced its emissions by 2% including a 17% reduction in natural gas, a very small reduction in electricity and a 2% reduction in waste to landfill.

Our quarterly behaviour change initiatives focused on solar electricity, waste to landfill and sustainable travel. Our BCN Site Representatives continued to facilitate local action through behavior change and other measures which have included some sites installing window blinds and LEDs.

Ongoing improvements to waste management have resulted in an increase in recycled (21%) and organic (14%) waste which is a positive reflection of the overall consciousness and commitment to better waste management. Waste to landfill has however risen. Some of this rise is due to an improved data collection method that saw an additional number of our approximately 70 sites report their council bin waste this year. With the majority of our sites' waste being collected by councils it is difficult to maintain up to date and consistent data however an annual 'audit' of council bins is conducted.

Travel emissions are inherent in the services we provide and this year our services expanded again, especially in regional assessment services for older people. However careful trip planning and the continued conversion of the fleet to hybrid petrol-electric is making travel by car more efficient than it was in terms of fuel consumption per kilometre. Also efforts have been made to increase the use of Uniting Communities' improved virtual meeting software such as Skype for Business.

The large reduction in copy paper use was facilitated by a reduction in printers and the installation of new multi-function devices (MFDs). Our city-based office also introduced on-demand printing whereby printing is not physically printed until a person logs in to the MFD. This is known to be a successful way to reduce printing.

### 3. Emissions summary

<b>Table 2. Emissions Summary 2017/18</b>		
Scope	Emission source	tCO <sub>2</sub> -e
1	Natural Gas	120
1	Refrigerant	44
1	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet	202
2	Purchased Electricity	934
3	Business Travel – Air Travel	54
3	Business Travel – Employee Vehicles	233
3	Business Travel – Employee Commuting	800
3	Stationery Purchases	12
3	Waste to Landfill	205
3	Natural Gas (indirect emissions)	24
3	Purchased Electricity (indirect emissions)	183
3	Transport Fuel – Company Fleet (indirect emissions)	16
3	Upstream transport and distribution (Business Travel - Employee Vehicles)	19
3	Upstream transport and distribution (Business Travel – Employee Commuting)	62
3	Copy Paper	5
3	Water	30
<b>Total Emissions</b>		<b>2,943</b>

## 4. Carbon offsets

### 4A. Offsets summary

<b>Table 3. Offsets Summary</b>						
Projects supported by offset purchase	Eligible offset units	Registry	Cancellation date	Serial numbers (including hyperlink to registry transaction record)	Vintage	Quantity
Native biodiverse revegetation in SA	KACCUS	ANREU	24/5/19	377398135-37773298137 and 3781042692-3781044188 <a href="https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/OSR/ANREU/Data-and-information">https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/OSR/ANREU/Data-and-information</a>	2018/19	1,500
Putian Shicheng Wind Farm Project in China	VCUs	VCS	1/8/19	5851-264260843-264261230-VCU-034-APX-CN-1-1448-01012014-31122014-0 <a href="https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=22148">https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=22148</a>	2014	388
Chakala Wind Power Project in India	VCUs	VCS	4/7/19	6870-353254779-3532587-6-VCU-034-APX-IN-1-1197-01012018-31052018-0 <a href="https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=26438">https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=26438</a>	2018	3,948
Myrtah Wind Power Project in India	VCUs	VCS	4/7/19	6413-320245575-320247626-VCU-034-APX-IN-1-1521-01012017-31122017-0 <a href="https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=26118">https://vcsregistry2.apx.com/myModule/rpt/myrpt.asp?r=206&amp;h=26118</a>	2017	2,052
Total offsets cancelled in 2018/19						7,888
<b>Total for 2018/19 inventory</b>						<b>2,943</b>
Amount for prior year restatements						1,358
Carried forward from prior year						-141
<b>Total offsets allocated - 2018/19</b>						<b>4,160</b>
Offsets banked for use future years (Chakala wind power project serial numbers: 6870-353254779-3532587-6-VCU-034-APX-IN-1-1197-01012018-31052018-0)						<b>3,728</b>



#### 4B. Offsets purchasing and retirement strategy

Uniting Communities commenced purchasing offsets in arrears with effect from 2017/18. Where it has direct control over the choice of offsets, e.g. where offsets are not retired by suppliers on our behalf, Uniting Communities will purchase offsets with co-benefits that resonate with its values of community and environment.

This year Uniting Communities' fleet vehicle supplier CMI Toyota again supplied eligible offsets with purchases, part of which were donations. After these have been deducted from the carbon inventory, offsets are purchased according to the requirements of NCOS for Organisations.

#### 4C. Offset projects (co-benefits)

This year Uniting Communities purchased 1,500 ACCUs from South Australian biodiverse revegetation projects in the Murray Darling Basin between the Coorong, Murray Mouth and the Riverland. Plantings are on lands including National Parks and private conservation reserves including internationally recognised wetlands (Ramsar listed). Co-benefits include creating habitat for international migratory birds. Protection is also given to nationally threatened species such as the Wedge Tailed Eagles. The revegetation projects contribute to the local economy, by creating employment and income for local communities. These are the first offsets in SA to have been accredited under the Commonwealth Government's Emissions Reduction Fund and Uniting Communities was the joint first buyer.

The overseas offsets are from three bundled wind power projects in India and China. These projects contribute to several sustainable development goals and ensure employment opportunities and infrastructure development in the regions. Co-benefits include social, economic, environmental and technological wellbeing as described below.

*Social well-being:* The project helps in generating employment opportunities during the construction and operation phases. The project activity will lead to development in infrastructure in the region such as development of roads and may promote business with improved power generation. This project created 150 permanent jobs and 210 jobs during the construction phase. The project has invested in training 100 volunteers who can help improve the health of people living in surrounding slums. Safe water projects have been established that provides clean water, sanitation education and improved latrine services. 12,000 people have benefited from the establishment of seven safe drinking water plants across three states. The project developer has also empowered young women with the creation of two community camps. The camps have already taught 500 girls about gender rights, health and soft skills.

*Economic well-being:* The project is a clean technology investment in the region, which would not have taken place in the absence of the VCS benefits. The project activity will also help to reduce the demand supply gap in the state.

*Environmental well-being:* Wind being a renewable source of energy, reduces the dependence on fossil fuels and conserves natural resources which are on the verge of depletion. Due to its zero emissions the Project activity avoids a significant amount of GHG emissions including specific pollutants like SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and SPM associated with the conventional thermal power generation facilities.

*Technological well-being:* The successful operation of the projects' activities should lead to promotion of wind based power generation and would encourage other entrepreneurs to participate in similar projects.

### 5. Use of trade mark

The trademark has been used as set out in Table 4. To the best of our knowledge this is complete.

Table 4. Trade mark register	
Where used	Logo type
Uniting Communities website: <a href="http://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/we-are-carbon-neutral/">http://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>	Certified organisation
“We are Carbon Neutral” brochure	Certified organisation
Carbon Neutral Adelaide website: <a href="https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities">https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities</a>	Certified organisation
Australian Government, Department of the Environment case study: <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf">http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf</a>	Certified organisation

## 6. Have you done more?

Carbon neutrality became a goal for Uniting Communities in 2010 and is now a core commitment for the organisation which is widely recognised as a leader in this area. Uniting Communities has always been willing to share its approach with others. Since we became Carbon Neutral our executives and program manager have presented at many events, including for Carbon Neutral Adelaide. Uniting Communities is the inaugural Ambassador for Carbon Neutral Adelaide and as such commits to continuing to reduce its carbon footprint and to promoting the program and its experiences to others. We also provide guidance to others in our industry sector on working towards becoming certified carbon neutral.

This role has become increasingly active since our new U City building opened in August 2019. This building has been rated the greenest building in Adelaide through its 6-star Green Star Design Rating. The aim is for U City to achieve Green Star As-Built and Performance Ratings as well as eventual Carbon Neutral Building certification. U City is a vertical community incorporating Uniting Communities’ administration and a range of services as well as a retirement village and disability accessible accommodation. The building also houses a state-of-the-art function centre and is home to commercial and retail tenants including a Goodwill Store and cafes. The building is the first of its kind and has unique features and sustainable design.

<https://www.ucity.com.au/u-city-development-awarded-highest-green-design-rating-in-sa/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NC95f05bUvI&t=1s>

Uniting Communities has been the recipient of a number of awards including:

- Winner, SA Climate Leaders Awards, Community and Regions Category, 2016
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Leadership & Influence 2017
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Applied Innovation 2017
- Recipient, City Switch Hall of Fame, 2018

As well as having a policy in place, we have shown our commitment to emissions reduction by including to carbon neutrality in employee job descriptions and setting annual capital and operating budgets. From the very start, we have engaged an external carbon consultant to assist us, allocated internal resources to committees and site-based activities and have invested in a proprietary carbon data management system. These investments have more than been repaid in operating cost savings and other benefits and will continue to do so.

Uniting Communities has provided case studies on its carbon neutral program to both the Commonwealth Government as well as to Carbon Neutral Adelaide (see links in Section 5). We are also a signatory to CitySwitch in respect of U City at 43 Franklin Street, Adelaide.

The table below includes links to our organisation website and other online promotional material.

<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/">https://www.unitingcommunities.org/we-are-carbon-neutral/</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	<a href="https://twitter.com/UCommunities_">https://twitter.com/UCommunities_</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/UnitingCommunitiesOz/">https://www.facebook.com/UnitingCommunitiesOz/</a>
<b>YouTube</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwoCOgEPXwo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwoCOgEPXwo</a>
<b>Case studies</b>	<a href="https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities">https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities</a> <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf">http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/81375eff-2080-4715-8260-f64243a01ef8/files/case-study-uniting-communities.pdf</a>