



PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

UNITING COMMUNITIES INCORPORATED

ORGANISATION CERTIFICATION


FY2021–22

Australian Government
Climate Active
Public Disclosure Statement



An Australian Government Initiative



NAME OF CERTIFIED ENTITY	Uniting Communities Incorporated
REPORTING PERIOD	Financial year 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 Arrears report
DECLARATION	<p><i>To the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this public disclosure statement is true and correct and meets the requirements of the Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard.</i></p>  <p>Simon Schrapel Chief Executive 23 March 2023</p>



Australian Government
**Department of Industry, Science,
 Energy and Resources**

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Version March 2022. To be used for FY20/21/CY2021 reporting onwards.



1. CERTIFICATION SUMMARY

TOTAL EMISSIONS OFFSET	2,827 tCO ₂ -e
OFFSETS BOUGHT	100% VCUs
RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY	N/A
TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT	25/2/21 Suzanne Ridding Sustainable Business Consultants Next technical assessment due: 2023-24

Contents

1. Certification summary.....	3
2. Carbon neutral information.....	4
3. Emissions boundary.....	6
4. Emissions reductions.....	8
5. Emissions summary.....	10
6. Carbon offsets.....	12
7. Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) Summary.....	14
Appendix A: Additional Information.....	15
Appendix B: Electricity summary.....	17
Appendix C: Inside emissions boundary.....	19
Appendix D: Outside emissions boundary.....	20

2. CARBON NEUTRAL INFORMATION

Description of certification

This certification renewal is for Uniting Communities Incorporated's (ABN 33 174 490 373) operational emissions in South Australia. The information in Section 6 (Carbon offsets) also includes offsets allocated for Uniting Communities U City carbon neutral building certification.

Organisation description

Uniting Communities is an inclusive not-for-profit organisation working alongside more than 80,000 South Australians as they strive for a bright future and great lives, supporting them to overcome adversity and disadvantage. Our service delivery, advocacy and community building activities are central to achieving this. We operate more than 100 community programs across 65 sites, travelling over three million kilometres per year and have a team of over 1,500 staff and volunteers.

Uniting Communities supports 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 certified carbon neutral organisation by 2015. Our Net Zero 2035 commitment was made in 2021 and relates to all our operations (central administration and services).

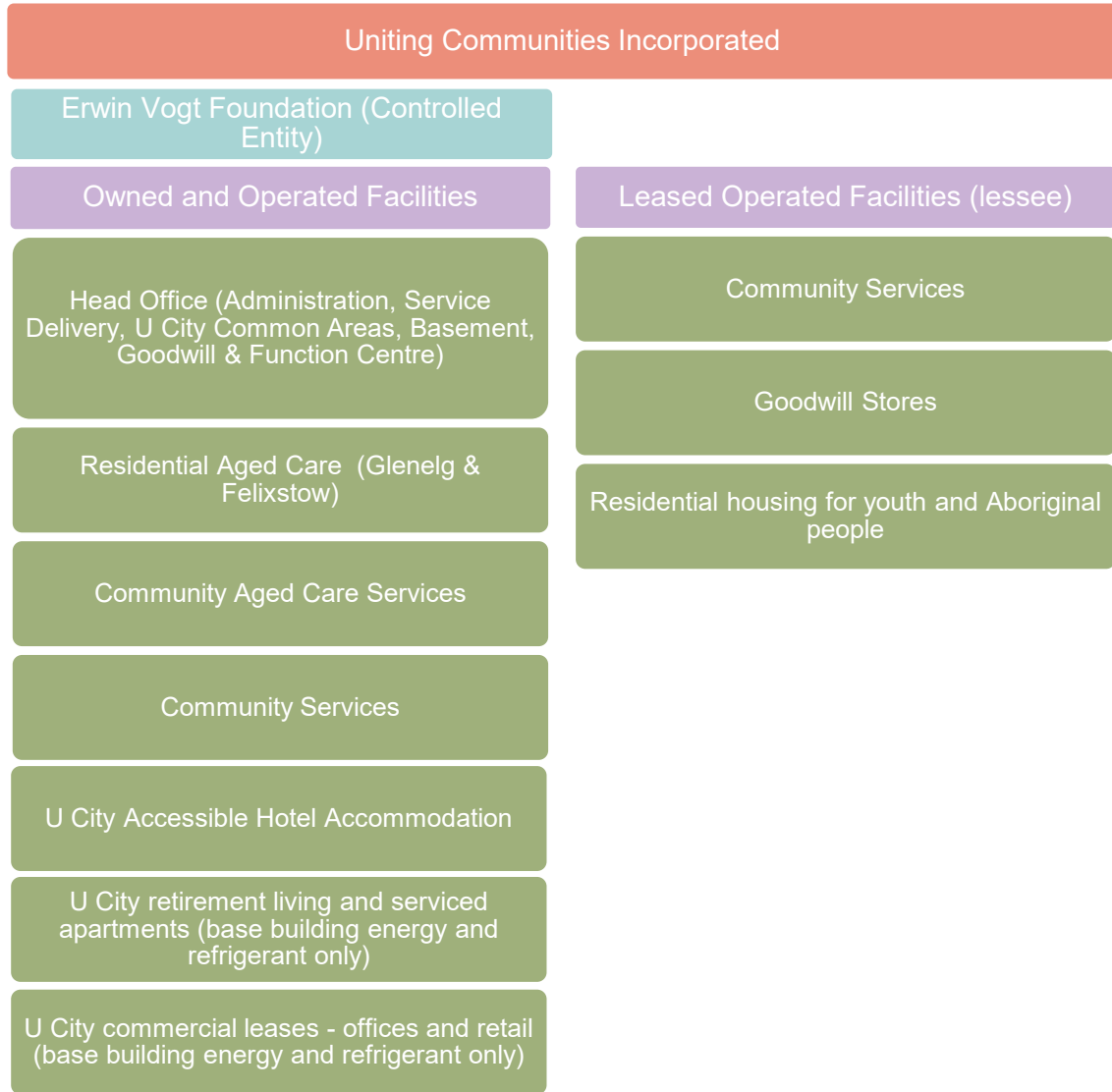
In 2015 we became the first registered charity in Australia to become certified carbon neutral and the first organisation in South Australia to do so. In 2016, Uniting Communities became a founding partner of Carbon Neutral Adelaide and in 2017 were named the first Ambassador of Carbon Neutral Adelaide. 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, winning awards and delivering on contractual requirements for grant funding.

In 2021, Uniting Communities' vertical village "U City" became the first whole building to be certified carbon

“Being carbon neutral makes sense for our organisation; we have a strong moral compass and we believe that climate change will most affect people in our client base – the elderly, socially disadvantaged and people on lower incomes. Through becoming carbon neutral, organisations can enjoy the benefits while supporting the environment in which we live, broader community.”

neutral in SA. Designed and built as a 6 Star Green Star building with the Green Building Council of Australia, U City has also won awards for its design and innovation.

For additional information, see Appendix A.



3.EMISSIONS BOUNDARY

Inside the emissions boundary

All emission sources listed in the emissions boundary are part of the carbon neutral claim.

Quantified emissions have been assessed as relevant and are quantified in the carbon inventory. This may include emissions that are not identified as arising due to the operations of the certified entity, however are **optionally included**.

Non-quantified emissions have been assessed as relevant and are captured within the emissions boundary but are not measured (quantified) in the carbon inventory. All material emissions are accounted for through an uplift factor. Further detail is available at Appendix C.

Outside the emissions boundary

Excluded emissions are those that have been assessed as not relevant to an organisation's operations and are outside of its emissions boundary or are outside of the scope of the certification. These emissions are not part of the carbon neutral claim. Further detail is available at Appendix D.

Inside emissions boundary

Quantified

Natural gas – organisation and U City whole building

Refrigerant – organisation and U City whole building

Transport fuel – company fleet

Electricity – organisation and U City whole building

Business travel – air

Business travel – employee vehicles

Employee commuting

Copy paper

Office equipment and supplies

External printing

Waste – organisation and U City whole building

Water – organisation and U City whole building

Working from home

Non-quantified

Food

Medical supplies

Outside emission boundary

Excluded

Volunteers' travel

Brokered services

Sundry consultants

Data management plan for non-quantified sources

There are no non-quantified sources in the emission boundary that require a data management plan. The sources in the non-quantified section of the emissions boundary are immaterial.

4. EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

Emissions reduction strategy

In August 2021, Uniting Communities announced its [commitment](#) to be Net Zero by 2035. Our interim targets are:

- 100% renewable energy by 2025
- Convert 100% of gas hot water units on owned buildings to electric heat pumps by 2030
- Transition 100% of company fleet to fully electric by 2035, and light vehicles by 2030
- 40% reduction in total emissions by 2030, compared to FY21.

A detailed Net Zero by 2035 plan, with annual actions, is currently being developed.

Uniting Communities continues to [commit](#) to being a certified carbon neutral organisation and to reducing its emissions per million dollars of revenue based on 2014/15 – its initial carbon neutral year.

Emissions reduction actions

For its organisation operations, Uniting Communities has reduced its carbon emissions by 2.6% this year and by 21% since the 2014/15 base year (as restated). Per \$1 million revenue the reduction is 48% since the base year. This year's result is despite the post-COVID restrictions return to work, less working from home and more kilometres travelled by staff in their own vehicles. The organisation has also grown in the last year and taken on additional services for older people and others including a new site.

The carbon emissions relating to other aspects of U City (other than Uniting Communities' own operations) have also reduced by 11 tonnes or 3.3%.

Uniting Communities has worked on the following emissions reduction initiatives during 2021/22:

- Ongoing conversion of the light vehicle fleet to hybrid petrol-electric – now 97.2%. This conversion is currently saving an estimated \$664 annually per vehicle and \$96,305 annually for the entire light vehicle fleet.
- Improve operational efficiency and reduce the use of paper and stationery. The trend of reduced copy paper use continued with a 16% reduction in 2021/22. External printing and stationery also reduced by 2.4% - an ongoing reduction since the majority of the ordering and storing was centralised at U City.
- Launched our 10-year certified carbon neutral celebration event (of carbon reduction) with an annual program of challenges. This program was aimed at the ongoing education and engagement of employees on how they can reduce carbon emissions in the areas of soft plastics, commuting to work by public transport or other forms of non-combustion engine vehicle travel such as walking or cycling, reducing electricity use.

- Development of the detailed Net Zero 2035 pathway.

Our internal emissions reduction actions are ongoing and include regular communications with our employees, carbon reduction discussions at team meetings, our active Net Zero Site Representatives, participation in annual days such as World Environment Day (which we turn into a whole week of activities to engage and educate), mandatory Net Zero orientation and online learning as well as regular communications to the whole workforce highlighting activities and tips for emissions reduction.

We also undertake annual employee commuting, working from home survey and waste audits, which not only help us to estimate the carbon emissions from these emissions sources, but remind our employees of their environmental impact.

5. EMISSIONS SUMMARY

Emissions over time

Emissions since base year - organisation		
		Total tCO ₂ -e
Base year:	2014–15	3,154
Year 1:	2015–16	3,080
Year 2:	2016-17	3,035
Year 3:	2017-18	2,849
Year 4:	2018-19	2,943
Year 5:	2019-20	2,820
Year 6:	2020-21	2,557
Year 7:	2021-22	2,503
Emissions since base year – U City whole building (emissions not covered in organisation certification)		
		Total tCO ₂ -e
Base year:	2020-21	329
Year 1:	2021-22	318

Significant changes in emissions

Emission source name	Current year (tCO ₂ -e)	Previous year (tCO ₂ -e)	Detailed reason for change
Electricity	811.8	1,128.8	Gradual decarbonisation of the electricity grid in SA
Bus travel (employee commuting)	157.5	46.4	Post-COVID restrictions return to travel by public transport and some behaviour change by employees
Petrol – medium car (employee commuting)	173.7	96.5	Post-COVID restrictions return to travel
Waste - landfill	208.0	184.4	Additional site and an increase in landfill waste due to PPE requirements (COVID) at aged care facilities

Use of Climate Active carbon neutral products and services

Certified brand name	Product used
Winc (Opal Australian Paper)	Carbon neutral copy paper

Organisation emissions summary

The electricity summary is available in the Appendix B. Electricity emissions were calculated using a location-based approach.

Emission category	Sum of total emissions (tCO ₂ -e)
Accommodation and facilities	0.00
Climate Active Carbon Neutral Products and Services (copy paper)	0.00
Electricity	811.84
Office equipment & supplies	96.42
Refrigerants	7.87
Stationary Energy (gaseous fuels)	224.29
Transport (Air)	14.77
Transport (Land and Sea)	1079.88
Waste	207.95
Water	45.73
Working from home	14.04
U City whole building (emissions not covered in organisation certification)	318.00
Leading a Sustainable Future event 2022	6.00
Total	2,826.79

Uplift factors

N/A

6. CARBON OFFSETS

Offsets retirement approach

Forward purchasing	
1. Total eligible offsets forward purchased and retired in last year's reports ¹	4,116
2. Total emissions footprint to offset for this report	2,827
3. Total eligible offsets retired and used for this report	2,827
4. Total eligible offsets forward purchased and retired for subsequent reports	2,400
5. Total eligible offsets forward purchased and retired for next year's report plus any remaining banked offsets to be carried over	3,689

Co-benefits

EcoAustralia Mount Sandy biodiverse native vegetation projects in South Australia

EcoAustralia is an award-winning stapled carbon credit product which helps to protect and restore native vegetation. The product blends State Government-accredited biodiversity protection with international carbon offsets. An Australian Biodiversity Unit, equal to 1.5m² of government-accredited, permanently protected Australian vegetation is paired with 1 Gold Standard international carbon credit, representing 1 tCO₂-e of avoided emissions.

The Mount Sandy project brings together indigenous and non-indigenous communities by promoting traditional land management for biodiversity conservation, in partnership with the Ngarrindjeri people. This project protects a rare pocket of wetlands and woodlands between the Coorong National Park and Lake Albert. As one of the last remaining areas of native vegetation in the region, the land forms a strategic wildlife corridor and is of great significance to the Ngarrindjeri people, the indigenous local nation. New plantings are from the local nursery run by the Raukkan indigenous community.

Co-benefits include climate action, job opportunities for indigenous people and protection of flora and fauna.

Stapled with InfraVest Changbin and Taichung bundled Wind Farms Project

The overseas offsets paired with the Australian Biodiversity Units are from wind power projects in Taiwan. This Gold Standard project is expanding Taiwan's renewables sector and raising environmental awareness. The wind farms consist of 62 wind turbines that generate over 480,000 MWh of clean power on average each year, which is supplied to the local electricity grid. By harnessing the power of prevailing coastal winds to generate clean energy, the Changbin and Taichung wind farms power Taiwanese homes, while helping to expand Taiwan's renewable energy industry. The project is helping boost sustainable development through several local initiatives, such as guided wind farm tours that raise awareness about climate change and pollution, supporting the elderly and a scholarship program.

¹ 4,900 units were initially retired, with 449 units used for Uniting Communities' FY2020-21 organisation certification; 329 units used for the U-City FY2020-21 building certification; and 6 units used for the *Driving a Sustainable Future* 2021 event certification.

Eligible offsets retirement summary

Offsets cancelled for Climate Active Carbon Neutral Certification											
Project description	Type of offset units	Registry	Date retired	Serial number (and hyperlink to registry transaction record)	Vintage	Stapled quantity	Eligible quantity (tCO ₂ -e)	Eligible quantity used for previous reporting periods	Eligible quantity banked for future reporting periods	Eligible quantity used for this reporting period	Percentage of total (%)
InfraVest Changbin and Taichung bundled Wind Farms Project – Taiwan <i>Stapled to:</i>	VER	Gold Standard	30/11/20	GS1-1-TW-GS472-12-2017-6457-117603-122502	2017	-	4,900	784 ²	1,289	2,827	100%
EcoAustralia Mount Sandy biodiverse native vegetation conversation project - SA	ABU	N/A	02/12/20	2019/4003-VOL001-11103 to 2019/4003-VOL001-16629 Link not publicly available	2020	4,900	-	-	-	-	-
Bundled wind power project by Myrtah Group - India	VCS	VERRA	05/07/22	7638-416156875-416159274-VCU-034-APX-IN-1-1728-01012017-24112017-0	2017	-	2,400	0	2,400	0	0%
Total offsets retired this report and used in this report										2,827	
Total offsets retired this report and banked for future reports										3,689	
Type of offset units		Quantity (used for this organisation and building reporting period claims)					Percentage of total				
Verified Emissions Reductions (VERs)		2,827					100%				

² 449 units were used in Uniting Communities' FY2020-21 organisation certification; 329 units were used in the U-City FY2020-21 building certification; and 6 units were used for the *Driving a Sustainable Future* 2021 event certification.

7. RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATE (REC) SUMMARY

Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) summary

N/A

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Uniting Communities continues to deliver presentations sharing UC's story of emissions reduction at conferences and podcasts including [Business SA's Chamber Networking event at U City](#), the [SACOSS Liveable Futures Conference: Towards Climate Justice & Social Equity](#), the [SACOSS Building a Climate Resilient Community Sector Conference](#), the [Australasian Road Safety Conference 2021](#) and the [CPA Australia Not For Profit Virtual Conference](#) and [AfMA's Interview Series Podcast](#). Uniting Communities also held its first ever certified Carbon Neutral event [Driving a Sustainable Future event](#), inviting many external stakeholders with key suppliers sponsoring the event, showcasing UC's carbon neutral journey to date and announcing UC's latest target to be Net (Carbon) Zero by 2035.

We also advocate for others to follow suit and have delivered presentations to a number of other organisations. During the previous [Community Sector Climate Change Advocacy Week](#), Uniting Communities signed ACOSS's Declaration - that a fast, fair and inclusive plan to address climate change this decade matters to the community sector and the communities we work with throughout South Australia. And in response to Deloitte Access Economics finding that a [National Low-income Energy Productivity Program \(NLEPP\)](#) could create 22,000 full time equivalent jobs to deliver the Program and an additional 1,800 jobs by delivering energy efficiency and solar to low-income homes, Uniting Communities asked "The SA Government to commit to improved energy efficiency standards for housing, particularly rental housing and the implementation of a Low-income Energy Productivity Program for South Australia."

As its Inaugural Ambassador and a Founding Partner, [Uniting Communities were honoured for its low carbon business leadership](#) by Carbon Neutral Adelaide. In addition to Uniting Communities' annual carbon neutral certification for its operations, U City became the first Whole Building in South Australia to be certified carbon neutral by Climate Active and featured in several external media outlets: [Australian Design Review](#), [The Weekly Source](#), [Woods Bagot](#) and most recently as a case study in the [Circular Economy in South Australia's Built Environment discussion paper](#) – where Green Industries SA is partnering with the Green Building Council of Australia, dsquared and the Adelaide Sustainable Building Network to explore circular economy opportunities for South Australia's built environment.

Uniting Communities, including U City, have been the recipient of a number of awards including:

- Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards 2021 – Business Leadership
- CitySwitch State winners over 2000sqm – South Australia 2019 & 2020
- Australia’s International Good Design for Social Impact Award Winner, 2020
- Property Council of Australia, Innovation and Excellence, 2020 SA State Development Winner
- UDIA SA Awards for Excellence 2020, Innovation in Development Winner
- UDIA SA Awards for Excellence 2020, Seniors Living Winner
- National innovAGEING Improving Consumer Choice 2020 Award Winner
- PIA SA Award for Excellence 2020, Great Place Award Winner
- Recipient, City Switch Hall of Fame, 2018
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Applied Innovation 2017
- Finalist, Carbon Neutral Adelaide Awards, Leadership & Influence 2017
- Winner, SA Climate Leaders Awards, Community and Regions Category, 2016

Links to Uniting Communities’ website and other online promotional material:

Website	https://www.unitingcommunities.org/about-us/purpose-and-value/our-commitments/carbon-neutral
U City	https://www.ucity.com.au/
Twitter	https://twitter.com/UCommunities
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/UnitingCommunitiesOz/
YouTube – Our Carbon Neutral Journey	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThwMrQCGbfk
Case studies	https://www.carbonneutraladelaide.com.au/business/uniting-communities
Latest Media	Uniting Communities was honoured for its low carbon business leadership Australian Design Review The Weekly Source Woods Bagot Circular Economy in South Australia’s Built Environment

APPENDIX B: ELECTRICITY SUMMARY

Electricity emissions were calculated using a **location-based approach**.

Location-based method:

The location-based method provides a picture of a business's electricity emissions in the context of its location, and the emissions intensity of the electricity grid it relies on. It reflects the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid in the location (State) in which energy consumption occurs. The location-based method does not allow for any claims of renewable electricity from grid-imported electricity usage.

Market-based method:

The market-based method provides a picture of a business's electricity emissions in the context of its renewable energy investments. It reflects the emissions intensity of different electricity products, markets and investments. It uses a residual mix factor (RMF) to allow for unique claims on the zero emissions attribute of renewables without double-counting.

Market-based approach summary			
Market-based approach	Activity Data (kWh)	Emissions (kgCO ₂ -e)	Renewable percentage of total
Behind the meter consumption of electricity generated	325,663	0	13%
Total non-grid electricity	325,663	0	13%
LGC Purchased and retired (kWh) (including PPAs & Precinct LGCs)	0	0	0%
GreenPower	0	0	0%
Jurisdictional renewables (LGCs retired)	0	0	0%
Jurisdictional renewables (LRET) (applied to ACT grid electricity)	0	0	0%
Large Scale Renewable Energy Target (applied to grid electricity only)	407,893	0	16%
Residual Electricity	1,786,259	1,777,263	0%
Total grid electricity	2,194,152	1,777,263	16%
Total electricity consumed (grid + non grid)	2,519,815	1,777,263	29%
Electricity renewables	733,556	0	
Residual Electricity	1,786,259	1,777,263	
Exported on-site generated electricity	39,166	-28,591	
Emissions (kgCO ₂ -e)		1,748,672	
Total renewables (grid and non-grid)	29.11%		

Mandatory	16.19%
Voluntary	0.00%
Behind the meter	12.92%
Residual electricity emissions footprint (tCO₂-e)	1,749

Figures may not sum due to rounding. Renewable percentage can be above 100%.

Location-based approach summary			
Location-based approach	Activity Data (kWh)	Scope 2 emissions (kgCO₂-e)	Scope 3 emissions (kgCO₂-e)
ACT	0	0	0
NSW	0	0	0
SA	2,194,152	658,246	153,591
VIC	0	0	0
QLD	0	0	0
NT	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0
Grid electricity (scope 2 and 3)	2,194,152	658,246	153,591
ACT	0	0	0
NSW	0	0	0
SA	325,663	0	0
VIC	0	0	0
QLD	0	0	0
NT	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0
Non-grid electricity (Behind the meter)	325,663	0	0
Total electricity consumed	2,519,815	658,246	153,591
Emission footprint (tCO₂-e)	812		
<i>Scope 2 emissions (tCO₂-e)</i>	658		
<i>Scope 3 emissions (tCO₂-e)</i>	154		

Carbon neutral electricity offset by Climate Active product	Activity Data (kWh)	Emissions (kgCO₂-e)
<i>Not applicable</i>	0	0

Climate Active carbon neutral electricity is not renewable electricity. The emissions have been offset by another Climate Active member through their product certification.

APPENDIX C: INSIDE EMISSIONS BOUNDARY

Non-quantified emission sources

The following sources emissions have been assessed as relevant, are captured within the emissions boundary, but are not measured (quantified) in the carbon inventory. These emissions are accounted for through an uplift factor. They have been non-quantified due to one of the following reasons:

1. **Immaterial** <1% for individual items and no more than 5% collectively
2. **Cost effective** Quantification is not cost effective relative to the size of the emission but uplift applied.
3. **Data unavailable** Data is unavailable but uplift applied. A data management plan must be put in place to provide data within 5 years.
4. **Maintenance** Initial emissions non-quantified but repairs and replacements quantified.

Relevant-non-quantified emission sources	(1) Immaterial	(2) Cost effective (but uplift applied)	(3) Data unavailable (but uplift applied & data plan in place)	(4) Maintenance
Food	Yes			
Medical supplies	Yes			

APPENDIX D: OUTSIDE EMISSIONS BOUNDARY

Excluded emission sources

The below emission sources have been assessed as not relevant to an organisation's operations and are outside of its emissions boundary. These emissions are not part of the carbon neutral claim. Emission sources considered for relevance must be included within the certification boundary if they meet two of the five relevance criteria. Those which only meet one condition of the relevance test can be excluded from the certification boundary.

Emissions tested for relevance are detailed below against each of the following criteria:

1. **Size** The emissions from a particular source are likely to be large relative to the organisation's electricity, stationary energy and fuel emissions
2. **Influence** The responsible entity has the potential to influence the reduction of emissions from a particular source.
3. **Risk** The emissions from a particular source contribute to the organisation's greenhouse gas risk exposure.
4. **Stakeholders** Key stakeholders deem the emissions from a particular source are relevant.
5. **Outsourcing** The emissions are from outsourced activities previously undertaken within the organisation's boundary, or from outsourced activities typically undertaken within the boundary for comparable organisations.

Emission sources tested for relevance	(1) Size	(2) Influence	(3) Risk	(4) Stakeholders	(5) Outsourcing	Included in boundary?
Brokered and consulting services	No	No	No	No	No	No
Travel/commuting by volunteers	No	No	No	Yes	No	No



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