



CPP Member Webinar Q&A

Net Zero Communities: Scoping and Planning Net Zero Community Targets

21st April 2020

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Setting Targets

Q: Council target is net zero by 2040 but what are your community targets?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *The council targets aim to be net zero by 2026, and the community targets aim to be net zero by 2040. We are aiming to go ahead of the community target with our council target.*

Q. How did you determine and decide on the corporate target of 2026?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We aligned with two council cycles, 8 years from when the plans were developed. We thought that would be enough time for us to get there.*

Q. In setting your targets, were you able to estimate how you might achieve the targets and how realistic these estimates were?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We haven't done that yet. As part of the target we're creating a roadmap for the actions required for how to get there and the resources needed to do so.*

Q. Despite the tremendous work of Port Phillip Council and the challenges around data, I see that emissions went up by 34% from 2007–2017. Without a price on carbon, is it possible for councils to deliver on the aspirational targets?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *I think that is such an important question and I think it really comes down to how much of your target do you want to own as a council and how much is going to be about advocacy and how do you communicate that with your community and with your decision makers? Ultimately I think a net zero goal for our community can't be achieved without significant action happening around something to do with putting a price on carbon or whatever you want to call it these days, so if you are going down that path of an aspirational target you have to be really clear where you can actually control it and where you can't.*

Q. What is the anticipated cost to offset community emissions by 2040?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *Council is currently in the process of defining the emission baseline and building the emission reduction strategy towards 2040. Costs to offset community emissions will be considered in the development of the strategy and in consultation with the community.*

Scoping and Calculating Emissions

Q. In calculating community emissions, was a consultant engaged and is it reported on annually? If so, does this mean a consultant is engaged to do so every year or is it possible to do it in house?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *With our corporate emissions we calculate in-house and then get a third party assessment and verification, and we get that annually. With our community emissions, it's a bigger project that we have outsourced previously and at this stage, our history has been that we tend to re-do that every 3 to 4 years and as best available data becomes clearer. We will hopefully progress to testing that more frequently, hopefully annually but at this stage we're still probably at that 3-4 year cycle.*

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *For the corporate emissions, we've done it in-house, we are working through building the community profile which is the difficult one. We have a tool called CORE to give us a baseline on how to estimate emissions. Also there is the online tool from Ironbark which we've been using lately, which estimates emissions which we use as a baseline, but we're aiming to get a consultant this year to develop a full community gas emissions baseline, but we haven't done that before for the city.*

Q. Can you expand on what has been included in the calculations? Was e.g. chemicals and stationary included?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *For our community emissions profile, it's stationary, it's a small amount of waste, it's transport, it's wastewater and energy use - being gas and electricity. We didn't go down the path of looking at indirect emissions of people's dietary decisions or their purchasing and consumption and investment, we kept it fairly narrow.*

Q. Did the corporate targets include emissions from legacy and future landfill?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *We don't have any landfills located within our council's boundaries, so the emissions that we attribute to waste is a very small part of our community profile.*

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We are the same. We don't have any landfill located within the municipality.*

Q. Did Council calculate emissions from their waste and are these being offset? There was mention of reducing waste to landfill but what about total waste emissions?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *Yes. We include waste emissions in our Council emissions inventory and in our community emissions profile. However, as City of Port Phillip doesn't have a landfill site in our borders the percentage of emissions attributed to waste is quite small. Last year we only attributed one percent of Council emissions to waste and this will be fully offset from 2020-21. Our most recent Community profile included 3.67% for waste. We do of course have a range of programs to*

encourage diversion from landfill but these programs aren't motivated by emissions reduction.

Reducing consumption and the associated emissions from production, transport and disposal (whether via recycling or landfill) has a broader emissions benefit but this is not included in our inventory or profile. This is one of the constraints of using municipal boundaries to define an emissions profile. We have previously used an 'ecological footprint' report to estimate all emissions generated by our community and have delivered messages to the community to promote more mindful consumption but taking any further action is outside of the scope of our sustainability policies.

Q. Are you looking at including scope 3, emissions from waste, sewer, water from residents? Some Councils are responsible for these services and they have high greenhouse gas emissions.

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *The City of Port Phillip doesn't deliver utilities to the community. We manage a portfolio of buildings that generate emissions from waste, water and waste water. These emissions are included in our organisation inventory if we are responsible for paying the utility invoices. If a tenant is responsible, it is included in the community profile and we encourage emissions reduction via our green leasing initiatives.*

Q. What percentage approximately are your council emissions of your community emissions?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *Last year, gross emissions were 0.6%. After purchasing offsets, our net emissions were 0.4% of the total community emissions profile. When we achieve zero net emissions in 2020-21 it will of course be zero percent!*

Offsets

Q. Have you considered buying offsets to reduce emissions to zero for council operations right now and then reducing emissions into the future, saving money on offsets?

- A. Juan (Warrnambool): *No at this stage, we are focusing all our resources in energy efficiency and behind the meter solutions as a first stage. Our goal is to offset as less emissions as possible and will likely be done by 2026.*
- A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *Purchasing offsets for emissions generated from council operations has been a tool used by the City of Port Phillip for over 15 years now. We report our council emissions as gross and net each year in our Annual Report.*

Q. Are you are on track to achieve Net Zero next financial year for your corporate emissions? What percentage did you have to reduce your emissions and what percentage were offsets?

- A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *The large majority of our emissions were electricity use as an organisation and we're part of an PPA through the Melbourne renewable Energy Project which means we now actually count all of our electricity as carbon neutral. What we have left is a little bit of gas which we're decommissioning over the next couple of years and changing to electricity, and we have fleet. So in the short term we will be purchasing offsets for our fleet emissions until we've got the right balance between technology and price, to fully transition our fleet over to EV's, which will then be linked into our Green electricity, so we won't have a pure zero result. There will be those offsets for the next couple of years.*

Q. Have you considered implementing some emission reduction approaches from urban forests also as council emission offsetting or even to cover part of investments to maintain them?

- A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *City of Port Phillip's focus has been on reduction of emissions through energy efficiency projects, behaviour change and increasing access to renewable energy. We do have a commitment to increasing greening within our municipality in both the public and private realm but measure the benefits in relation to urban cooling, biodiversity and amenity. As a densely populated inner-city municipality we are constrained by limited available space for increased planting and contaminated soil from historical industrial activity. There are challenges implementing carbon accounting and certification for the small scale of planting that we can deliver. We have previously included forestry projects in other jurisdictions in our mix of*

purchased offsets but tend to prefer offsets from renewable energy projects as the emissions benefit is not delayed.

Influencing & Working with the Community

Q. I'm curious about how Council will influence the community to get to net zero. Council's own operations usually account for around 5% of emissions in an LGA and Councils can control this but it can't control community emissions. How is Warrnambool planning to address this?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *The emissions are not representative in comparison to the whole municipality. That's why we have a community approach, as a part of the 2040 plan, we asked the community to pledge to take action towards reducing their emissions and so our goal will be to facilitate trying to show and communicate the benefit of taking the community to net zero and down the renewable energy path, but in the end it will be a community decision to go down that path or not.*

Q. What community organisations did you work with? Was it just businesses or others as well?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We worked with businesses and also community groups working within the environmental and sustainability area in Warrnambool. It also included schools and so in the end, we worked with every single part of the community.*

Q. Given there are so many apartments in your municipality, did you run specific community engagements to support uptake of solar etc. in apartments?

A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *Yes, our 2017 Sustainable City Community action Plan really targeted apartment dwellers and we worked hard and long with body corporates, owners corporations and individual owners and renters to try and get solar on apartment builders, and I have to report that it's still really hard.*

The barriers are cost and complexity of the installations and overcoming of the owners corporation voting. I also think that Landlords as a general rule don't perceive solar as increasing the value of their property, and even owner occupiers don't tend to live there very long so

as a general rule, they're not interested in a payback that's not going to happen really quickly.

So what we are looking at doing in our planning for the next stage, is we're looking to really pivot towards Power Purchase Agreements for the community and look at that kind of solution that individuals can sign up to regardless of what's happening in their apartment building. It doesn't mean we're giving up, we do have solar bulk buy and solar partnership programs - we will come out and visit owners corporations, hold meetings to do presentations and we've got quite a range of resources on our website to help people navigate the owners corporation process, which has been really popular, a lot of people have downloaded it, so we know there's interest there. It's just the barriers at the moment, often seem too high.

Q. Have businesses also set emission reduction goals internally as part of their partnership with Council to meet community emissions reductions?

- A. Juan (Warrnambool): *Many large businesses in Warrnambool have internally set emission reduction goals, and acknowledge the strategic alignment and support of Green Warrnambool and community emissions reductions. This is something we will build on going forward in partnership with local business and understanding of the emission baseline and the development of emission reduction goals.*

Q. Considering Council only has a limited amount of control and influence over many of the community emissions sources (e.g. household electricity usage, resident's driving habits, etc.), what are the most effective ways that Council can advocate and assist the broader community to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects?

- A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We have focused sustainability and energy efficiency campaigns on cost-savings initiatives, showing our community that "go green" it's not only good for the environment but also could help them to save money. Finding champions within the community and showcasing the work that they are doing is also assisting us to distribute the message.*
- A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *It is true, reducing community emissions is ultimately up to the residents and businesses themselves. Council can educate,*

facilitate, advocate and support the community to take action but in most cases can't enforce change. Unfortunately, there is no one answer to this question as much depends on your current reach within the community and the barriers that they face to implementing their own projects.

Councils don't have the budget to implement all the changes needed so must find opportunities to leverage activity and investment from others. Councils have a natural strength as the tier of government that is closest to the community and can identify the local barriers to emissions reduction and then provide effective support to reduce those barriers. Examples include:

- Facilitating groups of residents and businesses through existing networks and giving environment groups support to deliver emissions reduction projects.*
- Advocating to the state and federal governments to bring about the big changes needed to reduce emissions such as improving outcomes from the planning scheme and investing in infrastructure programs that reduce reliance on cars.*
- Adding value to existing programs eg. Solar Victoria is funded by the Victorian Government but Councils can promote it locally and provide extra support to local residents and businesses.*

Q. What have been your most effective community interventions, in terms of emissions reductions?

- A. Lisa (Port Phillip): *We have had a number of successful site-based interventions with individual businesses, apartment buildings and residents. These projects have resulted in measurable emissions reductions. The challenge is scaling these programs up to reach larger numbers of participants and also gathering meaningful emissions data to measure success.*

Programs

Q. What does the Green Business Program entail?

- A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We have audits with businesses regarding their initiatives which are currently underway. The idea is to get the data to*

implement the suggestions. The program consists of energy audits itself, working with businesses to come up with ideas to improve their sustainability performance and reduce their costs in their energy consumption. So, we go out to business and look at their operation and make suggestions by looking at their energy data and working out how we can help them make savings.

Q. Can you say more about the bulk solar program? How did it work?

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *We partnered with a company called Positive Charge who are part of the Australian Energy Foundation. It was a bit up and down, when Energy Matters went out of the market, and we had to find a different supplier, but it was a good campaign overall. It is difficult messaging to get across to the community though.*

Q. Regarding resources, who is on the Environment Team and who is driving the different parts of the targets re: greenhouse gas, waste etc.

A. Juan (Warrnambool): *Our Environment team has four people: myself; I'm in charge of gas emissions, waste, amongst other things, an environmental officer, a staff member who is the facilitator link between council and community groups and a coordinator to make sure we're on track.*