



Pathways to a low CO₂ future. Get started today!

Why take personal action to reduce CO₂ emissions?

- The scientific evidence for human influence on climate change is overwhelming.
- Climate change is already having a negative impact on our region, and it is predicted to worsen.
- Urgent global action is needed to return our planet to a safe climate, and global action begins locally, with each one of us.

The first step is to get informed, and be empowered to take action to create a better future for ourselves, our community, and our planet.

Commit to taking action. It's as easy as:

- Deciding to be a part of the solution.
- Deciding to start today, in one area of life, in any way you can.
- Reading through these sheets and choosing something you can do today. Write it down and stick to it for one month. You can build from there.
- If you are already reducing emissions, look through this series and choose the areas that are most relevant to you and your household. Then create an action plan and go for it!

A good first step - calculate your carbon footprint – (Greenhouse Gas emissions)

This is the amount of **carbon dioxide (equivalent) CO₂** Greenhouse Gases that you create in various parts of your life. CO₂ includes carbon dioxide and the other greenhouse gases such as methane, oxides of nitrogen and water vapour.

You need to know this, so when you start to take action, you can measure your progress.

Several calculators are available. The following links will direct you to some of them.

Greenhouse calculators

EPA Victoria provides an excellent calculator where you can choose either a quick or more detailed calculation option – it takes a while to load but is worth the effort. www.epa.vic.gov.au/GreenhouseCalculator/calculator/default.asp The results are reported for your household, not on a per person basis.

The “Carbon Cops” (ABC) has a simple greenhouse calculator. www.abc.net.au/tv/carboncops/calculator.htm

The Federal Government’s Department of Environment, Water Heritage and the Arts greenhouse calculator works out annual emissions. You need your tallies for fuel, electricity and gas for the year.

www.environment.gov.au/settlements/gwci/calculator.html

The process to follow for carbon footprint calculation

Collect your bills

One of the first things most calculators ask for is an estimate of your electricity and gas use, shown on your bills. It is good to have bills covering a year as this will take account of possible high energy use periods in winter and summer. If you need help making sure you enter the right figures into the calculator, your energy supplier is likely to have a page on their website to help interpret your bill.

Consider your heating, cooling and lighting

Many calculators ask for figures on how much of your house you heat or cool and how many lights you have on for how long each day. They may also want to know what type of lights you use. Take some time to consider these things, and note down number and type of lights, type of heating and cooling, and how much of the house you heat and cool.

Consider your transport options

Planes trains and automobiles

If you don't know how much petrol you use or the fuel economy of your car, record how far you drive for a week and how much petrol you use. It's even better and more accurate if you do it for a few weeks. Most calculators ask for an estimate of kilometres you travel annually by car, public transport and plane.



Paul Walsh has got on his electric bike

Consider your food and how much you buy

If you are completing one of the more comprehensive Greenhouse calculators, you will often be asked details about how much meat, dairy, fresh local produce and processed food you buy each week.

You will need to know roughly the type and amount of food you buy each week, and if possible where your fruit and vegetables come from.

Once you have worked out the emissions your household produces, and from which areas, you can then think about how to cut those emissions and associated energy costs, and make your house more comfortable. See the **Take action at home** fact sheet for information, tips and resources.

Now that you know your emissions, set a reduction goal!

We recommend setting a goal for yourself, or your household, such as reducing your emissions by 10% over the next six months. Talk to your family or housemates, agree on a target, write it down and stick it on the fridge! This could include an "Action Plan", which outlines the main actions you will take to reach that goal. It is important to involve everyone in the house and have incentives for achievements.

Locally

If you have not already done so, why not join MASG, a group of local people taking action on climate change. ?

You will have access to our regular e-news with updates on current news and events, and services such as free home sustainability assessments. You will also be supporting us to do the heavy lifting required to reach our goal of 30% reduction in emissions in our Shire by 2015.

**You can join online at www.masg.org.au
Or call us on 5470 6978.**