

Moreland
City Council

Carbon Offset Policy 2020-2024

Date Authorised by Council:	12 August 2020
Commencement Date:	12 August 2020
Review Date:	2024
Responsible Department	City Futures

1 INTRODUCTION

Council achieved carbon neutral status as accredited by the National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS) in 2012. Moreland City Council was the second Council in Victoria (and one of four nationally) to become carbon neutral for its corporate operations.

Since 2012, Moreland has maintained its carbon neutral status each year and is now one of three Councils in Victoria that have carbon neutral status.

Continuing accreditation requires the purchase of verified carbon offsets. This policy outlines Council's approach and criteria to the purchase of carbon offsets.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Alignment

Moreland City Council has always been a leader in environmental initiatives, including the pursuit of addressing climate change. Council's two previous strategies in this area: Carbon Management Strategy (CMS) and Corporate Carbon Reduction Strategy, 2015 (CCRP) were combined into the Zero Carbon Moreland – Climate Emergency 2040 Framework (the "Framework"), adopted in 2019 to provide a pathway for Moreland City Council to maintain its commitment of carbon neutrality for Council's corporate operations and reach for a zero-carbon municipality by 2040.

In December 2008, the incoming Mayor's speech stated that Council would achieve zero net emissions by 2012 as part of demonstrating leadership to its community. Council delivered on its promise of zero net emissions by 2012 by achieving carbon neutral certification under the National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS).

It is important for Council to continue to show leadership to its community and broader region on tackling the threat of climate change and responding to the Climate Emergency. Council will continue to showcase the important role of demonstrating leadership and in turn providing inspiration to staff and the community to take action in their personal lives.

2.2 Organisational Context

The Framework analyses Council's corporate carbon footprint, presents energy costs and forecasts and determines the most cost-effective approach to achieve our net-zero corporate emissions target. While the primary focus of Council's efforts is to continually reduce emissions, it has agreed to purchase carbon offsets for the difference to achieve carbon neutrality.

In July 2010, the Federal Government introduced the National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS) to provide national consistency and consumer confidence in the voluntary carbon market. Council will continue to work within the guidelines of NCOS (Now - Climate Active Carbon Neutral Certification) to meet its carbon neutral target. Since 2012 Council has met the requirements of the NCOS which uses the reporting protocols developed under National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Act, 2007. This covers scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions across a broad range of environmental aspects and the details of this are available on our website under the annual Climate Active Carbon Neutral Certification public disclosure summary.

Council is now a part of the Melbourne Renewable Energy Project (MREP); a partnership with Moreland City Council and 13 other organisations, who together pooled their corporate carbon emissions to tender the construction of a new Victorian renewable energy project to offset their collective electricity emissions. This resulted in the construction of the Crowlands Wind Farm in north west Victoria (near Ararat), which includes 39 new wind turbines and a combined electricity generation capacity of 80MW. As of 1 January 2019, Moreland began purchasing all its electricity for Council operations from this wind farm.

As a result, all electricity for corporate operations is purchased from the Crowlands Wind Farm under a ten-year power purchasing agreement, Councils exposure to the costs of carbon offsets has been reduced by 45% as all electricity is now carbon neutral from the source and does not require further offsets.

Combining the reduction in energy consumption from the energy efficiency program operating since 2011 and the MREP contract, Councils corporate emissions are now 70% below the 2011 baseline which has significant flow on effects in reducing the amount and cost of carbon offsets that need to be purchased to maintain carbon neutral certification.

2.3 Research and other drivers

To meet Climate Active Carbon Neutral Certification requirements Council is obliged to purchase 'qualifying' offsets. If Council chose not to purchase these offsets it could not become certified under the program and would not meet its commitments under the Zero Carbon Moreland 2040 Framework.

3 OBJECTIVES

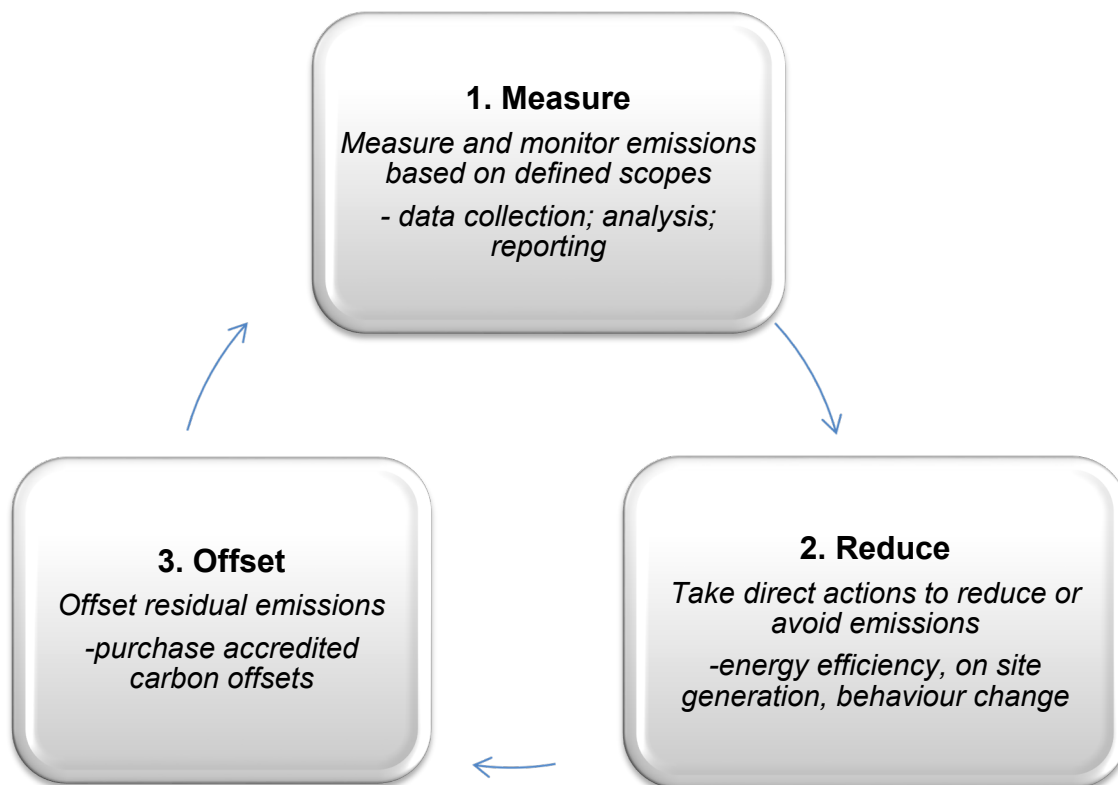
This policy establishes a framework for purchasing carbon offsets, which includes the procurement process and criteria for offset selection. The policy's objectives are to:

- Guide Council's own decision making in maintain carbon neutral certification; and
- Demonstrate leadership in Council's own decision making in responding to climate change on a corporate level and continue to lead the community towards carbon neutrality.

4 POLICY DETAILS

4.1 Strategic approach to Council investment

To manage its commitment to reducing emissions and maintaining carbon neutrality, Council will continue to take a strategic approach to investment. To achieve carbon neutrality in a credible way, Council utilises the following framework:



4.2 Procurement

Council will always seek to maximise its action under step 2 (reduce) to minimise its action under step 3 (offset). When selecting carbon offsets, Council will use the following criteria to guide purchasing decisions:

Mandatory criteria:

- Must be Climate Active (formerly NCOS) accredited offsets, suitable for the purpose of maintaining Council's carbon neutrality certification

Desirable criteria:

- Offsets obtained via a project delivered in Australia;
- Preference for projects with social and/or environmental co-benefits (beyond greenhouse gas mitigation), including verification processes for example:
 - Agriculture activities (e.g. soil carbon)
 - Vegetation activities (e.g. revegetation, avoided deforestation)
 - Savannah burning¹
- Cost per tonne CO₂e

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party/parties	Roles and responsibilities	Timelines
Sustainable Built Environment Unit	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To undertake emissions inventory for Council operations using the Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard and maintain certification2. To engage with accredited offset suppliers in line with the policy, and to procure offsets on a yearly basis as required in line with the policy.3. Verify the validity of offsets purchased and ensure certification of their retirement.4. Brings forward a range of options (both domestic and international offset procurement) to Council for decision on a biennial basis.	<p>Yearly, for the duration of the policy</p> <p>Every two years, for the duration of the policy</p>

6 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in 2024.

7 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
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¹ Savanna burning is a carbon emissions reduction initiative. savanna fire management projects aim to reduce the frequency and extent of late dry season fires in savannas, resulting in fewer greenhouse gas emissions and more carbon being sequestered in dead organic matter.

Offset

Refers to a carbon offset – a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide or greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for or to offset an emission made elsewhere.

8 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

None