



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Emission Reduction Plan 2025-26



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The document must be attributed as the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Emission Reduction Plan 2025-26.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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Accountable Authority Sign Off

The Australian Government released the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy in November 2023, setting out the overall approach and action required by Commonwealth entities to achieve the APS Net Zero 2030 target.

The Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy represents a strong commitment by the Australian Government to lead by example on emissions reduction and contribute to the decarbonisation of Australia's economy.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is committed to the Government's APS Net Zero 2030 target. This is the DEWR's second emissions reduction plan and shows the department's continued commitment to the achievement of the Australian Government's APS Net Zero 2030 target, as per the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy.

This Emissions Reduction Plan 2025-26 describes the priorities and actions that DEWR will undertake to reduce our operational emissions contributing to the APS Net Zero 2030 target.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania Rishniw".

Tania Rishniw

A/g Secretary

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

February 2026

Emissions Reduction Plan

Purpose

DEWR is responsible for managing and implementing emissions reduction initiatives set by the Australian Government's Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy (the Strategy) developed by the Department of Finance. The Strategy sets out the Australian Government's approach to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions from its operations by 2030 and the reinstatement of public emissions reporting.

The goal of this Emissions Reduction Plan is to outline a pathway for DEWR to contribute to the achievement of the APS Net Zero 2030 target through emissions reduction activities. This is the department's second emissions reduction plan which builds on the DEWR Emissions Reduction Plan 2024 and details new priorities and actions and continuing actions for the current year to reduce DEWR emissions.

This Emissions Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with the Strategy, associated guidance and reporting standards for annual emissions reporting.

Net zero greenhouse gas emissions

APS Net Zero 2030 is the target set by the Australian Government to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from government operations by the year 2030. It includes scope 1 and scope 2¹ emissions from activities in Australia and its territories, as described in the Strategy. The APS Net Zero 2030 target applies at the aggregate level to non-corporate Commonwealth entities and generally covers the entirety of the entity's organisation. From an organisational perspective, this means minimising the greenhouse gas emissions that are within our control.

Governance and reporting

Progress against actions identified within this Emissions Reduction Plan, and any additional measures adopted, will be included in our annual reports. This, combined with annual emissions reporting, will be used as a measure of DEWR progress towards reducing its emissions.

As part of the Net Zero in Government Operations Annual Progress Report, the Department of Finance will aggregate these measures to provide whole-of-Australian Government emissions reporting.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations operational context

DEWR has over 4,100 personnel operating across all Australian states and territories. Our facilities include multiple office spaces, data centres and storage facilities, and across areas which incur extreme temperatures. The department is required to travel to both metro and regional areas across

¹ Scope 1 emissions reflect emissions from sources owned or controlled by Government, including the stationary combustion of fuels (boilers, generators), and transportation (vehicle fleet). Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions which occur because of the activities that generate electricity, which is consumed by an entity, but is generated outside that entity's boundaries. They are physically produced by the burning of fossil fuels by the generator of the electricity.

Australia to work with stakeholders and members of the community to deliver the department's services, support and outcomes.

DEWR has already commenced its net zero emissions pathway in line with the direction set in the Strategy. This includes the following key activities:

- Developed a departmental level climate risk plan comprising the elements of the Net Zero activities and shared risks with the relevant treatment owners from across business units.
- The Enterprise Risk team has built climate risk consideration into the Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework, our enterprise risk system and supporting materials, including training, which assist with relevant reporting.
- The net zero governance structure was revised in 2024-25 providing clear lines of responsibility and reporting established to steer the department's strategic direction on net zero. The key change being the formation of the Net Zero SES Steering Group which reports to the Executive Board and the Delivery and Change Committee. The Steering group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary, Employment and Workforce and includes the department's Chief Sustainability Officer.

DEWR is actively engaged with the evolving requirements of the APS Net Zero 2030 and will align with the strategy and whole of government guidance when issued and report accordingly.

DEWR also hosts the Department of Education (Education) in its tenancies across all of Education's locations in Australia. Under a memorandum of understanding (MoU), operational between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026, DEWR provide Education with property, technology and other corporate services including application hosting, landfill waste and recycling, accommodation and fit-out and network hosting. There is no meaningful way to split emissions related to these services between DEWR and Education.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations policy context

The APS Net Zero 2030 target complements the Australian Government's broader [Net Zero Plan](#) which sets out the pathway for a fair, orderly and efficient transition. This includes emissions targets of 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, 62-70% by 2035, and net zero by 2050.

Under the Future Made in Australia agenda, the Government is investing \$22.7 billion over a decade to maximise the economic and industrial opportunities of decarbonisation, and to strengthen Australia's position in a rapidly evolving global economic and strategic landscape.

The net zero transition is reshaping industries, jobs and communities, requiring coordinated efforts across governments, industry, communities and education and training systems. DEWR is supporting the transition through policies that assist affected communities, promote workforce mobility, develop a skilled workforce and improve access to emerging job opportunities. In partnership with the Net Zero Economy Authority (NZE), DEWR is working with communities and other government agencies to co-design supports and services that reflect community needs.

The government's support for workforce transition includes:

- Regional Workforce Transition Plans (RWTPs) which will be co-designed with stakeholders in regions most impacted by the closure of coal-fired power generation and emissions-intensive industries such as the Hunter, Gippsland, South West Western Australia and Central Queensland. RWTPs will provide the support that people need and help communities know what is available and how and where to access it.
- The Transitioning Workforce Fund will deliver tailored, co-designed solutions for workers and communities in key regions.
- NZEA's Energy Industry Jobs Plan will provide support to workers directly affected by the closure of eligible coal or gas-fired power stations.
- DEWR's Regional Workforce Transition Officers are on the ground in key regions to facilitate partnerships across government and communities, ensuring local voices shape solutions.

DEWR is working with state and territory governments to strengthen the vocational and education and training sector, with 'supporting the net zero transformation' a shared priority under the National Skills Agreement (NSA). The department is leading efforts to align workforce strategies, share labour market insights and coordinate training delivery to ensure that industry and regional needs are reflected in national policy and programs.

The government's support for strengthening capacity across the VET sector to deliver clean energy training includes:

- The \$35 million *Clean Energy Capital Investment Fund*, which aims to expand clean energy training capability and assist with facility upgrades across wind, solar, pumped hydro, grid battery storage, electricity networks and hydrogen as well as key electrical and construction trades.
- The \$30 million *Turbocharging the VET Workforce* measure, which will support states and territories to 'turbocharge' the teacher, trainer and assessor workforce for clean energy, manufacturing and construction.
- Funding of \$20 million for the establishment of the National Training Centre in New Energy Skills, which will train over 2,000 tradespeople annually with the skills needed for the nation's clean energy transformation, including plumbers, gasfitters and refrigeration workers.
- Investing up to \$325 million over five years under the NSA, with matched funding from states and territories, to establish nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence.
- TAFE Centres of Excellence are strengthening the capability and capacity of the VET system to provide high-quality and responsive skills training for critical and emerging industries, including the transformation to a net zero economy.

DEWR also partners with the industry-owned and led Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) to bring together employers, unions and governments to address skills and workforce challenges through tripartite engagement. A key function of JSCs is developing workforce plans for their industry sectors that inform appropriate strategies to help address workforce challenges and skill gaps.

JSCs continue to undertake mapping of and consultation on the needs of industry. This is an essential step in determining the job roles, skills needs and training pathways required to support the net zero transition.

Engagement

In the development of this plan, DEWR has engaged with:

- Department of Finance
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Education - to discuss options for shared locations and any associated and relevant outcomes to lower emissions.
- Fair Work Commission
- Climate Action in Government Operations – to ensure that this plan aligns with the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure requirements

Emissions reduction targets

DEWR plans to achieve the APS Net Zero 2030 target in full, as per the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy. The target covers the entirety of our entity's operations within Australia and its territories for scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, as described in the Strategy.

Priorities and actions

For DEWR to contribute to the achievement of the APS Net Zero 2030 target, targeted action on existing emissions reduction measures and the introduction of further or new measures is required. The key new actions for the year are summarised in the following points noting they build on existing actions, with further detail provided below:

- Commitment that, for purchase or construction contracts entered into from 1 July 2026, and with a value greater than \$15 million, new office spaces will have a minimum 6 star NABERS energy rating and 4 star green star rating.
- Commitment that, for purchase or construction contracts entered into from 1 July 2026, new office spaces will be all-electric, including building heating, cooling and water heating.
- Transitioning 100% fleet vehicles to low emission vehicles by 1 July 2026.
- Continued initiatives to raise staff awareness of the net zero targets and driving cultural change to ensure that everyone is working towards achieving the target.

Continued additional actions being considered and negotiated with landlords for new office accommodation leases:

- Carbon modelling
- LED lighting planning
- Solar PV and LED lighting upgrades
- Electrification of Plant and Equipment

Buildings

Consolidation of the department's leased premises within specific locations across Australia is currently underway, with several existing leases expiring in the next couple of years. This will provide the department with the opportunity to preference buildings with better energy-efficiency, and to modernise office fit-outs with initiatives such as controllable LED lighting, and more efficient space utilisation.

The department will also continue the transformation to modern ways of working, including consideration of desk-sharing arrangements that will facilitate more efficient use of leased office-space, and a subsequent reduction in total energy consumption.

NEW ACTION

- Commitment to consider as part of the value for money assessment, for purchase or construction contracts entered into from 1 July 2026, and with a value greater than \$15 million, new office spaces will aim to deliver a minimum 6 star NABERS energy rating and 4 star green star rating.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- In line with the Net Zero in Government Operations strategy, new market approaches for leased office space will preference all-electric buildings where available.
- Value for money assessments for future leases from 1 July 2025 will consider targeting a requirement for 5.5-star minimum NABERS energy ratings.

Electricity

The department's energy contracts are managed by our Property Service Provider (PSP) under the Whole-of-Australian-Government (WoAG) Property Services Coordinated Procurement Arrangements, and the department has committed to transitioning electricity contracts to renewable sources where available.

NEW ACTION:

- Commitment to consider as part of the value for money assessment, for purchase or construction contracts entered into from 1 July 2026, new office spaces will seek to be all-electric, including building heating, cooling and water heating.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- Consulting with the Department of Finance to ensure participation in WoAG electricity procurement as per the Strategy and replace all electricity contracts with renewable electricity. The department will migrate over to these arrangements as they are progressively rolled out, and existing contracts cease
- In locations where the WoAG arrangements will not be available, the department will work with the PSP to transition existing contracts to renewable sources where possible.

Fleet

The department has committed to replacing its passenger vehicle fleet with Low Emission Vehicles (LEV) as existing leases end in line with the Commonwealth Fleet Vehicle Selection Policy.

DEWR has undertaken a review of fleet vehicle utilisation to determine vehicles suitable for replacement with LEVs, including Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) where usage is concentrated in metropolitan areas with ready access to charging infrastructure, and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) where usage involves long-distance travel and extends to regional areas where access to charging infrastructure may be limited.

Currently DEWR has 47 leased fleet vehicles, 39 of which are passenger cars subject to LEV targets.

NEW ACTION

- 79% of DEWR's passenger fleet vehicles are already LEV and this is to increase to 100% by 1 July 2026 as existing leases end and vehicles are replaced.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- DEWR to follow its EV charging plan, which is in accordance with the 1 July 2024 target.

ICT Requirements

The department's current data centre providers are planning to be Net Zero by 2030.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- As current contracts cease, DEWR will look to identify providers from the Data Centre Panel established by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) which will mandate that all data centre providers to the government achieve a NABERS energy rating of 5 at minimum.

Procurement

DEWR has aligned the procurement policy with the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy and the Sustainable Procurement Guide published by DCCEEW and will continue to promote sustainable procurement into the future.

NEW ACTION

- The Procurement and Grants team will raise awareness of sustainable procurement through initiatives such as newsletter and intranet articles on the topic of sustainable procurement.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- To ensure the successful implementation of our sustainable procurement, DEWR will proactively educate and build the capabilities of staff in this area.

Travel

To support the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, DEWR will continue to integrate environmental considerations into our travel decisions and look at more efficient ways to travel with an aim to reduce emissions associated with business travel.

CONTINUED ACTION:

- Finalise the updating of the departmental travel policy following advice from the WoAG Travel Arrangements.
- Encourage the use of low-emission transport options where possible.
- Encourage the selection of hotels with NABERS ratings where available and suitable.

Baseline emissions

Baseline emissions are a record of greenhouse gases that have been produced in the past and were produced prior to the introduction of any strategies to reduce emissions. The baseline emissions from financial year 2022-23 are the reference point against which DEWR's emissions reduction actions are being measured.

The baseline emissions for this plan focus on scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, consistent with the APS Net Zero 2030 target. Electricity-related emissions were calculated using the location-based method. The complete 2022-23 greenhouse gas emissions inventory tables for DEWR are presented in our 2022-23 annual report.

Table 1: DEWR Greenhouse Emissions

	2022-23 t CO₂e Baseline	2023-24 t CO₂e	2024-25 t CO₂e
Scope 1 (Direct combustion)			
- Fleet and other vehicles ¹	34.26	30.34	52.68
Total Scope 1	34.26	30.34	52.68
Scope 2 (Indirect electricity consumption)			
- Electricity (location-based approach)	3,369.04	3,236.51	2,252.22
- Natural gas	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Solid Waste		N/A	N/A
- Refrigerants		N/A	N/A
- Fleet and other vehicles	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Domestic commercial flights	N/A	N/A	N/A
- Domestic Hire Car		N/A	N/A
- Domestic Travel Accommodation		N/A	N/A
Total Scope 2	3,369.04	3,236.51	2,252.22
<i>Electricity (Market-based approach)</i>		953.64	563.95
Scope 3 (Indirect emissions and supply chain sources)			
- Electricity (location-based approach)	316.70	303.81	163.49
- Natural gas	0.00	0.00	0.00
- Solid Waste		129.92	98.89
- Refrigerants		N/A	N/A
- Fleet and other vehicles ¹	8.67	7.67	13.34
- Domestic commercial flights	770.32	1,208.99	1,071.51
- Domestic Hire Car		24.88	19.89
- Domestic Travel Accommodation		582.78	331.40
Total Scope 3	1,095.69	2,258.05	1,698.52
<i>Electricity (Market-based approach)</i>		117.73	76.59
Total t CO₂e	4,498.99	5,524.90	4,003.42

¹: Fleet emissions have increased from 2023-24 to 2024-25 because the department's fleet increased from 35 vehicles to 47 vehicles in 2024-25. Four of the new vehicles are 'light-commercial' 4x4 variants which are required for remote regional travel and have higher emissions than other 'passenger' fleet vehicles.

Involved participants

The following areas of DEWR have been involved in the development of this plan:

Table 2: DEWR Involved participants

Division	Branch
Finance, Governance and Enterprise Services Division	Property, ICT Procurement and Security
Enterprise Technology Division	Infrastructure Platforms and Operations
Finance, Governance and Enterprise Services Division	Finance Branch
Finance, Governance and Enterprise Services Division	External Budgets, Strategy and Performance
Legal and Assurance Division	Enterprise Risk, Assurance and Investigations
Cross-divisional	DEWR Net Zero SES Steering Group