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Climate Change Help for Not-for-Profits

Survey reveals big savings and opportunities in NFP sector's switch to zero-carbon

A new website with practical tools for community leaders aims to help the \$176 billion not-for-profit sector cut greenhouse gas emissions and respond to climate change.

The [Net Zero Heroes](#) website includes help sheets about key climate change concepts, mitigation and adaptation strategies, and tools to help not-for-profits take action, including a free funding discovery portal.

The site focuses on three key strategies for cutting greenhouse gas emissions:

1. Shifting to green power
2. Installing solar and batteries
3. Transitioning car fleets to hybrid and electric vehicles

Deals developed specifically for the not-for-profit sector will be added in coming weeks.

The resources have been produced by Australia's best practice governance network for not-for-profits, the Institute of Community Directors Australia (ICDA), in response to a national study showing a huge appetite to act on climate change and a desire for clear guidance, as well as untapped commercial benefits.

They follow findings from a survey of 570 not-for-profit leaders ([Greening the Not-for-profit Sector](#)) that revealed the sector could make a big impact on Australia's carbon emissions, and NFPs could make significant savings, by accelerating the shift to greener vehicles and power. The survey found:

- **Buildings owned or operated by not-for-profits can be used to generate green power:** 77% of survey respondents own, lease or rent at least one building. More than a third already have solar panels but 58% would like to make this shift. There is strong interest in battery storage.
- **NFPs could cut costs by trading in petrol-guzzling cars:** 57% of organisations in ICDA's survey sample own or lease at least one car, with an average fleet size of five. Not-for-profits spend on average \$430 a week on fuel. If they could source "free" electricity (e.g. through solar panels) a typical organisation could offset the cost of one \$45,000 car in just two years. Those without access to free power could still make major savings on petrol and maintenance by cutting their car use or switching to an electric or more efficient vehicle.
- **Many NFPs want to source green power:** Only 6% of respondents use 100% green power, but 83% would like to. A typical organisation in the ICDA sample spends \$10,000 a year on electricity and \$3,700 on gas.

The ICDA survey reveals a big opportunity for change, when the figures are extrapolated over Australia's estimated 600,000 not-for-profits, which employ around 1.38 million staff. Approximately 133,380 new cars could be leased or purchased by Australian NFPs over the next three years, with 136,000 organisations ready to buy solar panels.

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The survey highlights some of the barriers to the uptake of EVs and the transition to green power, such as funding and the supply of cars, but reveals a great willingness to transition once these barriers are reduced or removed.

“Much attention is given to the need for businesses and government to transition to zero carbon, but the not-for-profit sector is often overlooked. This is a mistake, given the immense size and scope of the sector and its role in influencing citizens,” said ICDA general manager Adele Stowe-Lindner.

“It’s our hope that the Net Zero Heroes project will convince green suppliers and policymakers of the opportunity for change within this sector, and give not-for-profits the tools they need to respond to the challenges ahead.”

ICDA Community Directors Council chair Susan Pascoe AM said not-for-profit leaders must consider climate change as a serious governance issue.

“The new ICDA site is not just for environmental organisations – every single not-for-profit needs to be shifting to cut their emissions, and every single not-for-profit organisation should be planning for climate change,” Ms Pascoe said.

“Climate change will affect everything. Whether you’re a sports group or an arts group or a charity working with vulnerable Australians, every single organisation has a responsibility to understand what climate change means for their mission, their operations and their constituents.”

MORE INFORMATION

Net Zero Heroes website

communitydirectors.com.au/netzeroheroes

Greening the Not-for-profit Sector report

communitydirectors.com.au/research/greening-the-nfp-sector

Comment

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