# Workplace environmental sustainability audit

Whatever sector your organisation is part of, there is a lot you can do to reduce your impact on the environment.

## Who should conduct this audit?

The audit should be conducted by a board member or, at the board’s request, the CEO or a delegate, and presented to the board for review and discussion.

## How should we conduct the audit?

* First, tick the actions your organisation already does, or has already done, in green.
* Second, tick the actions that your organisation would like to do in the short-term, in yellow. These might be items that are straightforward to implement.
* Third, tick actions that should be part of your organisation’s longer-term strategy, in blue.

## What’s next?

Turn the audit into a short report for the board on:

* what you already do
* what you aim to do in the coming year
* what should be built into the organisation’s longer-term strategy.

## Making sure it happens

* The CEO will need to consider how to implement the short-term actions, and what resources might be required. The board should agree with the CEO on a date on which the CEO will present an implementation plan.
* The board and the CEO should agree on a review date in three to six months, and add the review to the board’s agenda.

# Audit

## Electricity

* Switch to accredited 100% green electricity (it doesn’t reduce consumption but it eliminates greenhouse gas generation)
* Install solar panels
* Review the costs and benefits of installing a battery, and go for it if it stacks up
* Install automated systems for turning down and off lights and non-essential equipment after hours and on weekends
* Replace ageing refrigerators and air-conditioners with newer energy efficient units
* Replace lighting with energy efficient lights
* Include appliance energy star ratings in your purchase decisions
* Participate in a community energy program

## Gas

* Replace gas appliances, including heaters, with electric ones as they reach the end of their life, or sooner
* If you use gas hot water, heat the stored water to no more than 60 degrees Celsius
* If you use gas central heating, set the thermostat at 18–20°C and have building users dress for the weather

## Office consumables

### Paper

* + Audit to see where paper can be replaced by electronic communication, electronic collaboration tools and online forms
  + Purchase ethically produced recycled paper – check the buying guide at ethicalpaper.com.au
  + Ensure printers are set to print double-sided by default
  + Locate a recycling bin close to the printer

### Print cartridges

* + Recycle print cartridges through Planet Ark or at deposit boxes at post offices and major retailers
  + Set the printer to ‘eco mode’ to reduce ink consumption

### Kitchen

* + Supply crockery and cutlery to avoid use of disposable items
  + Encourage building users to use reusable cups for drinks purchased at cafes
  + Provide organic waste bins to recycle food and green waste, ensuring they are prominently placed
  + Choose whole-bean coffee machines rather than capsule systems
  + Set up a “share space” where building users can donate excess fresh produce from their gardens

### Catering

* + Eliminate the use of disposable cups, plates and cutlery
  + Prefer plant-based meals over meat
  + Reduce the amount of food ordered to avoid waste
  + Select a caterer based on their sustainability values

### E-waste

* Recycle obsolete electrical equipment through the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme
* Donate working equipment to local charities
* Recycle batteries and other e-waste at deposit bins at major retailers

### Transportation

#### Air travel

* + Replace air travel with online meetings or ground transport (trains and buses) where possible
  + Purchase carbon offsets when you must fly

#### Land travel

* + Upgrade the organisation’s fleet to electric vehicles
  + Install electric charging stations
  + Encourage bike riding and provide end-of-trip facilities to staff, volunteers and service-users
  + Provide building users with information on public transport options
  + Allow staff to work from home
  + Prefer local suppliers for deliveries (and ask if they have electric delivery vans)
  + Prioritise electric vehicles and vehicles of people with specific needs when allocating onsite car parking

### Water

* Install no-flush urinals and in-cistern wash basins
* Install rainwater tanks
* Replace water-hungry appliances with more efficient ones
* Plant drought-resistant gardens

### Building design

* Prioritise energy efficiency when purchasing or renting office space; for example, consider orientation, heating, cooling and lighting
* Design new buildings to maximise passive warming, cooling, shading and ventilation
* Consider the impact of any new construction on native flora and fauna

### Banking and finance

* Encourage staff to select a superannuation fund that does not invest in fossil fuel industries
* Choose a banking provider that has environmentally friendly lending criteria
* Avoid investing organisational funds in fossil fuel industries

### Policies, procedures and organisational culture

* Include energy and waste criteria in procurement policy
* Set up (and resource) a ‘green team’ to champion the sustainability cause
* Celebrate or reward climate-positive behaviour and actions of staff
* Encourage a ‘dress for the weather’ culture
* Include climate and waste criteria in your decision-making process regarding sponsorships and fundraising
* Preference low-carbon travel options and low-impact accommodation providers in your travel policy
* Provide induction and training on climate change to board members, staff and volunteers

#### Develop a climate change policy to guide organisational decisions on procurement, climate change awareness and advocacy, sponsorships and partnerships

### Education and stakeholder influence

* Consider where you build a ‘green lens’ into your program delivery
* Join a regional or industry-based climate action group to help build awareness and momentum for change

#### Promote sustainability to stakeholders by demonstrating best-practice in your own service

* + Build sustainability messaging into your communications and education