

Northern Midlands Council: Carbon Emission accounts 2022/23

The Tasmanian Government has committed to net zero emissions by 2050. Local Government have a role to play in reducing emissions over time. Annual carbon accounting is an important step in understanding the sources and magnitudes of Council’s carbon emissions. Tracking changes in our emissions over time allows us to assess the impacts of investments we have already undertaken as well as to identify areas where future emissions reduction activities should focus.

What activities do we account for?

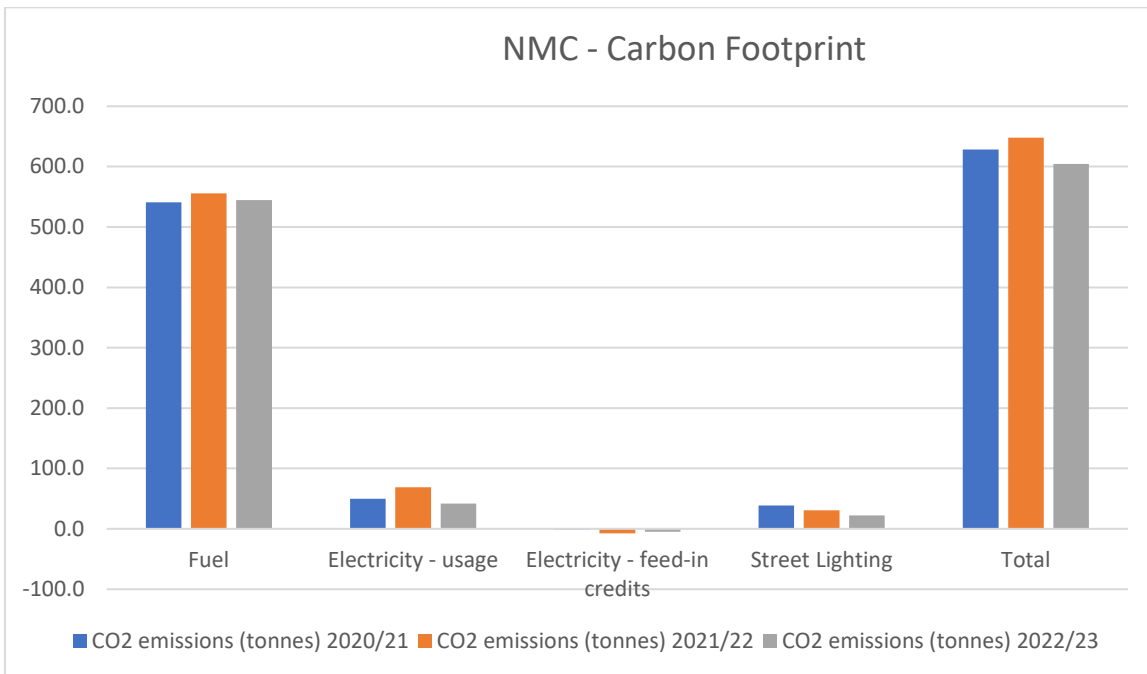
Northern Midlands Council’s carbon emissions come from 3 main activities:

- Fuel used by our vehicle fleet. In 2022/23 we had 79 vehicles using a mix of diesel and unleaded petrol.
- Electricity used by streetlights. In 2022/23 we had a total of 1149 streetlights using a range of bulbs.
- Electricity used by our properties. This includes the pools, recreation facilities/areas, community buildings and depots/offices.

How have our emissions changed over time?

Northern Midlands Council has calculated their carbon emissions for 3 periods: 2020-21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. In total Northern Midlands Council emitted 604 tonnes of CO₂ in 2022-23– 545 tonnes from fuel usage by our fleet, 42 tonnes from general electricity which is offset by -4.7 tonnes from feed ins, and 22.4 tonnes from electricity used for street lighting.

The graph below shows the total carbon dioxide emitted from each of the activities above in these three periods.



This figure shows:

- Emissions from fuel have decrease 2% over the period. This decrease is due to a 2.0% decrease in fuel usage in 2022/23 (2.8% increase in 2021/22 & 4.3% increase in 2020/21).
- Emissions from total electricity usage has decreased over this period by 32.6 tonnes, feed in credits also decreased by 2.5 tonnes.
- Emissions from street lighting have fallen substantially over the period, with a 26.8% decrease (8.2 tonnes) in 2022/23.

What have we done to reduce emissions?

Northern Midlands Council have undertaken a program of replacement of streetlights with more energy efficient models. This has seen over sodium vapour, mercury vapour bulbs and fluorescent bulbs replaced with more energy efficient LED models. This program is ongoing and expected to lead to further reductions in future years.

Investment in carbon reducing internal activities is also being undertaken by Council such as the tree planting, urban stormwater design activities, reuse and recycling programs.

What further actions are we planning?

Emissions from our fleet through fuel usage have been increasing over time and remain an issue. We are investigating options for reducing emissions from our fleet including transitioning to lower emissions vehicles, hybrid or electric vehicles over time.

Frequently asked questions

How are carbon emissions calculated?

Carbon emissions are calculated based on the amount of fuel and electricity used by Northern Midlands Council. The Australian Government published a set of Emissions factors each year which can be used to calculate the total carbon emitted from each of these sources. Tasmania has much lower emissions factors for electricity than other States due to the high contribution of renewable sources such as hydropower to our electricity supply.

What do Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions mean?

Carbon accounting considers three types of emissions:

- Scope 1 – are direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by Council. The only scope 1 emissions from Northern Midlands Council are from fuel usage by our fleet.
- Scope 2 – are indirect emissions due to electricity used by Council.
- Scope 3 – are indirect emissions from sources not owned or controlled by Council but which arise due to Council's activities. These could include emissions associated with upstream extraction, production and transport of fuel and electricity used by council.

Are Scope 3 emissions included in this report?

Northern Midlands Council Carbon Accounts do not include Scope 3 emissions. Activities which reduce electricity and fuel usage should reduce Scope 3 emissions, all other things being equal. Other factors which affect Scope 3 emissions such as changes to extraction, production or transport processes by fuel and electricity generators are largely outside of the control of Council so there is limited benefit in accounting for these emissions.