# **Developing your travel emissions policy –template**

# 

Table of contents

[Developing your travel emissions policy –template 1](#_Toc184642574)

[Using this template 3](#_Toc184642575)

[Policy sections 4](#_Toc184642576)

[Opening statement 4](#_Toc184642577)

[Purpose and scope 4](#_Toc184642578)

[Targets 4](#_Toc184642579)

[Roles and responsibilities 5](#_Toc184642580)

[Authorisation to travel 5](#_Toc184642581)

[Transportation guidelines 6](#_Toc184642582)

[Flights 7](#_Toc184642583)

[Active transport 8](#_Toc184642584)

[Public transport and ticketed rail/coach 9](#_Toc184642585)

[Rideshare or taxis 9](#_Toc184642586)

[Vehicle hire 9](#_Toc184642587)

[Private vehicle use 9](#_Toc184642588)

[Company vehicle use 10](#_Toc184642589)

[Commuting to our offices 10](#_Toc184642590)

[Accommodation guidelines 10](#_Toc184642591)

[Meals and additional expenses 10](#_Toc184642592)

[Health and safety 10](#_Toc184642593)

[Optional sections to consider 11](#_Toc184642594)

[Glossary 12](#_Toc184642595)

# **Using this template**

This template helps you develop a travel emissions policy for your business. It aims to help you reduce your scope 3 emissions. To be most effective, the travel emissions policy should align with and support your business’s overall strategy and sustainability targets, as endorsed by the board.

You’ll find 17 sections included. Select and customise any combination of these sections to suit your needs. Key information likely to require customisation has been highlighted for your convenience.

As well as the main policy template, we have included 4 optional sections to help guide your approach. These sections will differ between businesses and may not always be relevant.

# **Policy sections**

## Opening statement

COMPANY is a member of the CitySwitch program. We have identified travel to be our RANKING (usually primary for office-based companies) source of scope 3 emissions and are committed to reducing them. This policy has been developed to minimise our environmental impact from business travel.

## Purpose and scope

Whenever travelling as a representative of COMPANY, it is expected that you consider the environmental, financial and social impacts of travel taken. While travel is essential for our business, we ask that you are mindful of mitigating these negative impacts. This policy is effective immediately and will be reviewed annually.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, board members, and others travelling for and funded by COMPANY domestically and internationally. It does not apply to everyday commuting to and from our office. We encourage you to use active transport such as walking, cycling, scootering or public transport for daily commuting.

## Targets

As set out in our SUSTAINABILITY REPORT (link), our team has set ambitious sustainability goals to reduce our environmental impact. Our overall emissions reduction goal is GOAL *For example, Net zero by 2030*. For scope 3 emissions, which are indirect from our value chain, we have set the goal of GOAL *e.g., X% reduction in select scope 3 emissions*.

To assist in achieving these goals, we have the following specific business travel related goals:

1. GOAL e.g., reduce total travel-related emissions per employee by X% by 20XX.
2. GOAL e.g., X% of local business trips by foot or bicycle by 20XX.
3. GOAL e.g., X% of all meetings with remote participants to be held virtually by 20XX.

**Note for policy author:** These goals should be taken from your annual Sustainability Report to align with company targets. If transport specific goals need to be developed, these must align with the sustainability strategy A best practice goal would be reducing flight emissions by X by 2030, as this directly tracks emissions reduction. Alternative targets include reducing the number of flights taken by X by 2030 or reducing flight kilometres travelled by X by 2030.

## Roles and responsibilities

1. Employees: Comply with travel guidelines in this document through approvals with your line manager and guidelines as set out on the [Smartraveller](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/) website. Prioritise sustainable options whenever possible.
2. Line managers: Approve travel requests that comply with these travel guidelines and encourage the team to choose sustainable options. Comply with these guidelines through approvals with the senior leadership team.
3. Senior leadership team: Approve line managers’ requests that comply with these travel guidelines. Report on progress and make improvements when identified.

## Authorisation to travel

Any travel for the purpose of business must meet the following requirements.

* It is necessary and cannot take place over an audio or visual call.
* The planned travel meets the budgeting requirements of the project it pertains to.
* The proposal to travel is approved by your line manager by email. This should include the reasoning for the trip and expected means of transportation, with cost estimates.
* If the travel involves flights, a justification of flights must be included (over alternative means).

This infographic provides a summary of the approval process for managers:

## Transportation guidelines

It is expected you select the least environmentally damaging way of travelling, within reason. The following table gives an overview of what mode of transport we would generally find acceptable for certain distances. This is assuming the travel has been deemed necessary and is subject to approval. See subsequent sections for specific information.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very short distances** | **Short distances** | **Medium distances** | **Long distances** | **International** |
|  | Less than 20km | 20-100km | 100-500km | More than 500km | Australia-return |
| Flights | Never acceptable | Never acceptable | By exception only | Usually acceptable | Always acceptable |
| Public transport and ticketed rail | Always acceptable | Always acceptable | Always acceptable | Always acceptable | N/A |
| Rideshare (Uber, Didi) or taxis | By exception only | By exception only | Never acceptable | Never acceptable | N/A |
| Vehicle hire | By exception only | By exception only | By exception only | By exception only | N/A |
| Private vehicle use | By exception only | By exception only | By exception only | By exception only | N/A |
| Active transport (walking, cycling) | Always acceptable | By exception only | N/A | N/A | N/A |

* All travel plans are subject to approval.
* Active or public transportation is always preferred. Then, car hire, private vehicles or rideshare (depending on distance) is preferred. Flights are considered a last resort.
* When travelling internationally, but not on an Australia-return trip, national policy applies based on distances.
* Carpooling in private vehicles should be done when possible (rather than taking several private vehicles).
* Sustainable transport options for each travel type include:
  + Flights: direct, economy
  + Public transport and ticketed rail: electric options
  + Rideshare or taxis: Uber Green, fully electric hybrid vehicles, carpooling
  + Vehicle hire: fully electric or hybrid vehicles, carpooling
  + Private vehicle usage: carpooling
  + Active transport: all have close to no environmental impact

## Flights

Flights are the primary source of scope 3 emissions at COMPANY. While the geographical size and location of Australia makes it difficult to avoid, we are seeking to limit flights whenever possible.

* Flights should always be considered a last resort.
* For domestic travel, the distance travelled should be over 500km, unless there is no other way of reaching the destination.
* There must be no alternative transport option that can get you to your destination in under 5 hours.
* Flights are acceptable for international travel, given that they are the only efficient transport option for overseas Australia-return trips.

When booking flights, we ask that you:

* only book in economy class, unless exceptional circumstances apply. This can include health and disability complications, or to ensure social welfare (for example, when an employee must be ready for a full day’s work directly after a long-haul flight). In such cases, premium economy and business class are acceptable. Flying in business class produces 3 times more CO2 emissions per passenger than economy class.
* book direct flights when possible, as direct flights emit less emissions than 2 or more connecting flights.
* combine meetings to reduce necessary flights.

The following may be useful in deciding whether you should request a flight as part of your travel request.

Generally, employees do not need to book flights themselves. We ask that you contact POINT OF CONTACT to make this booking, once approved by your line manager.

Active transport

Walking and cycling are encouraged for short-distance travel. This option not only helps reduce emissions but also promotes employee health and well-being. Where active transport is a viable option, employees are encouraged to consider it as a preferred mode of travel for journeys under 5km, particularly in urban areas or where suitable infrastructure exists.

For businesses with access to facilities like bike storage and end-of-trip facilities, you are encouraged to choose active transport. When travel by active transport is impractical due to distance or safety concerns, consider public transport or other low-emission options as alternatives.

## Public transport and ticketed rail/coach

Public transport and ticketed rail/coach are the most ideal method of travel where active transport is not viable, and we encourage you to use it whenever possible.

For distances under 500km, it is expected you take public transport and ticketed rail/coach, unless this is not practically possible. Reasons not to take public transport and ticketed rail/coach include:

* + lack of public transport available
  + excessive travel times based on the distance – over 2 hours per 100km
  + travelling with excessive luggage
  + health or disability
  + excessive delays or wait times
  + safety concerns

## Rideshare or taxis

Generally, rideshares or taxis should only be used for short distances when public transport is not available. For distances over 100km, it is likely that rideshares and taxis will become uneconomical, and we would encourage you to consider public transport, ticketed rail/coach, or vehicle hire, which should be organised in advance.

## Vehicle hire

Only acceptable in specific circumstances:

* The travel distance is over 100km and public transport or ticketed rail/coach is not available.
* You need frequent access to a vehicle over several days. In this case, the cost of hiring a vehicle should be more affordable than using taxis or rideshares during the trip.
* Public transport, rideshares and taxis are all unavailable.

Generally, employees do not need to book vehicle hire themselves. We ask that you contact POINT OF CONTACT to make this booking, once approved by your line manager.

## Private vehicle use

A private, personally owned vehicle can be used for business purposes – beyond commuting to the office – if an employee wishes to do so. We ask that these are only used in the following circumstances:

* commuting around your home city and surrounds for business purposes is absolutely necessary and public transport is not practical
* commuting to and from airports where public transport is not practical, and it is more economical than a taxi or rideshare, including parking
* travelling longer distances (over 500km) where public transport and ticketed rail/coach is not practical.

## Company vehicle use

While all other transport emissions are scope 3 emissions, the use of a company vehicle would fall under scope 1 or 2 emissions. When using an internal combustion engine (ICE) company-owned vehicle, this would produce scope 1 emissions. An electric company-owned vehicle (EV) would produce scope 2 emissions, through electricity purchased to charge it. It is important to reduce all scopes of emissions, and a company vehicle should only be used when no public transport or ticketed rail/coach is available. Refer to the company vehicle use policy for full details.

## Commuting to our offices

While this policy does not apply to your personal commute to our office location(s) in Sydney and Melbourne, we encourage you to consider your impact from this travel. When possible, use active transport, public transport or carpooling for this commute so we can collectively work to lower our scope 3 emissions.

## Accommodation guidelines

Select overnight accommodation based upon the least expensive acceptable and practical options available. Essentially, this means bed and breakfasts or moderately priced hotels, not luxury accommodation.

We tend to centralise our bookings through AGENCY NAME to assist in tracking emissions. When available, we encourage accommodation to be booked that has a third-party green certification, as recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).

Generally, employees do not need to book accommodation themselves. We ask that you contact POINT OF CONTACT to make this booking, once approved by your line manager.

## Meals and additional expenses

See our travel expenses (link) policy for details on expenses, including allowances and reimbursement processes. Consume sustainably when travelling. This means when using an allowance provided by COMPANY, we ask for you to purchase meals that support local businesses if possible.

## Health and safety

While we believe sustainability is extremely important, your safety comes first. We never expect an employee to choose a more sustainable option if it puts their health or safety at risk. Please discuss with your line manager if you have concerns about this.

# **Optional sections to consider**

**Background of travel emissions**: Context around climate change to help employees understand the purpose of this policy. This section can be informative at the start of the policy, or within ‘Purpose and scope’ as a subsection. For more details on scope 3 travel emissions, please see Reduce your travel emissions guide: Practical pathways for sustainable business travel and employee commuting.

**Caps and permissions:** Limits on the number of trips or emissions per department.

For example, each department is limited to X round-trip flights/flight kilometres per year, with exceptions requiring approval from the senior leadership team. This should generally be proportional to the number of employees in each department and their roles.

**Reimbursement for sustainable travel:** Policies favouring reimbursement for lower-emission travel modes (for example, train over plane).

**Carbon offsetting programs:** Evaluate credible carbon offsetting systems, such as Climate Active, Gold Standard and Verified Carbon Standard. Offsetting does not reduce the emissions in the first place. This policy would change depending on whether the company has an offset provider partner or prefers to use airline provided offsets. For more details on carbon offsetting, please see our [offset emissions](https://cityswitch.net.au/resources/offset-emissions/) resources

# **Glossary**

**Active transport:** Any transport method powered by human energy such as walking or cycling. This method produces zero, or negligible, emissions.

**Carbon footprint:** The total amount of greenhouse gases produced by a business for all three scopes of emissions.

**Carbon neutral:** When net-zero carbon emissions are achieved by balancing emissions with reduction strategies or carbon offsets.

**Carbon offsetting:** A method of compensating for emissions by funding projects that reduce or capture equivalent CO2 emissions, such as reforestation.

**CO2:** Carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas.

**Electric vehicles (EVs):** Vehicles powered entirely by electricity.

**GHG emissions:** Greenhouse gas emissions (including CO2, as well as methane, nitrous oxide, and others captured by international and national agreements)

**Hybrid vehicles:** Vehicles that use both an internal combustion engine and an electric motor to reduce fuel use.

**Public transport:** Systems of transport that are shared. Usually trains, buses, trams, light rail or ferries. In this policy, long-distance ticketed rail/coach is also included here.

**Scope 1 emissions:** Direct emissions from sources the company owns and controls.

**Scope 2 emissions:** Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity used by the company.

**Scope 3 emissions:** Indirect emissions that occur in the company’s value chain, including business travel.

**Sustainability goals:** A set of targets set out by a company as part of their sustainability strategy, usually relating to reaching net-zero emissions by a certain year.