



YMCA COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENT

“Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility”

The YMCA Movement in Australia is committed to being a leading environmentally-responsible organisation, acting in a sustainable way, and minimising our environmental impact.

We recognise the critical importance of caring for the environment for the future of humanity.

In providing programs and services that build strong people, strong families and strong communities, we will also protect, sustain and restore our natural environment.

Our commitment to environment will be achieved by our Member Associations through:

- **Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
We accept the science of climate change and our responsibility to reduce our environmental ‘footprint’.
- **Sustainable Use of Water**
We adopt and promote water-efficient strategies.
- **Sustainable Use of Land & Resources**
We preserve the earth's ecological diversity and the natural ecosystems in our communities.
- **Community Leadership and Advocacy**
We actively encourage public education & awareness – for our staff, volunteers, members, participants, partners and other stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

Environment and sustainability is not a 'stand-alone' issue, but must be an integral component of all our operations, and embedded in everything we do. The 'YMCA Environmental Commitment' encapsulates our commitment to environment & sustainability. It has been developed through consultation with YMCA Associations, formulated via the YMCA Environment Working Group, and endorsed by the Australian Conservation Foundation. It has considered key learning and outputs from YMCA Movement Development Forums conducted nationally, and previous YMCA vision statements and goals relating to environment and sustainability.

Due to the diversity of our member Associations and their communities, and the range of different environmental issues confronting each, the 'YMCA Environmental Commitment' has been kept broad enough to enable Associations to develop their own specific strategies and targets beyond this statement. Many Associations are already displaying significant leadership in developing and implementing environmental initiatives.

Examples of current and potential initiatives include:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions – utilising external auditing to measure baseline data, and implementing strategies to achieve carbon neutrality;
- Encouraging more environmentally-friendly transport to and from our facilities by staff and customers;
- Working closely with partners to redesign or modify our buildings to enable more environmentally sound operations, and introduce water harvesting/recycling systems;
- YMCA's 'adopting' an endangered species in local areas – a tangible way for the community, and children in particular, to connect.

AGREED ACTION

The YMCA Movement in Australia thoroughly supports this commitment and, via the Environment Working Group, will:

- Facilitate education, foster awareness, and provide resources to enable Associations to become environmental leaders in their local communities.
- Measure environmental performance via the annual Census, to capture and monitor baseline data in key areas of water usage, energy and waste, and determine environmental plans and programs currently in place.
- Collate case studies of Associations' environmental initiatives, and provide a forum via the extranet for sharing these with the Movement. This will provide opportunities to inform and inspire others to duplicate and implement similar initiatives.
- Nurture our positive partnership with the ACF, and work together to develop viable methods of environmental education and awareness for our partners, volunteers, customers and staff (i.e. 'Greenhome' Program).
- Explore and promote funding and grant opportunities to allow implementation of environmental initiatives.