

# Draft Climate Action Plan - August 2023

## 1. Introduction

This document is the first full draft of the DPC's Climate Action Plan. It draws together different strands of our work into a single document. Climate impacts are ubiquitous across the DPC's program and could therefore be overlooked and become opaque. We therefore seek to bring these together into a unified structure of reporting and oversight which will enable greater transparency and promote continuous quality improvement.

## 2. Values and Mandate

The DPC adopted a Strategic Plan in August 2022, articulating a revised set of objectives and values which form the basis for our mandate till July 2027. This included a clear declaration committing DPC to the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 'a better and more sustainable future for all people and the world by 2030'. Our revised values include a renewed commitment to 'care for our members, resources, people and environment'. Climate action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are in all five of our high level strategic objectives, with seven specific commitments:

- **Community:** Understanding and enhancing the environmental sustainability of the DPC's digital platforms. Much of the DPC's community engagement depends on digital infrastructures for video conferencing and all manner of web-based interactions. Although this reduces the carbon costs of travel and opens the door to global participation, the carbon footprint of our online services are only partially understood. In support of Sustainable Development Goal 9 we will map and audit our communications to understand their carbon footprint and develop an action plan to reduce it.
- **Advocacy:** Raising awareness about the relationship between digital preservation and environmental sustainability. The DPC will identify and use strategic opportunities to raise awareness about the connections between digital preservation and environmental sustainability, seeking out examples of good practice and leading by example.
- **Workforce Development:** Support inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In response to Sustainable Development Goal 4, the DPC will extend its training provision, including the Career Development Fund, with the purpose of supporting increased diversity and reducing structural barriers which exclude many from participation in the digital preservation field.
- **Good Practice:** Monitor, manage and improve habits of sustainable consumption in the production and delivery of DPC events. Prior to Covid-19, DPC briefing days and member-facing events involved significant amounts of travel and catering which in turn implied waste. Once the pandemic is over, we will return to a 'better normal' in support of Sustainable Development Goal 12. In doing so we will be mindful of the DPC's global membership, recognizing that 'face to face' activities can also exclude a great many members. Although some travel and face-to-face events will resume as a component of our work, we will seek to reduce travel and routinely measure carbon cost and risk of waste generation when we plan events, establishing a framework for continuous improvement to reduce our consumption from events by the end of this planning period.
- **Good Practice:** Take action to combat climate change and its impacts by promoting developments in sustainable consumption for digital preservation. In support of Sustainable Development Goal 13, the DPC commits to raising awareness, promoting standards, engaging research and building institutional capacity for digital preservation practices that measure, monitor and reduce the production of greenhouse gases and the consumption of

non-renewable resources, or which contribute to climate change, erode marine environments or harm biodiversity.

- **Accountable Sustainable and Dynamic:** Committing to Sustainable Consumption. In support of Sustainable Development Goal 12 we will commit to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The sustainability of the DPC includes the social, environmental and inter-generational impacts that arise from our work. As such, we will seek to better understand the impacts we have, monitoring and improving them as we go.
- **Accountable Sustainable and Dynamic:** Being accountable for our values. The DPC will live its value. In support of Sustainable Development Goal 16 DPC will establish a framework to report actions that activate the Sustainable Development Goals, and develop an audit capability that monitors conformance to our values and is accountable to members. We will work to ensure our financial reserves and investments are consistent with our stated values.

### 3. Impacts of climate change on DPC

Climate change will have – has already had – an impact on digital preservation and therefore also on the DPC. Every touch point in a digital preservation workflow requires some electrical input, while the computing equipment needed to maintain a digital preservation facility is the result of complicated and intensive manufacturing processes which draw heavily of power supply and depend on the extraction and consumption of raw materials. Record creators and data managers are rightly under pressure to reduce and remove redundant data and systems which in turn manufactures a contrived but plausible tension with preservation requirements. It is therefore imperative that the digital preservation community demonstrate continuous improvement in the efficiency of our tools and services. For example the twenty years of the DPC have witnessed a long slow consolidation of data: from disk to server, from server to data centre, and from data centre to the Cloud. This has brought economies of scale which on the face of it bring greater efficiencies in patterns of consumption and emission. Even so, spinning disks in cloud service centres and the transport of data between different locations require large quantities of electricity and are also dependent on other raw materials including drinking water and rare earth elements. The renewal of computing equipment over extended periods creates significant amounts of e-waste which is expensive to recycle but dangerous to discard.

As a sector-building agency DPC needs to be alive to these and related pressures which our members face. We already know of specific members facing material risks of climate change, such as wildfires (National Library of Australia), rising sea levels (Historic Environment Scotland), drought (University of Cape Town) and mass displacement of peoples (UNHCR). Our members hold and create significant amounts of environmental data (EUMetSat) and research data management from climate sciences is well represented across our academic membership. All members are under pressure to reduce their energy costs and many are looking to cloud services which, in addition to claims about environmental impact reduction, leverage more flexible solutions to digital preservation challenges.

In addressing our members' emerging needs to address climate change there is a growing demand for advice, standards and training which have always been core services within the DPC's strategic plan. Moreover, by modelling good practice and by being seen to respond to the carbon and related environmental impact that arise from our own work we are better positioned as advocates for change.

### 4. Key Stakeholders

All of our members and all of our programs are to some extent engaged in climate action through our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. They are represented most explicitly in the Leadership of the DPC through our sub-committees.

Management and Governance Sub-committee responsible for monitoring and auditing our carbon footprint and establishing target that will lead us to net zero. Chaired by Tim Keefe, with John McMillan responsible for reporting. This is the first time DPC has attempted to audit and account for our carbon footprint, establishing an internal reporting framework which will be to impact every other aspect of our work. Consequently, the Management and Governance Sub-Committee will be tasked to establish and evolve the DPC's Climate Action Plan.

Good Practice Sub-Committee is responsible for 'thought leadership' identifying and promoting best practice and commissioning original research that illustrates and enables net zero across the DP Community. Chaired by Roxana Maurer, Jen Mitcham and Paul Wheatley responsible for reporting. Therefore the Good Practice Sub-Committee will work to encourage more, and more effective, climate action planning within digital preservation workflows and services.

The DPC recognizes that the climate crisis is also a human and economic one: that poverty, precarity and exclusion are not separate crises but intrinsically linked with climate. Therefore, our response to the climate crisis is further expressed through commitments to inclusion and professional development which are overseen by our Advocacy and Community Engagement and our Workforce Development Sub-Committees.

## 5. Governance

Executive Director, William Kilbride will be responsible for the DPC's Climate Action Plan. Our progress will be reported to and reviewed by our Management & Governance Sub-Committee on behalf of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board will be invited to nominate a 'Green Champion' from the DPC membership to support independent audit and encourage a culture of continuous quality improvement. This may include the establishment of a cross-DPC Climate Action Group that will guide and energize our work in this area.

In addition, the Climate Action Plan will be entered on the DPC's corporate risk register, allowing a separate mechanism to report and manage reputational risks. Failure to act competently in this area would not reflect well on our standing in the community. Moreover, we increasingly recognize that members and suppliers may be required to document our actions as part of the procurement of DPC membership.

The Climate Action Plan will be reviewed annually during the carbon calculation at year end but will continue to be updated as and when required should progress made or issues raised.

## 6. Communication

The DPC will communicate its intention and strategy through an Environmental Policy statement which will be published on the DPC website and shared through internal mailing lists.

Policy and outcomes from work done to be shared with sub-committee, Representative Council and Executive Board. The creation of the final plan will be done with some consultation between these three groups of our membership base.

We encourage members to report and share their climate actions with us so we may track progress across the sector and seek to develop tools that would facilitate this. For example, considerations of environmental sustainability are expressed indirectly within the DPC Rapid Assessment Model. Members are encouraged to report their RAM score periodically so that an aggregate assessment of performance across the whole DPC can be derived. At this point the reporting is minimal and

environment is only oblique visible through RAM scores. However, this could be further developed to demonstrate the downstream impact of DPC's work.

## 7. Targets and Objectives

### Short Term

- Environmental Policy Statement to be reviewed by Executive Board in September 2023 and published in October 2023.
- Climate Action Plan to be reviewed by Executive Board in September 2023 and published in October 2023.
- DPC to sign up for the United Nation's Race to Zero Campaign December 2023.
- Staff Travel log to be set up so we can start to collect information more accurately on business travel which is our highest emission source.
- Measurement of Carbon Footprint starting from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 to be recorded and presented to M&G Sub-Committee and Executive Board quarterly.

### Medium Term

- DPC to measure carbon footprint in line with the financial year August 2023 – July 2024 and release findings then and annually thereafter. This could take the form of annual report sent out to all members and/or form part of the AGM in terms of a short presentation.
- DPC to set tangible targets for reduction of carbon emissions in 24/25 after first year of measuring emissions.
- DPC to measure the impact of our pension investments as if pension funds are invested in oil and gas companies for example, this would greatly impact our carbon footprint.
- DPC to look at cost and availability of our carbon footprint work being externally assessed to ensure information is accurate and suggest improvements.

### Long Term

- The DPC will become net zero by 2032.

## 8. Carbon Calculation to Date

We have carried out an estimation of our Business Carbon Calculation for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 which stated that our overall emissions are classed as low. Our estimated totally emissions for the period were **23.4 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e**.

Emissions are classed under 3 different scopes which can be outlined as follows:

- **Scope 1** - Direct emissions from the combustion of fuel in assets that a company operates, such as fuel emissions from company-owned cars, diesel generators, gas boilers and air-conditioning leaks.
- **Scope 2** - Indirect emissions from the generation of energy purchased from a utility provider, such as heating, cooling, steam, and electricity.
- **Scope 3** - All indirect greenhouse gas emissions that do not fall under scope 2 - upstream and downstream. This calculator includes upstream emissions from purchased goods and services, capital goods, upstream transport and distribution, and business travel, calculated from your expenses.

Currently, the DPC's main source of emissions is Business Travel which accounts for around 93% of our scope 3 emissions. The DPC has negligible amounts of emissions in other areas but do need to investigate how are pension funds are invested as this could make a sizeable difference.

The DPC does not have many emissions in scope 1 and 2 as we have a very small office space which is rented, and all energy charges are paid for within the rental agreements. The DPC also doesn't have any company cars, limited use of couriers/postage etc so this really cuts down on many of the areas that most organizations need to consider.

Scope 3 emissions are classed as upstream and downstream.

Upstream would be our business travel whilst downstream would be our pension investments. Upstream is something we have incurred ourselves whereas downstream is something that someone we have contracted with have incurred.

## 9. Reducing our Emissions

The DPC will implement the following to help reduce our emissions (Employee Commuting and Business Travel are already being followed through our staff handbook guidance):

- Employee Commuting
  - Encourage the use of hybrid working to reduce commuter emissions.
  - Cycle to work loans.
- Business Travel
  - Business travel only when necessary.
  - Preference for land transport (rail) when available
  - Preference against air travel (introduce management approval requirement)
  - Staff Travel register to measure impact.
  - Staff to use public transport as first option and when practical when travelling.
- Pension Investments
  - Engage with our pension providers to ascertain where investments currently lie and if there are "greener" alternatives that we can look at.
- Recycling of Equipment
  - Consider how we recycle old laptops, furniture etc moving forward. We do not have a large amount of fixed assets other than our laptops but something we should be more cognisant of moving forward when the situation arises.

## 10. Questions / Clarifications

This first draft of the Climate Action Plan requires more work, and the following matters still need to be clarified or considered:

- What impact does the membership's own carbon footprint have on the DPC? It would seem impractical for the entire operations of our diverse membership to be factored in, but should we include the travel to DPC events for example when looking at our carbon calculation?
- We need to consider the actual carbon footprint of Digital Preservation itself. This may not need to be within the DPC's own climate action plan, but this should be under consideration in the future.
- Clarification of carbon emissions of pension provider and whether there are better alternatives.

## 11. Next Steps

- Draft climate action plan to be discussed at Australasia Stakeholder Group on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023.
- DPC to investigate impact of pension provider on carbon calculation.
- Draft climate action plan and Environmental Policy Statement to be discussed at Management & Governance SC on 13<sup>th</sup> 2023.
- Climate Action Plan and Environmental Policy Statement to be taken to Executive Board for discussion and approval on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

- Both documents to be published to membership in October 2023.
- DPC to sign up to United Nation's Race to Zero Campaign (subject to board approval).
- First quarterly carbon footprint measurement report to be reviewed by Management & Governance Sub-Committee and Executive Board in November/December 2023
- Short report on work to date at AGM 2023

#### **12. About this document**

- Ver 01: Document initiated, JMM, 01/08/23
- Ver02: Revised and updated, WGK, 04/09/23