

# Arts on Tour Environmental Policy



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Arts on Tour is based in Redfern NSW and we respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the unceded land on which we work. As we tour artists and productions across this vast continent, we pay our respect to all First Nations Elders, past, present and future. We celebrate their continuing connection and contribution to culture, country and community, and thank all First Nations peoples for their wisdom in caring for the land, the sky, the rivers and the sea in a sustainable and regenerative way for over 60,000 years.

## ABOUT ARTS ON TOUR

Arts on Tour is the most prolific touring service organisation for performing arts in Australia, and the peak body for touring in NSW. Widely recognised for leading on best practice in touring, Arts on Tour's overarching purpose is to bring culturally distinctive and resonant arts experiences to audiences and communities across the country, and to deliver a program of events and initiatives that build the sector's touring capacity.

Arts on Tour delivers on average 15-20 national tours each year, with up to 200 people on the road. We work with primarily NSW-based artists and producers and a network of regional presenters across the country to deliver a touring program with an audience reach of over 150,000 people.

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

A core value of Arts on Tour is caring for the wellbeing of people and our planet. We take responsibility for the need to balance the positive impact of live arts experiences for artists and communities with the negative environmental impact of making, touring and presenting work.

As a nation, Australia continues to lag behind in addressing the climate emergency, and the arts sector is no exemption. Touring is a major contributor to the carbon emissions output of the performing arts, and AOT is committed to implementing and championing environmentally responsible practices across our programs and operations. As artists and storytellers, we can use our voice to inspire environmental action. As artists and arts makers, we can lead on change. In addition, the cost of not transitioning to low emission, and less wasteful practices is already not only environmental, but also financial, with less carbon almost always equating to less cost.

The scale and reach of our activity, and our reputation for best practice and innovation means Arts on Tour is well placed to directly and indirectly lead on change. We are committed to doing this by bringing an environmental lens to our operations and touring practices, and by offering upskilling and eco literacy programs to the performing arts sector as part of our ongoing Green Touring Initiative.

## OUR APPROACH

Our approach to climate change and caring for the environment is constantly evolving. In 2019 we launched the [Green Touring Initiative](#) with the aim of carbon neutral touring and a *remove, reduce, offset* strategy. In 2021 we developed and signed a Net Zero Commitment Statement, featured in the [Green Touring Toolkit](#), committing to net zero emissions by 2024. But then we learnt more, and the picture got more complicated.

Working with environmental consultants Bea Jeavons and Aimee Smith in 2024, our strategy has evolved into a three-pronged approach in which we are no longer pursuing a net zero goal. We have kept *remove* and *reduce*, replaced *offsetting* with investing in biodiversity protection and restoration, and added climate advocacy, recognising that as a sector, we can harness the power of the artist's voice and the gift of our storytelling.

**This approach sees us step away from carbon neutral/net zero claims that are achieved by buying carbon credits to offset the emissions that we can't remove or reduce.**

Now we have learnt more, our thinking is that this gives a false sense of security, when research (e.g. this [Climate Council report](#)) tells us that it is impossible to offset fossil fuel emissions with carbon credit projects. We can't buy our way out of the climate crisis.

So, instead of purchasing carbon credits to offset emissions, we are measuring our emissions and investing at least the same amount of money into planting native trees where the focus is on restoring native ecosystems and building critical habitat for wildlife. Although these plantings also remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere, a net zero claim is not the goal.

## A THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY

1. **DECARBONISE:** measure and reduce emissions across our operations and Touring Program
2. **RESTORE:** invest in nature conservation and biodiversity projects to protect and restore nature
3. **ADVOCATE:** use our voice to advocate for climate action

## OUR EMISSIONS BOUNDARY

An emissions boundary transparently discloses which activities have been included within an organisation's emissions calculations. Where the line is drawn is based on how much control the organisation has over these activities. (See the [Green Touring Toolkit](#) for more info.)

AOT includes all Scope 1, 2 & 3 activities in our emissions boundary for both our office operations and AOT-produced tours. For the tours we manage on a producer's behalf, touring emissions sit within the producer's boundary rather than AOT's. This is the majority of activity we do as a touring service organisation.

What do we measure and include?

- **AOT operations:** electricity (sourced from a renewable energy supplier), water, waste, telecommunications, paper, printing, employee travel and accommodation, employee commuting, office IT and furniture purchases.
- **AOT-produced tours:** emissions from all touring-based activity, including travel, freight, accommodation and food.

### What about emissions relating to producing and presenting the productions we tour?

Based on the guideline of including in our boundary what we have control over, AOT does not include emissions from the making of a work (within the producer's boundary) or those from presenting the work, including audience travel (within the presenter's boundary). However, given the interconnectedness of the making-touring-presenting cycle, we work with our producer and presenter partners to support lowering emissions across the whole cycle with resources and projects such as the [Greening Production Making](#) series and by including a [Green Rider](#) in our presenter contracts.

## OUR EMISSIONS

Arts on Tour delivers on average between 15-20 tours/year, with up to 200 people on the road, reaching over 150,000 audience members nationally. We measure emissions for our operations and our touring activity – both the tours we produce (emissions within AOT's boundary) and those we manage on a producer's behalf.

In 2024, emissions were:

- AOT operations, including the office, staff travel and industry events: 16 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e
- AOT produced tours (3 tours): 45 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e
- Tours we managed for Producers (18 tours): 666 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e

Touring is a high emissions activity, hence our commitment to this work. If you're interested in what types of activity contributed the most, see [here](#) for a breakdown. You can also see here the complexities of benchmarking tours on emissions levels, depending on if emissions are assessed per tour, per performance, per week, or per person.

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

Following our three-pronged *Decarbonise, Restore, Advocate* strategy, our environmental goals for our operations and touring program are:

### GOAL 1 – DECARBONISE: Measure & reduce emissions across our Operations & Touring Program by:

#### *Operations/General:*

- ☐ Implement action plans to remove and reduce emissions-producing activities in our operations including staff travel, office energy usage, procurement, food, event catering and waste.
- ☐ Partner with suppliers with decarbonisation strategies (producers, accomm providers, ground transport fleet providers)
- ☐ Measuring emissions for AOT operations, AOT produced tours, and the tours AOT manages

#### *Touring Program:*

- ☐ Seeking out and programming *low emission tours* as part of Green Programming policy
- ☐ Applying remove and redesign strategies to all aspects of tour logistics planning
- ☐ Increase the eco literacy of touring company members to contribute to the reduction of energy and waste emissions while on tour
- ☐ Supporting the Tour Producer to consider responsible disposal strategies for set elements to minimise landfill and maximise the lifetime of materials through re-purposing and re-use.

#### **GOAL 2 – RESTORE: invest in nature conservation and biodiversity projects by:**

- ☐ Partnering with conservation and forestry organisations and investing in projects that protect and restore the land and marine ecosystems
- ☐ Invest at least the same amount of money in restoration projects that we would in high quality carbon credits if we were pursuing a carbon neutral strategy.

#### **GOAL 3 – ADVOCATE: use our voice to advocate for climate action by:**

##### *Operations/General:*

- ☐ Partnering with climate advocacy organisations such as [Culture Declares](#), [A Climate for Art](#) and [Creative Climate](#) to support collective action across the arts in Australia and globally
- ☐ Providing tools and resources and run programs for the sector to increase eco literacy and support climate action
- ☐ Advocating to suppliers, government agencies and other stakeholders to adopt and support climate action and emission reduction targets.
- ☐ Divesting from fossil fuels by using Beyond Bank and informing staff of divestment superannuation options

##### *Touring Program:*

- ☐ Curating environmentally-themed productions as part of our Green Programming policy
- ☐ Working with our producing and presenting partners to support decarbonisation across the making, touring and presenting of work

## ACTION PLANS

### **TOURING PROGRAM – ON THE ROAD**

Approach: refer to our Touring Environmental Action Plan, which can be downloaded from the Resources section on our website [here](#).

### **OPERATIONS – IN THE OFFICE**

Approach: Reduce emissions from energy usage, procurement, travel, food and waste in our operations, including running the office, hosting events and staff travel. Strategies include:

#### **1. Switched to Renewable Energy ✓**

- ☐ Switched to 100% renewable energy from [Diamond Energy](#)  
We lease our office so we can't put solar on the roof, so opting for a 100% renewable energy supplier is the next best option. Diamond Energy has over 65 fossil-fuel free energy generators and feeds more renewable energy into the grid than its customers use.

#### **2. Divested from fossil fuels by switching to fossil fuel free banking ✓**

- ☐ Switched to fossil fuel free banking with [Beyond Bank](#), a community-owned B Corp bank with excellent customer service and high interest rates!

### 3. Divested from fossil fuels by supporting fossil fuel free superannuation - in progress

- ☐ We are in the process of recommending fossil fuel free super funds to employees, such as [Future Super](#) and [Australian Ethical](#), which also offer competitive returns.

### 4. Introduced energy reduction LEDs ✓

- ☐ Switched our lighting to LED fixtures. With a subsidy from the NSW Energy Saving Scheme the energy saving in the first year far exceeds the cost of installing

### 5. Introduced energy saving measures ✓

- ☐ Set air conditioning to 18-20 degrees in the winter and 24 degrees in the summer
- ☐ Turn off office equipment at the end of the day, including printer and computers, rather than leaving them in sleep mode
- ☐ Travel to Sydney-based meetings by train or by foot where possible
- ☐ Minimise intra and interstate visits for meetings and venue visits, and combining visits to venues in close proximity in the one trip to minimise emissions

### 6. Reduced our landfill waste ✓

- ☐ Utilise Doyle Bros, a leading waste and recycling service, to manage our waste and recycling and minimise our landfill
- ☐ Recycle our toner cartridges, retired computers and mobile phones responsibly
- ☐ Use recycled batteries where batteries are required

### 7. Reduced paper usage and printing ✓

- ☐ Use FSC Certified recycled paper (Recycled Reflex)
- ☐ Minimise printing, and print double sided in black/white unless colour is absolutely necessary
- ☐ Issue contracts and agreements digitally, signed electronically
- ☐ Utilise a digital cloud-based accounting system (Xero) that eliminates the need to print and keep paper receipts and invoices

### 8. Greening our supply chain – in progress

- ☐ We are in the process of developing a questionnaire for suppliers to evaluate environmental credentials to green our supply chain
- ☐ To reduce AOT event emissions, we measure our emissions for sector events such as Salon and the Touring Lab and seek out low emission caterers and catering options (e.g. no red meat)

## POLICY REVIEW

| Item                              | Comments                                                            | Last Review     | Review Cycle                              |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Environmental Policy              | Policy developed as part of AOT's <i>Green Touring Toolkit</i>      | April 2022      | Annually<br><b>Next review:</b> July 2026 |
| Touring Environmental Action Plan | Action Plan developed as part of AOT's <i>Green Touring Toolkit</i> | April 2022      | Annually<br><b>Next review:</b> July 2026 |
| Office Environmental Action Plan  | Incorporated into Environmental Policy document                     | N/A<br>new plan | Annually<br><b>Next review:</b> July 2026 |