

WPA SOCIAL IMPACT FRAMEWORK

# CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY



Version 1

*August 2023 to August 2026*



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#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Acknowledgements
- 4 Contributions
- 5 Our Leaders' Statement
- 6 Strategic Direction
- 7 Social Impact
- 8 Our Commitments
- 9 Our Sphere of Influence
- 11 Global Commitments
- 13 Our Footprint
- 14 Adaptation
- 15 Our Approach
- 16 Our Action Plan

## MORE THAN TREADING WATER

Water Polo Australia is aiming to drive change towards a more sustainable future. Our social impact framework encompasses identified strategies to address inclusion, reconciliation, culture, and as per this document our climate impact.

Water Polo Australia's full position statement on climate change can be found on the WPA website.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Water Polo Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the ongoing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respects to the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

## CONTACT

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# Acknowledgements

Water Polo Australia (WPA) has adopted a targeted engagement strategy and engaged with key stakeholders to inform and support the development of this Climate Action Strategy. Engaging passionate and informed allies creates a road to success and longevity.

## United Nations Sports 4 Climate Action Framework

United Nations Sports 4 Climate Action Framework (UNS4CAF) guides sports in achieving global climate change goals and preparing to adapt to the unavoidable physical risks associated with climate change. Signatories are asked to incorporate the climate principles into their strategies and commit to halving emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2040. Water Polo Australia became a signatory to the UNS4CAF in October 2022.



**United Nations**  
Climate Change

## The Australian Olympic Committee

The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) became a signatory to the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework in December 2020, acknowledging the active role that sport can play in delivering sustainable operations for the benefit of the environment. The AOC is a primary program partner of Water Polo Australia.



## The Australian Government / The Australian Sports Commission

Australia is a party to the Paris Agreement, which commits signatories to net zero emissions to achieve the global temperature goals and prevent the extreme impacts of climate change. The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is the Australian Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sports at all levels. The ASC, including the Australian Institute of Sport, is a primary program and funding partner of Water Polo Australia.



## Water Polo Australia Climate Action Panel

Water Polo Australia (WPA) offers sincere thanks to its climate action panel for the contribution of their expertise in preparing this strategy. Our panel has a depth of experience including international and national climate change policy, climate change adaptation research, sports administration, sports sustainability, high performance, and business strategy and management.





# Contributions

Thank you to the invaluable expertise of the WPA Climate Action Panel. Our panel comes from a variety of backgrounds including sports administration, climate adaptation research, sports sustainability consultancy, athlete representatives and committed members of our community.



**Susie Smith**  
(Panel Chair  
and WPA Director)



**Richard McInnes**  
(CEO, WPA)



**Holly Tyrrell**  
(GM Strategy, WPA)



**Kal Glanznig**  
(Athlete Representative)



**Damien Brown**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Greg Dingle**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Stephanie Lebeau**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Terry Muir**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Annabel Sides**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Katisha Webb**  
(Independent Panellist)



**Christina Wilson**  
(Independent Panellist)



# Our Leaders' Statement

The Board of Water Polo Australia recognises that our sport is not exempt from the impacts of climate change and that we have an opportunity to demonstrate climate leadership through the integration of sustainable business practices.

As an Olympic sport, we also acknowledge our responsibility to play a leadership role and to understand and prepare for the environmental challenges sport will face. In this leadership role, we will actively contribute to and support the broader community to deliver a climate positive Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

Guided by our mission statement... "To create success today, to inspire tomorrow, and be a team for life" ...we aim to drive change towards a more sustainable future, inspiring others to follow on a similar path.

We have a panel of experts supporting us with our climate strategy, who are aware of the urgency to act and understand the risk that climate change presents.

On behalf of this panel, with the support of the WPA Board, we are excited to publish this document, our first Climate Action Strategy.

Our strategy is ambitious, innovative, and achievable.

It positions water polo as a leader in our field and is consistent with our own national strategic framework priorities, and the principles of the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework.

We acknowledge the power of sport to accelerate change and mobilise fans, athletes, and suppliers into best-practice climate action. Through our leadership, water polo will be a sport of choice for partners seeking to couple outstanding results with sustainability leadership.

This strategy outlines our climate action initiatives that will drive practical actions across our sport over the next three years and ultimately deliver our commitment to achieve a 50 percent reduction in our emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2040.

We view climate action, not as a distraction from our core business but as an important part of who we are and how we remain sustainable and resilient as we grow into the future.



***Trent Birkett,***  
***President Water Polo Australia***



***Richard McInnes,***  
***CEO Water Polo Australia***

# Strategic Direction:

## *WPA is a team for life*

Water Polo Australia, in collaboration with our State Water Polo Associations, developed our National Strategic Framework. This framework established our shared **vision**, our **mission**, our **values**, and five common **elements** to achieve these.

Our **VISION**  
is to make  
Our Sport,  
Your Sport!

### OUR MISSION

To create success today,  
inspire tomorrow,  
and be a team for life

### OUR VALUES

Fun  
Inclusive  
Pursuit of Excellence  
Teamwork  
Respect





# Social Impact:

## *Engaging today for a stronger tomorrow*

Globally, many industries are reviewing their business practices and making changes to be more socially responsible. This is driven by the evolving expectations of governments, investors, and business partners, and importantly internally by employees and communities. The sporting community is not exempt from this trend.

Integrating broader sustainable thinking into core business is no longer optional, it is integral to successful organisations. It is the right thing to do and makes good business sense.

Our approach to sustainability includes the development of our: Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Strategy; Reconciliation Action Plan; Culture Innovation Strategy; and this Climate Action Strategy. Together these projects form the core of our social impact framework, and we will drive these changes through the pillars of leadership, environment, and community.

We view sustainability initiatives not as a distraction from our core business but as an important part of who we are. We will look to align with corporate partners who share these values and build strategic alliances to create a common good for our community and the communities in which we live and play.

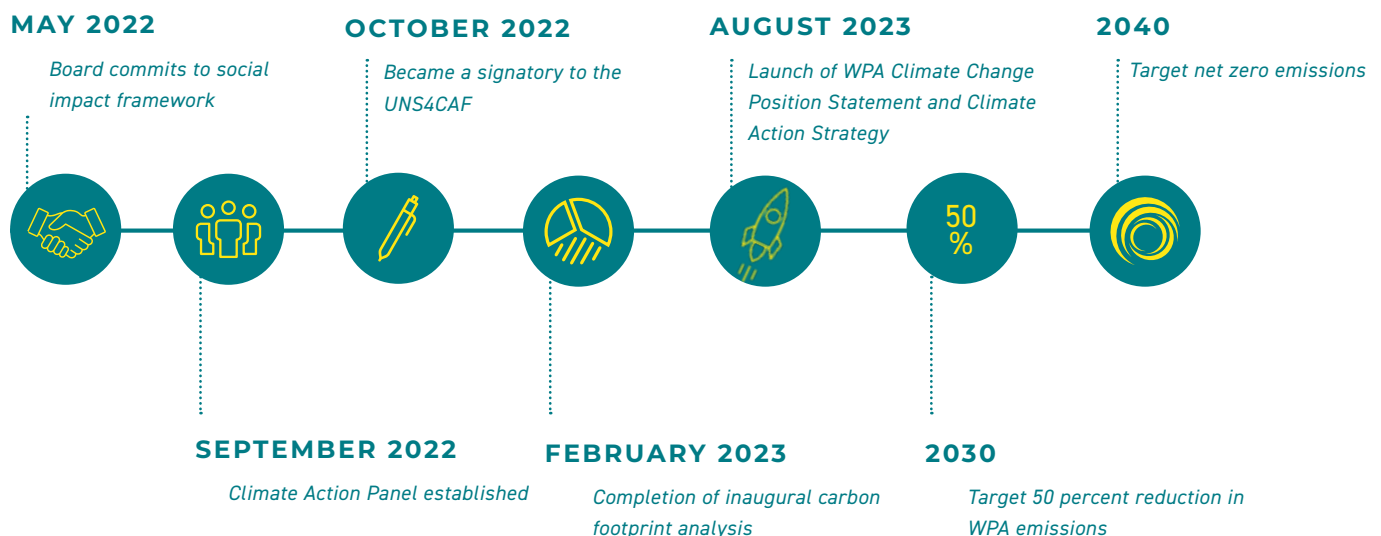


# Our Commitments:

## *Taking action*

- > We accept climate change science and acknowledge the call for urgent action to address global emissions.
- > We accept the challenge to act in line with the UNS4CAF principles and Australian Government targets.
- > We will engage with subject matter experts to inform, support, and guide our climate journey.
- > We will demonstrate climate leadership in our sport.
- > We will create a greater understanding of water polo's carbon footprint and how the impacts of climate change may impact our sport.
- > We will achieve a 50 percent reduction in scope-1 and scope-2 emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2040.

## OUR TIMELINE





# Our Sphere of Influence:

## *Leading by example*

Water Polo Australia is the national governing body for the Olympic sport of water polo in Australia. We are responsible for the development of water polo players, officials, coaches, and volunteers in Australia and for the conduct of competitions independently and in collaboration with our members. We recognise that through our leadership we can create a positive ripple effect. As we commence our journey and implement initiatives, we will encourage individuals and organisations to join with us.



### CORE OPERATIONS

22 national staff (15.6 FTE)

### EVENTS AND TEAM

8 national events

2 national senior teams

6 national squads

### ENGAGED COMMUNITY

20,000 members

7 State Associations

17 Regional Associations

154 Clubs

681 Referees

1138 Coaches

### WIDER NETWORK

Venues and facilities

National Institute Network

Australian Sports Commission

Friends and Family of members

Australian Olympic Committee

Partners and Suppliers

### GLOBAL SECURITY

World Aquatics General Populations

## SMALLER FOOTPRINT, GREATER IMPACT

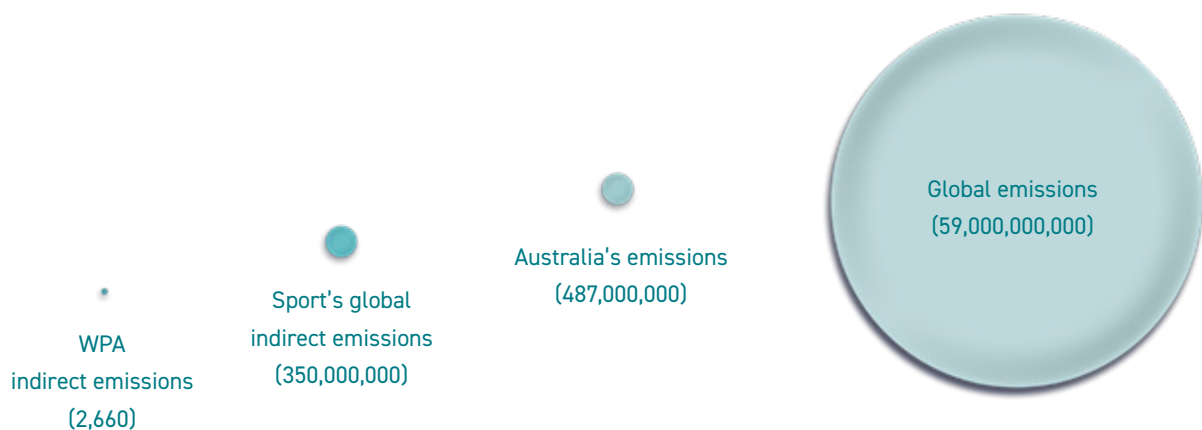
Being responsive to climate change means understanding the impact of our activities on the environment in order to **mitigate our footprint** and the potential impacts of a changing climate on our sport in order to **adapt**.

Although most of our activity occurs in hired facilities, this does not mean we cannot positively influence where we play and how we play.

We will strive to preserve the traditions, core values, and community spirit that is water polo while also becoming more resilient and sustainable as a sport.

## GLOBAL NET ZERO CHALLENGE

Globally, we need to urgently reduce emissions from thousands of billions of tonnes down to net zero to avoid the extreme impacts of climate change. Emissions in the following diagram are approximate for comparison purposes (2023).



Although on a global scale WPA's footprint is relatively small, every small effort counts, and we can make a substantive difference through positive leadership and behavioral influence across the water polo and greater sporting communities.

# Global Commitments:

## *Driving local action*

Under its international obligations, Australia, along with nearly 200 other signatories to the Paris Agreement, is required to measure, report, and reduce its emissions, and has committed to achieving net zero scope-1 emissions by 2050.

Globally, the scale of the challenge is enormous. The collective goal is to shift emissions from approximately 52,000 million tonnes annually to net zero before 2050. Australia's emissions in 2020 were approximately 530 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (mtCO<sub>2</sub>e) and the 2030 target is to reduce these emissions to approximately 350 mtCO<sub>2</sub>e. Although this is a very small portion of global emissions, global action is required to achieve global goals and all actions count.

### INTERNATIONAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK

The methodology for measuring, reporting, and verifying these emissions and their relative impact is determined by international frameworks established under the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change – the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

An organisation's carbon footprint is measured through a complex calculation of its direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions.

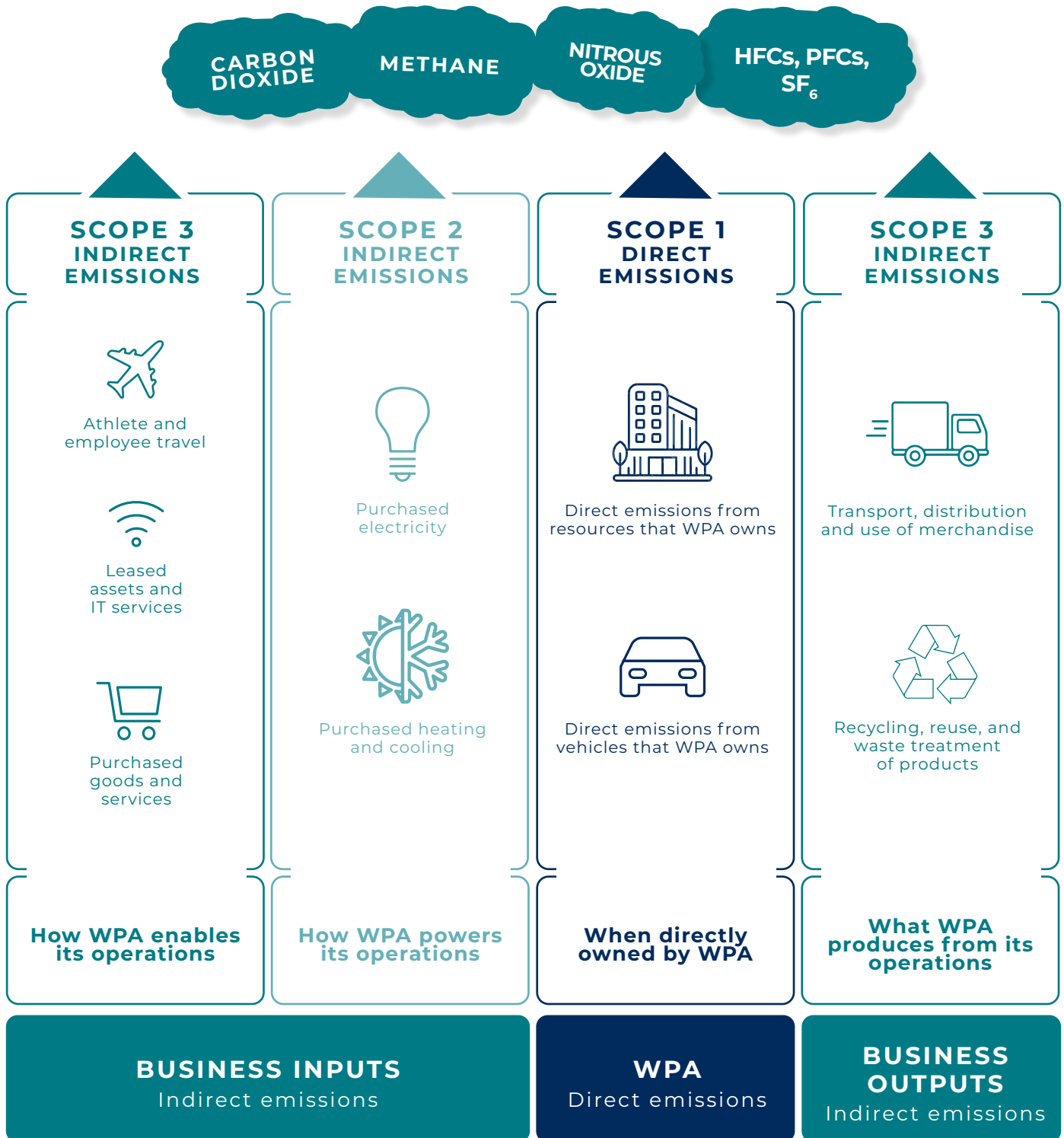
Emissions from things we do are called direct emissions, or scope-1 emissions. Emissions from the purchase of electricity are categorised as scope-2 emissions, and emissions from the production of goods and services that we use, or sell, are known as scope-3 emissions.

It is important to understand that scope-2 and scope-3 emissions are captured as someone else's scope-1 emissions, for example, emissions from airline travel would be scope-3 emissions for Water Polo Australia but would be classified as scope-1 emissions for the airline.

While it's easy to assume that Scope-2 and 3 emissions will be resolved if everyone takes responsibility for their own actions, we recognise that consumers can make a difference through leadership and conscious choices made with a focus on sustainability. Our action plan includes initiatives to address scope-1, 2 and 3 emissions.

## UNDERSTANDING SCOPE 1, 2 & 3

Understanding Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions provides WPA with tools to strategically reduce emissions by understanding where they originate.



Ref: GHG Protocol scopes emission sources adapted by ESG & Carbon Services 2023.



# Our Footprint:

## *Measuring our baseline emissions*

We are committed to understanding the resources we use, the emission we create, and the waste we leave behind. To understand our impact and reduce our emissions, we will measure and report our direct and indirect emissions.

In February 2023, we completed our first carbon footprint analysis consistent with the methodology outlined in the International Greenhouse Gas Protocol standard.

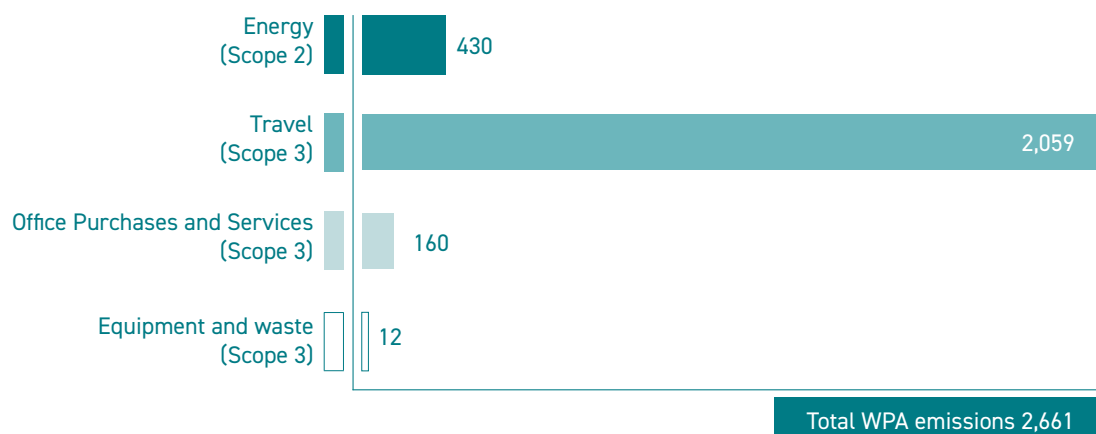
The inaugural footprint analysis focused on areas under our immediate control and direct influence such as WPA events, corporate office, and national team tours and camps.

WPA's total carbon footprint is very small, with no direct emissions (Scope 1). Our indirect emissions (Scope 2 and 3) in 2022 were 2,660 tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub>e) and are predominately associated with travel for our staff, the Australian teams, and the Australian Water Polo League teams.

We recognise the importance of understanding our impact across all aspects of water polo and acknowledge that as our climate change literacy grows, so too will the scope and depth of future footprint analysis insights.

Items not currently included within scope but flagged for future inclusion include spectators at our events and competitions; and events conducted by our state associations or other external bodies such as schools.

### WATER POLO AUSTRALIA CARBON FOOTPRINT 2022 (tCO<sub>2</sub>-e)



# Adaptation:

## *Active risk management*

The global sporting community has started to develop and adopt resilient business models that adapt to the physical impacts of climate change on their sport. In parallel, the sporting community can provide important leadership by managing their carbon footprint.

### WATER POLO CLIMATE RELATED IMPACTS

**Warmer and more heatwaves (number of hot days increase) and less cooler days**

- Athlete heat stress
- Spectator affects/comfort
- Transport and infrastructure impacts
- Game and training timings and asset availability

**Coastal sea level and flooding increase**

- Pool availability (short term)
- Coastal pools rendered unusable (long term)

**Increase in drought frequency and duration**

- Water availability and impact on pool costs
- participation costs



**Cool season rainfall decline in southern Australia**

- Long term water availability and prioritisation

**Greater proportion of higher intensity storms**

- Community and residential asset destruction
- Availability of pools
- Event and training disruption
- Physical dangers
- Increased participation costs
- insurance

**More intense heavy rainfall**

- Pool availability, flooding
- Playing and training conditions
- Natural disaster community impacts

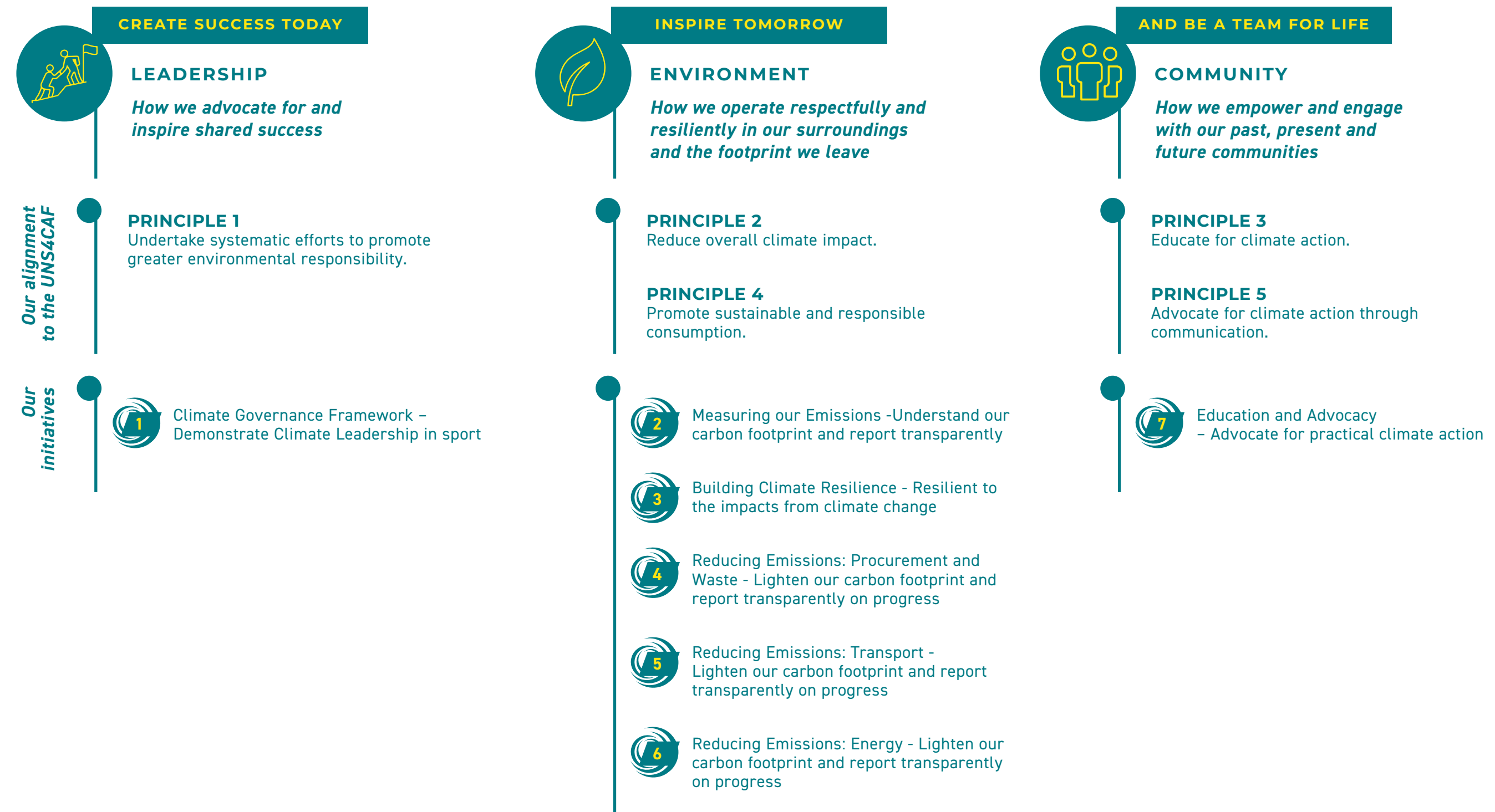
**Longer fire season and more dangerous fire weather**

- Air quality effects on athletes and spectators
- Natural disaster community disruptions

Figure 2: Major climate change impacts in Australia affect water polo in the short and long term disproportionately across the country.

# Our Approach: *Starting 7 Initiatives*

We will deliver our climate commitments through our “**Starting 7 Initiatives**”. These initiatives are aligned with the WPA social impact framework (Leadership, Environment, and Community) and the five UNS4CAF principles. Our approach is focused on our immediate sphere of influence and will aim to bring our climate journey to life through leadership and creating the foundations for collaborative action. We are committed to continuous improvement and will continue to evolve our approach to be responsive to community needs, industry research, and ultimately best practice.



# Our Action Plan

LEADERSHIP		How we advocate for and inspire shared success.		
INITIATIVE 1: CLIMATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK			UNS4CAF Principle	
Demonstrate climate leadership in sport				
a. Publish inaugural climate change position statement	FY23	Panel	1	
b. Become a signatory to the UNS4CAF	FY23	CEO	1	
c. Publish inaugural Climate Action Strategy	FY23	Panel	1	
d. Publish commitment to emissions reduction goals for 2030 and 2040	FY23	Panel	1	
e. Commit to annual review of progress against strategy	Annual	GM Strategy	1	
f. Identify potential corporate partnerships to support sustainability commitments	FY24	CEO	1	

ENVIRONMENT		How we operate respectfully and resiliently in our surroundings and the footprint we leave		
INITIATIVE 2: MEASURING OUR EMISSIONS			UNS4CAF Principle	
Understand our carbon footprint and report transparently				
a. Publish inaugural carbon footprint analysis and repeat annually	FY23	Panel	1	
b. Develop a sustainability checklist for clubs, aquatic facilities, competitions, and events	FY24	Panel	1, 2, 3	
INITIATIVE 3: BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE			UNS4CAF Principle	
Resilient to the impacts from climate change				
a. Development of Extreme Weather and Playing Conditions Guidelines	FY24	GM Strategy	1, 4	
b. Complete a national aquatic facility audit	FY24	GM Strategy	1, 5	
c. Develop WPA's Open-Water Activation Plan (including partnerships, infrastructure, and equipment opportunities)	FY24	GM Strategy	1, 2, 3	



INITIATIVE 4: REDUCING EMISSIONS - PROCUREMENT AND WASTE Lighten our carbon footprint and report transparently on progress			UNS4CAF Principle
a. Complete an audit of plastic usage at WPA events	FY25	WPA Events	4
b. Identify and implement opportunities to minimise plastic waste at WPA events	FY26	WPA Events	2, 4
c. Complete an audit of WPA's annual textiles, equipment, and material usage and suppliers	FY25	GM Strategy	4
d. Identify climate positive improvements in supply chains with suppliers (water polo ball recycling, uniforms)	FY26	GM Strategy	2, 4
e. Identify and implement opportunities to reuse, recycle and reduce uniforms	FY24	GM Strategy	2, 4
INITIATIVE 5: REDUCING EMISSIONS - TRANSPORT Lighten our carbon footprint and report transparently on progress			UNS4CAF Principle
a. Review WPA flexible work policy and identify opportunities to reduce emissions	FY24	GM Strategy	2
b. Review WPA travel policy and identify opportunities to reduce emissions (corporate and/or voluntary)	FY24	GM Strategy	2
c. Review major competitions schedule to identify opportunities to reduce travel	FY26	GM Strategy	2
d. Investigate partnerships and incentive programs to reduce travel-related emissions	FY24	Panel	2
INITIATIVE 6: REDUCING EMISSIONS - ENERGY Lighten our carbon footprint and report transparently on progress			UNS4CAF Principle
a. Work with facility and building operators to identify and implement practical energy efficiency initiatives	FY26	GM Strategy	2

COMMUNITY	How we empower and engage with our past, present, and future communities		
INITIATIVE 7: EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY Advocate for practical climate action			UNS4CAF Principle
a. Complete annual leaders and community sentiment survey to understand social impact perceptions	Annual	GM Strategy	5
b. Develop a climate action strategy communications plan	FY24	GM Strategy	5
c. Deliver targeted community education program (based on survey data)	FY25	GM Strategy	3
d. Introduce national sustainability awards	FY25	CEO	5
e. Implement a national sustainability ambassador program	FY25	CEO	5
f. Develop ClubPool climate action factsheets (sports sustainability, sustainable choices, green transport)	FY25	Panel	3



# Water Polo

OUR SPORT, YOUR SPORT

WPA SOCIAL IMPACT FRAMEWORK

**CLIMATE ACTION  
STRATEGY**