

Beyond Net Zero: The Practical Sustainability Moves That Will Matter Most in 2026 - Northmore Gordon

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Efficiency Assessments Energy Procurement Navigate energy markets with confidence Virtual Environmental Manager Leverage our teams wide experience Certificates Close Certificates Open Certificates Certificates Our Environmental Attribute Certificate services help businesses accelerate technology adoption, improve project ROI, and manage claims of renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon offset 1 carbon offset = 1 tonne of CO₂-e avoided or removed from the atmosphere. Avoided emissions covers activities that alter behaviour that would have otherwise caused emissions such as energy efficiency improvements or avoided deforestation. Removal covers activities that permanently remove CO₂ from the atmosphere such as new forestry plantations, soil carbon improvement or carbon capture and storage. certificates Live Certificate Prices The value of certificates change day-to-day, check todays prices Solar VEECs (VEU PBA) VEU PBA for Large-scale Solar Measurement & Verification (VEU & ESS) M&V; for Large C&I; Efficiency Projects (VEU PBA & ESS PIAM&V;) BESS Calculator Estimate the Peak Reduction Certificate revenue available to your NSW battery project in minutes ERF & Carbon Credit Registration ACCUs for Emission Reduction Projects Boiler Upgrades (VEU & ESS) NSW & VIC Boiler Rebates REC Registration (I-RECs & LGCs) Register renewable assets for I-RECs and LGCs Trade RECs & Carbon with us Trade Local & International Environmental Attribute Certificates moREnewable100 (RECs & Offsets) Reach Global Sustainability Goals with Certificates and Offsets Deemed Certificates (VEU & ESS) NSW & VIC Rebates Global Certificates Environmental Attribute Certificates Australian Programs Australian EAC Programs Case Studies Sectors Articles Team More Close More Open More Northmore Gordon Learn more about Northmore Gordon with the latest news and insights, were to find us, and the extensive terminology used in emissions reductions About Us Who we are & what we do in energy efficiency & decarbonization. Locations Find our offices near you. Contact Us Get in touch with our team. Careers Join our team making a sustainability difference Articles Learn about energy efficiency & carbon reduction. Latest News Stay informed on industry developments. Government Updates Track policy changes impacting your energy use. Accreditations See our certifications for trusted service. Glossary Define key terms in emissions reduction. Beyond Net Zero: The Practical Sustainability Moves That Will Matter Most in 2026 Craig Morgan December 15, 2025 Articles Share this article Northmore Gordon's Point of View as We Close Out 2025 As 2025 draws to a close, one thing is clear: organisations don't need more slogans — they need clearer priorities, better data, and practical steps that improve efficiency, resilience, and cost performance. Across Australia, governments have increased their focus on climate adaptation, energy transition, and long-term resilience: The Federal Government is committed to achieving 82% renewable electricity by 2030 as part of a broader Net Zero Plan, and 6 x Sector plans. NSW's Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2025–2029 outlines 46 actions across infrastructure, transport, land use, water, health and economic planning. Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026–30 sets out significant investment and a whole-of-economy pathway. Other states are moving similarly: building adaptation capacity, electrifying systems, and embedding climate risk into regulatory and planning frameworks. For businesses, this means the question is no longer “Should we act?” but “How do we act smartly, consistently and in a way that aligns with business strategy?” The organisations that succeed in 2026 won't be the ones chasing shiny tech or the next grant. They'll be the ones who make practical, high-value moves — the ones that compound. Below is Northmore Gordon's point of view on what really matters. Efficiency first Develop a strategy for Certificates, funding and incentives Electrify where it makes sense for cost and efficiency Manage your carbon risk through your vwhole alue chain Use data-driven decisions 1. Efficiency First — The Best ROI Still Comes From Operational Excellence Efficiency, the first fuel, remains the fastest, cheapest, least-regret step in any sustainability plan. Some things are simple and cheap! This is not new news in 2025, but it was a lesson re-learned. Businesses re-discovered that many efficiency gains are operational, not just capital investments. This aligns with what we saw in our companion article, Quick Wins — What Actually Worked in 2025? , where the highest-value improvements came from: Heat recovery load shifting and sequencing compressed-air leak reduction boiler and steam system tuning setpoint optimisation better scheduling and behavioural adjustments real-time monitoring enabling fast correction Why does this matter for 2026? Efficient systems drift. Controls get overridden. Settings change. Habits slip. Even “efficient” sites underperform after 12–24 months unless they are regularly reassessed. We see this repeatedly. Energy Audits Still Matter! A good audit is not a compliance box. It

is a diagnostic, produces an investment roadmap for deeper efficiency, and most importantly, is a reality check against assumptions. Data is money — when you can see it, you stop wasting it. Metering & Monitoring Matters More Than Ever! Energy audits based on data assure ROI on opportunities. It's no coincidence that NSW Government is providing grants for Metering and Monitoring plans and implementation. Measuring electricity, gas, steam, hot/chilled water and air, informs where it is used efficiently and where it is being wasted, and where it can be reused or redirected.

2. Certificates, Funding & Incentives Need Their Own Strategy — Not Last-Minute Scrambling In 2025, too many organisations still chased grants reactively or relied on vendors to “find them a rebate”. In 2026, the winners will do the opposite: they will build funding and certificates into their business planning cycle. Here's the shift: Use a framework, not chance. Northmore Gordon helps clients map VEECs, LGCs, ESCs, and grants into 12–36 month project or capital works pipelines so funding becomes predictable, not incidental. Stop missing out. Build a structured process where your project pipeline is supported by VEEC Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificate /LGC/ESC eligibility, and upcoming and known grants, and you are aware of government announcements before it happens. Let funding accelerate operational priorities. External funding from certificates and grants can bring forward a project that was marginal, or change priorities, or help take a large transformation leap instead of small steps. Integrating certificates and funding into your workflow is one of the biggest missed values we still see in the market. Fixing this can lift project ROI by 15–30%.

3. Electrification — drive efficiency, cost reduction and carbon reduction together Electrification onto an increasingly renewable grid isn't a trend anymore. It's a transition. But it must be done with eyes open: grid & connection capacity is not guaranteed electrification loads must be modelled, not guessed partial electrification may outperform full electric on ROI network connection costs, network tariffs and certificate value can make or break payback sequencing loads and load shapes matter carbon emissions due to electrification may rise in the short term don't assume that the same gas capacity must be replaced – drive the opportunity for efficiency as well biomethane supply through the grid could meet some thermal needs at lower cost 2025 showed a clear shift: the smartest electrification projects weren't “replace gas with electric” They were modular, staged, monitored, and financially engineered through the right strategy that combines wholesale electricity market exposure, and optimisation of network tariff, certificates and grant funding, and engineering design. Case studies like MainStream Aquaculture highlighted a new reality: electrification is most successful when data, grid constraints and certificates are aligned from day one.

4. Embedded Carbon & Supply-Chain Readiness — Start Small, Scale later State climate strategies, federal government regulations, the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and customer demand require more visibility on Scope 3 emissions. The message for business: You don't need perfection You need to start Start with: your top 10 suppliers or categories major material or equipment inputs upstream energy-intensive processes logistics and transport exposures Many organisations overcomplicate this. You can start with spend-based or proxy data simply to identify where to focus. Once you know where your carbon liability is greatest, you can plan better to reduce risk, negotiate better, select smarter, and avoid unpleasant surprises in the years ahead.

5. Data driven decisions — Because Guessing Isn't a Strategy As policies tighten, certificate prices fluctuate, grants come and go, political parties change, and electrification accelerates, data is becoming the difference between businesses that advance and businesses that miss out. 2025 reinforced this: customer demand and product mixes change “efficient” controls operate inefficiently multiple teams report different emissions and energy data (ESG vs NERS vs ASRS Australian Sustainability Reporting Standards (ASRS) - Australia's mandatory climate-related financial reporting rules started on 1 January 2025 and are being phased in across three reporting groups.) meter-level insights catch waste that's been hidden for years visibility unlocks quick wins with no capex validated data dramatically improves investment decisions Regular energy audits + metering & monitoring + proper energy data governance = competitive advantage. This is how leaders get ahead: They assign ownership They set review cycles They track performance They catch drift early They use data to shape the 2026 capital plan, not guesswork And critically — they use data to identify what to stop doing, not just what to start. 2026 Mindset Shift: The Difference Between Leaders and Laggards Leaders: Electrify what makes sense Optimise what they already own integrate bioenergy Biomass is plant or animal material used to produce electricity or heat. Examples include forestry by-products, crop waste, animal waste and food processing waste. Biomass

is considered a renewable energy fuel if it comes from a sustainably managed source. , energy efficiency and electrification into a thermal strategy Integrate certificates and grant funding strategically Reassess assumptions regularly Use data to guide every major decision Laggards: Chase grants reactively Assume their systems are “fine” Invest without modelling Treat audits as a checkbox Ignore drift in controls and operations Assume electrifying everything is the right answer The gap is widening — and 2026 will amplify it. If You Only Do Four Things Before March 2026: Audit your site — not for compliance, for clarity. Build your certificate & funding strategy — don't leave money unclaimed. Optimise what you already own — it's where the fastest payback still lives. Plan your metering & monitoring – you can't manage what you can't measure Ready to Build Your 2026 Energy & Sustainability Plan? If you'd like help turning these priorities into a practical roadmap, we're here to support you. Northmore Gordon works with organisations across Australia to build actionable strategies , deliver high-value audits , and design funding and certificate plans that maximise ROI and reduce risk. Whether you need to: map out your 2026 energy and sustainability strategy , complete a site-wide audit and uncover operational savings, or integrate VEECs, ESCs, LGCs, grants or other funding into a structured project pipeline – we can help you plan with confidence. Get in touch with our team to talk through your goals for 2026 and how we can support your next steps. Net Zero You may also like: Discover what worked in 2025 and where to focus in 2026. Key Considerations for Companies When Purchasing Carbon Offsets Key Purchasing Considerations for Renewable Energy anywhere in the world using RECs Latest Updates ASRS Group 3: are you in scope and don't know it? September 18, 2026 Correct as at 13 September 2026. If your company is a large proprietary company, you Read More » Welcome to our August & September 2026 Compliance Update. September 1, 2026 This edition confirms Northmore Gordon's accreditation for three new PDRS battery activities, tracks the VEUVictorian Read More » Australian Certificate Markets – August 2026 Update September 1, 2026 Price Summary Certificate Open Close Range Effective cap Movement / Reason PRC \$2.70 \$3.35 \$2.70 Read More » Where's the value in renewable heat? August 24, 2026 Most renewable heat conversations start with a technology question: heat pump, biomass, biogas, or electrify Read More » Get in touch Australia 1300 854 561 (Advisory) 1300 878 500 (Certificates) Melbourne Suite 1, Level 4 607 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Singapore +65 6690 2480 Singapore 1 Keong Saik Road, Singapore 089109 Stay up to date Alternatively, complete the form and we will be in touch with you. First Name Last Name Email Phone Number Country Australia Singapore Subject Message Send Services Energy Audit Services M&V; Services EEO Assessments Corporate Energy and Carbon Management Grants and Program Strategic Energy Sourcing Virtual Energy Manager Climate Active Certification Sectors Animal Processing Chemical Processing Commercial Buildings Food & Beverage Manufacturing Mining Oil & Gas Pharmaceutical & Health Products Public Sector Waste & Wastewater Wood, Paper & Cardboard Processing Upgrades Boiler Upgrades Commercial Lighting Hot Water Systems Mid Scale Solar NABERS Public Lighting Refrigerated Display Cabinets Solar PV Small Scale UPS Certificates Live Certificate Prices International Renewable Energy Certificates Tradable Instrument for Global Renewables Australian Carbon Credit Units Energy Savings Certificates Large-scale Generation Certificates Small-scale Technology Certificates Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates Government Schemes Emissions Reduction Fund Energy Savings Scheme Renewable Energy Target Victorian Energy Upgrades Helpful Links About us Meet the Team Careers Contact us Articles News Glossary Privacy Policy Complaints