

# Design to the rescue

**A FEW MONTHS AGO** the company signed up with Project Andromeda; a self-proclaimed profit-orientated company with a twist. It offers like-minded businesses a no-nonsense approach to tackling environmental problems with emphasis placed on positive solutions - both ecological and economical.

Corlette Design is in fact the first graphic design business in Australia to partner up with the project, which keeps tabs on businesses' carbon footprint.

So, what is a carbon footprint and how does a company become climate positive?

"Basically, it refers to the amount of carbon emission a person or business produces. Corlette Design is discovering it's economically advantageous for companies to cut back on emission rates," Project Andromeda founder Robert Clarke explains.

A climate positive business measures and verifies steps towards mitigating climate change through its daily operations. By understanding its own emissions and counterbalancing it - by supporting projects that remove CO2 from the atmosphere - a business offsets their footprint.

Harnessing the carbon trading expertise of the ANZ Investment Bank, the project is a commercial business model aimed at certifying businesses climate positive.

Due to guidance from Clarke, Corlette Design now has the right tools to educate clients and suppliers plus uses environmentally friendly materials and production techniques. Employees have also become super efficient when it comes to cutting back on energy

**Marking its footprint down as one of Australia's first climate positive studios, Corlette Design is certainly taking an innovative step forward. Larissa Meikle investigates.**

consumption, in the Surry Hills studio.

"Now, our designs definitely factor in environmentally responsible practices. This includes the careful consideration of paper stocks, printing techniques, formats and mediums of communication. For instance, brochures need not always be large formats. We are considering more innovative shapes and sizes, which are more economical for sheet sizes on press," Corlette Design creative director Camille Corlette said.

"My clients are also using electronic communication as a way of saving paper and also saving costs. Having said this, we certainly don't think this is a compromise on our creativity. If anything, we feel that it will lead to more exciting designs that will challenge us.

"I have actually switched suppliers because they are not climate positive. Many of them have then made inquiries to Project Andromeda so they too can

learn how to cut back on their emissions, or, gain my business back. In an industry like ours, word of mouth can go along way."

Yet, involvement with their new call-to-action partner doesn't stop there.

Corlette has designed the Project Andromeda icon and is actively networking the new project to clients, suppliers and colleagues.

"I wanted the logo to be instantly recognisable and Robert and I liked the idea of using weather symbols to portray climate. I also wanted something that had longevity and could be easily placed on products such as business cards to office chairs," she explains.

Keeping in mind Clarke's brief, the icon was not to come across as a negative climate change warning.

"We wanted to position ourselves apart from the 'anothergreenclimategroup.com'. That's why my team chose the colour blue, not green, and we spent a great deal of time, care and attention on the design, branding and strategy. Our approach is different, and we want our look and our name to reflect that," Clarke adds.

Symbolism played a major role in the planning of the icon. Even the etymology of the business name - which still intends to take a back seat to the brand - is 'to think, to be mindful of', in Latin.

The design company now considers many issues, which Corlette admits, she never questioned before clashing heads with Clarke.

"There are very effective but simple practices we have adopted now, such as embossing print on our business cards as an alternate to using ink. We now have a customised recycling system and I



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*Robert Clarke.*

### WHAT IS CARBON CREDIT?

One carbon credit equals one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> removed from the atmosphere. Carbon credits come in many forms. The very highly rated, such as UN/Kyoto-based Certified Emissions Reductions (CER), and Australian derived NSW Government Greenhouse Abatement Certificates (NGAC). Some international credits are less well regarded, in terms of the long-term value they create. Accredited projects include efficiency, renewable energy, and carbon sequestration or forestry. Carbon credits trade on the international exchanges just like any other commodity.

For more information visit  
▶ [www.projectandromeda.com](http://www.projectandromeda.com)

believe the business is going through its most innovative time yet.

“Thinking about all these changes also has an impact on the way you design: now I think about different formats I can use to cut back on paper and I feel more in-touch with the production side of designing and this helps drive down costs.”

Businesses of all sizes are beginning to understand that action on climate change brings positive benefits, not just to the environment, but also to other aspects of business.

Decisive and measured action not only brings economic benefits, but also allows professionals to avoid being accused of jumping on the bandwagon, or how Clarke puts it: ‘the greenwash’.

“Rather than waving a green flag and



going about policy in a haphazard way, business is beginning to examine the cold, hard facts,” he explains.

“Under this glow of media speculation and sensationalism, the creative business world needs to act with clarity, transparency and integrity.”

As the project expands, the vision is to have climate positive designs, rock concerts, film, television, furniture and airlines.

The design and architecture business sectors have been quick to respond and it may have something to do with the priority they place on innovative challenge.

With the help of Corlette Design’s branding campaign, Clarke plans to launch his Australian-based business in New Zealand and China.

Due to the scale of the movement, Clarke employs Baker and Mackenzie as legal advisors and the ANZ as suppliers of ‘carbon credits’ (see box-out above).

Membership ranges from \$300 to \$2500 per year, depending on the size of a business, which according to Corlette, is a small price to pay for benefits returned.

She believes the cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of membership, taking into account the economic benefits of retaining staff.

Early results for the studio are already indicating marketing benefits and enhanced internal communication.

“Team spirit is up when all staff members work towards a goal, outside direct work related concerns,” Corlette said.

“I have had a number of clients ask about the project and it has been a great talking point for me when chasing new business. Featured as part of our email signature, the icon has certainly instigated conversation.”

Corlette explains that curiosity is the first reaction, because people have heard of the term ‘carbon neutral’ but not of climate positive.

“Once we explain to them (clients) what it’s all about, the reaction is eagerness to know more.”

Being a member, Corlette Design also has access to businesses it otherwise wouldn’t have encountered.

Part of the project’s philosophy is to: provide clients with unique networking opportunities with other climate positive businesses. This may not necessarily just include clients or suppliers.

“Haworth Furniture will be our first port of call when we look into ordering new office furniture as we know they too are climate positive. Project Andromeda is in the process of signing up a variety of clients from restaurants to banks and this will certainly open doors in terms of networking and business,” Corlette said.

“We confidently think this will be the new way forward. Companies want to be associated with like-minded businesses: people who share the same philosophies and positive aspirations.

“From a marketing angle, it is fantastic for us. Our client base stretches across Asia-Pacific, India, United Arab Emirates and the United States so this allows us to promote the message far-and-wide, and to communicate that we in Australia are making a difference.”

By 2030, Corlette Design would have saved about 4000 tonnes of carbon emission - not a bad feat for a boutique studio. ©

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▶ [www.corlettedesign.com.au](http://www.corlettedesign.com.au)  
Photo: R. Sweeney, Sugar Love Pictures

### WHO IS CORLETTE DESIGN?

Established in 1979, the design agency is based in Surry Hills and specialises in corporate identity development, marketing, collateral, online solutions, signage, annual reports and packaging.

Clients range from Hilton, The Law Society of New South Wales, Shangri La, Sheraton, Australian Institute of Management, Westin and W Hotels, Raffles and Marriott.

Corlette is currently working on projects in Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, China, India, Dubai, Papua New Guinea and Thailand.

