

Voxed Environmental Impact Report

During the recent creation and production of a new climate fiction dance theatre work by Voxed, the company has been taking steps to better understand the environmental impacts of the working processes. This has involved collating data to submit via Julie's Bicycle's creative green tools to estimate the carbon footprint of this recent production of 'It's Not Me...'. Some additional steps were taken to understand more broadly the ecological impacts of the project, but recognise there is much more to do in collating this more holistic and qualitative information. Part of this project also involved facilitating educational workshops on the climate crisis causes and impacts, as well as the role of artists in climate action, for freelance artists in the Newcastle area, and working with students at Dance City exploring the themes of the work.

This report will summarise some of the findings and learnings over this project, as well as outline suggestions for future actions to implement in order to embed more climate action within company processes.

Carbon Footprint Outcome from Julie's Bicycle's Creative Green Tools Data Input

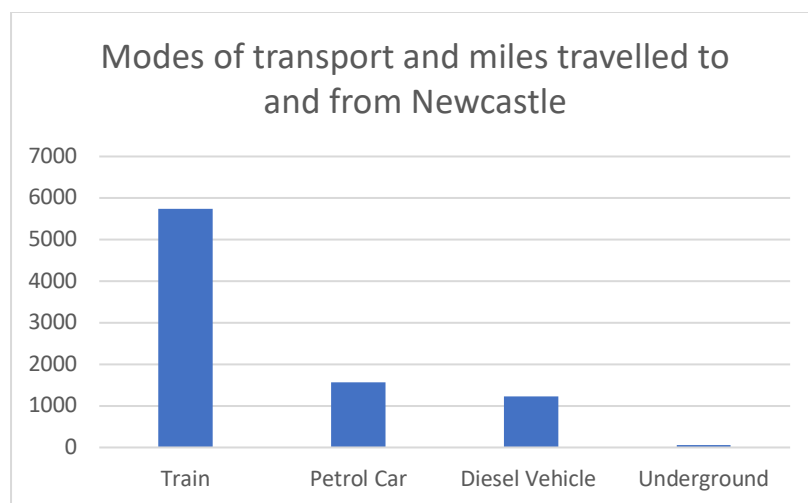
Total Carbon Footprint = 2.56 tonnes CO2e

Breakdown:

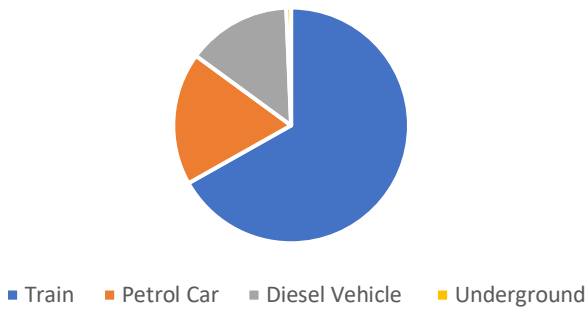
Production = 0.73 tonnes

Transport and accommodation considerations = 1.83 tonnes

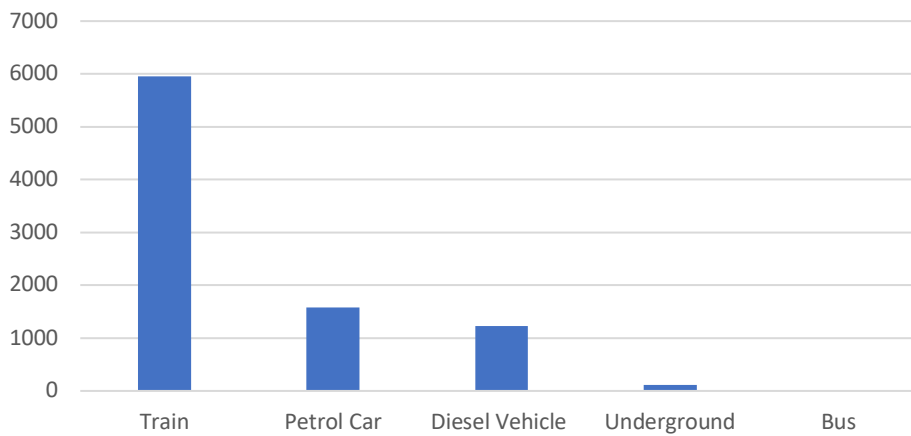
Travel – Below, you will find graphs which break down the number of miles travelled via different modes of transport over the project.



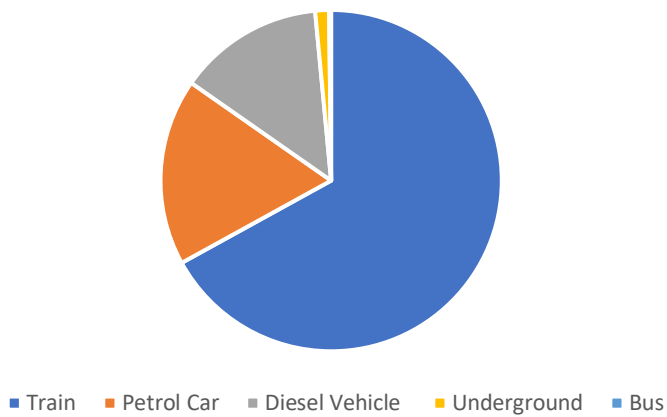
Breakdown of travel modes to and from Newcastle, based on miles travelled



Breakdown of travel modes over the entire project, based on miles travelled



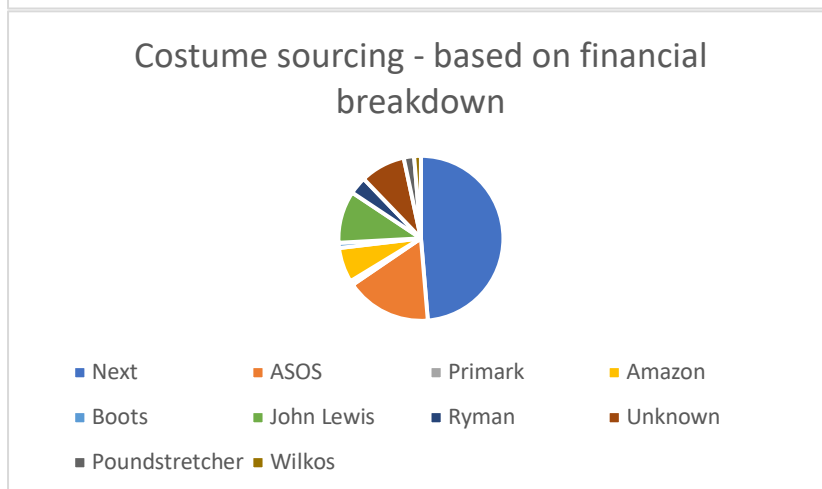
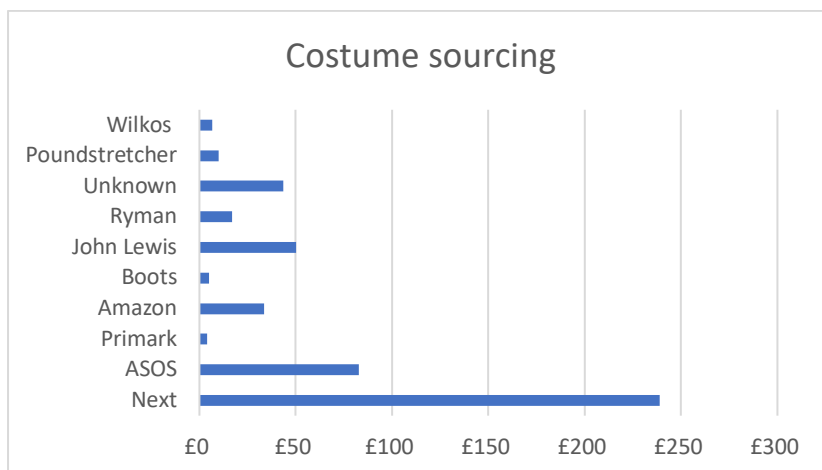
Breakdown of travel modes over the entire project, based on miles travelled



Costume Procurement



Based on information received about purchases for costumes, for this production, 0% of the costume were from second hand sources



This graph and chart show the percentage of finances spent at each supplier for costumes.

Positive actions implemented over the project

- 68% of miles travelled were using public transport
- 100% of props and costumes will be reused
- Climate themed work reaching the Dance City audience.
- Outreach and education – workshops on climate action for artists
- By collating data and inputting this into Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools, the company now have a baseline to reflect upon that can improve future actions and monitor progress
- Accommodation in Newcastle near within walking distance of venue
- All timber for the set was reused, and steel recycled. 0% of the set went to landfill.

Advice for Future Processes

- **Write environmental responsibilities into the contracts of all staff/roles within the team.** This helps to embed a collective approach to how climate action and sustainable practices take shape within the company.
- **Develop an environmental policy and action plan, and make this publicly accessible.** This will support in motivating continued improvements, will hold the company accountable, open up a dialogue with audiences and other artists to inspire more climate awareness and action, as well as opening up space for learning from each other, evolving the policy to better embed meaningful changes.
- **Develop a green rider** – for areas less within the direct control of the company (e.g. the ecological impact of venues you tour to/rehearse in), this can catalyse positive change to emerge in other organisations. A green rider can allow you to communicate the ways you would like the organisations you work with to support the values of the company. You can include specific requests that will encourage more sustainable approaches whilst you are in the building, and open up a dialogue on further changes you'd hope the venue would pursue in the future to better align their working practices with the values and aims of the company with regards to ecological impact.
- **Make the information on your ecological impact publicly available** – this is really important for normalising transparency, supporting collective accountability and a source of learning for more companies to develop knowledge and pathways for sharing and improving upon climate impact and action.
- **Considerations around lighting choices** - Energy usage for Tungsten Lights – 89.2 kW compared to only 1.3kW for LED's. Are there possibilities to explore more energy efficient lighting alternatives that don't impact negatively on the performance?
- **Education sessions opened up for all the creative team** rather than just through Dance City. It was a great aspect of the project to interweave education sessions, however in the future, if similar activities take place, it would be really positive to bring all of the Voxed creative team into those learning spaces as well.
- **Shift the company bank account** – divesting from fossil fuels is a deeply important action to take, to ensure that the company finances aren't supporting practices that are ethically and environmentally detrimental. Switching bank account to one that does not invest in fossil fuels or other harmful practices is an avenue I recommend exploring.

Touring

- **Factor in the budget for an EV rather than diesel van hire** –14% of miles travel were in diesel vans, so further reducing this will have a positive impact on reducing carbon footprint of travel.
- **Pre-planned use of vehicles to reduce unnecessary mileage** e.g. with van trips to B&Q, Screwfix, could they have been done in one journey?
- **Theatre digs over hotels where possible.** If booking hotels, try to prioritise hotels that may have eco labels such as a good BREEAM rating for the building, a green tourism grading, a Global Sustainable Tourism Council accreditation, or look for the green footprint logo. If renting an apartment/shared house, try to avoid Air BnB where and explore other more environmentally conscious options such as FairBnB or Homestay when possible. Theatre digs website is also an option to explore as opposed to AirBnB.
- **Encourage the team/offer an incentive to use lower carbon transport** – 67% of travel was already by public transport means, which has a positive impact on emissions reduction from travel, but ways to increase the use of lower carbon modes of transport where possible would further improve upon the travel emissions from the project.
- **Speak to venues about a % of ticket price, or optional donation going to an environmental/social justice org** to further extend the positive impact the work can have in communities of the locations you tour to.
- **Prioritise where possible booking venues based on sustainability and accessibility** – having a green rider will support in this process of opening up these explorations.

Procurement

- **Avoid costume procurement from fast fashion brands where possible.** For this production, 0% of costumes were sourced 2nd hand, and 100% came from fast fashion brands (breakdown outlined in graphs above). According to the World Economic Forum, the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of annual global carbon emissions, Buying just one white cotton shirt produces the same amount of emissions as driving 35 miles in a car (WRAP). The fashion industry is the second largest consumer industry of water, requiring about 700 gallons to produce one cotton shirt and 2 000 gallons of water to produce a pair of jeans. The fashion industry is also the second biggest polluter after the fossil fuel industry. As well as environmental impacts, the fast fashion industry is often linked with social injustice through unethical working conditions – abuse, unsafe working conditions, and payment far below a living wage. This has been made evident in documentaries such as 'The True Cost' and "River Blue'. In 2018, factories that supply H&M were named in reports by Global Labour Justice detailing abuse of female garment workers. H&M also have given no evidence it ensures payment of a living wage across its entire supply chain.

- **Source locally and ideally second hand where possible.** Also consider the material type According to the EAC report, 20-35% of all primary source microplastics in the marine environment are from synthetic clothing. A single 6kg domestic wash has the potential to release as many as 700,000 fibres. Avoid purchasing clothes made from synthetic fibres where possible.
- Hire more instead of buying, for any items that are unlikely to be reused. Avoid ordering off Amazon where possible.
- **Materials audit** – including documenting the source of all items purchased – in the data received from other members of the team, there was some information missing when looking at the source of the item and the type of material.
- **Avoid unnecessary packaging, and monitor packaging and waste from procurement.** What packaging waste or single use materials could have been documented? E.g. batteries, packaging for items ordered etc.

Broader ecological impact considerations and monitoring

- Especially giving the intention to tour the work 'It's Not Me..' it would be immensely beneficial to consider how to identify and extend the qualitative impacts of the work. Consider forming partnerships with grassroots organisations and campaigns, and explore what exchanges and meaningful actions could emerge from such collaborations.
- **Food** – exploring the possibility of how the creative team could be supported in making more sustainable choices whilst working with the company. This could take a variety of forms, from a meat free day a week the team commits to, through organising a collective plant-based dinner together, or sharing information with creative team about independent shops in the area for local, seasonal produce, plant-based cafes/restaurants etc.
- **Digital footprint** – The internet currently produces approximately 3.8% of global carbon emissions and this is expected to double by 2025. Consider collating information on the digital footprint of the company throughout your work. E.g. website, emails, Zoom meetings etc. Explore options of switching to a green web hoster. Some possible options include [34sp](https://34sp.com) or looking to <https://sustainablewebdesign.org/> for website development and hosting advice.
- **Audience travel** – documenting audience travel to performances and explore with venues ways to support audiences to take low carbon transport modes to and from performances.
- **Create the opportunity for considering ecological impacts within each team meeting**
- **Checking in and questioning** – dedicating time regularly to plan and reflect on the positive changes implemented, learnings from challenges, and improvements to move towards. Allow space for the larger questions of how the culture of the company can embody approaches that foster regeneration and holistic climate action across projects and the day to day.

Next steps

Evolving creative practices to be more ecologically conscious, sustainable and (where possible) regenerative, is an ongoing process which many aspects can take time and attention to implement. By understanding more about the ecological impacts of this project, areas for improvement can be identified and acted upon in order to better align the company's actions and values. It is with great hope that this evaluation can prove useful in supporting these next phases of change. Following this evaluation, creating an action plan to identify the shorter-term and easier to apply goals, as well as the longer term more challenging actions to work towards will be a positive next step for the company to build on the climate action momentum already in process.

24/01/2022
Written by Marla King
Environment Officer
Voxed