



# Sustainability Bulletin

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## #1 in climate action globally

Welcome to your new-look Sustainability Bulletin, and indeed, a lot has been happening in recent months!

The University of Tasmania has been named number one in the world - for the second year in a row - in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings for Sustainable Development Goal number 13: Climate Action. The University also came third in the world for Life below Water (SDG 14) and fourth for Life on Land (SDG 15).

Across all 17 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), University of Tasmania has charted a rise from 76th overall in 2021, to 25th in 2022 and now rank number five out of more than 1,500 higher education institutions worldwide.

This result represents not only a significant commitment by staff, students and the broader Tasmanian community, but clear and steady improvement for the University across a range of vital social and environmental indicators.

So, what does it really mean?

Each year, Times Higher Education assess the impact that higher education is having around the world according to each of the UN's agreed goals, aiming to dramatically improve socioeconomic and ecological resilience worldwide by 2030. Performance is judged on a combination of over 200 pieces of qualitative and quantitative evidence supplied by universities and published, peer-reviewed research.

Some of the actions that propelled University of Tasmania to top spot on Climate Action include our certified carbon neutral status, focus on sustainability education, achieving full divestment from fossil fuels and world class research on climate action.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Rufus Black, said, "Universities around the world are, and will be, key to driving everything we need to do to shift our trajectory to one that leads to a more sustainable, more just, and more equal world, from the smallest of steps to the bold and fundamental shifts we need to make as a global society.

"At a practical level, as large organisations, we are large consumers, employers and drivers in our local economies, and that means the steps we take towards sustainability at an operational level can have significant impacts."

We didn't stop there, though! Recently, the University also signed the [Climate Action Network for International Educators \(CANIE\) Accord](#), making 59 commitments to undertake accelerated climate action. Some of these include: increasing the climate literacy of our globally mobile students; inserting climate action criteria into procurement contracts and; avoiding reliance on carbon credits over genuine decarbonisation measures.

Also, University of Tasmania has become a founding member of the [Climate Action Barometer for International Education \(CABIE\)](#), a global benchmarking study tracking and comparing climate action across international education. Participation in the CABIE has been designed to help international areas in universities contribute meaningfully to the institution's overall sustainability strategy.

In other news, University of Tasmania and our partners have just scooped TWO 2023 Green Gown Awards!

- The [Curious Climate Tasmania](#) program, including Curious Climate Schools, was named winner in Australasia and was highly commended in the international field. This public-powered scientific engagement program bridges the gap between experts and audiences with credible, relevant information about climate change.
- University of Tasmania's new [Diploma and Undergraduate Certificate in Sustainable Living](#) were also named winner in Australasia and highly commended internationally. These courses are truly interdisciplinary and offer a broad understanding of the concepts, implications and relevance of sustainability, founded on rigorous academic knowledge.

While we're on awards, University of Tasmania was recently placed on the [Australian Financial Review's Sustainability Leaders list](#) for our Green Bonds, focusing on reduction of embodied carbon. The proceeds from the Green Bonds will be utilised by achieving a minimum 20% reduction in upfront carbon emissions through the adaptive reuse of existing University buildings (i.e., avoiding demolition and construction) where appropriate, and the use of low embodied carbon construction practices in major refurbishments and new construction as part of our campus transformation. Find out more in this [interview with Corey Peterson](#), our Chief Sustainability Officer.

The [River's Edge](#) building at Inveresk, being officially opened later this week, represents a wonderful example of these principles. Give it a looksee!

### Bringing the Global Goals to life

On the 15th of June, around 20 adventurous University of Tasmania staff members and students came together in Hobart to play a game. Not just any old game - the 2030 SDGs Game!

One of the many ways the University is integrating the Goals is through this engaging, fast-paced and interactive simulation game that helps actually localise the SDGs and take the 'real world' into the year 2030.

Designed in Japan in 2016, the 2030 SDGs Game has become a powerful and impactful social phenomenon, reaching no fewer than 300,000 participants in corporate, government, educational, and community settings around the globe! While there are more than 1,200 trained facilitators in Japan and another 100 across the rest of the world, there are only 9 here in Australia to date. So, we are very happy to announce that our own Cathy Walker, Sustainability Projects Officer (Cradle Coast), is one of them! Freshly certified, Cathy is the only facilitator in Tasmania and she can't wait to bring the game to people all over the state. Got in touch to find out more.



Staff and students in Hobart had a great time finding ways to achieve the goals by the year 2030. There was some fierce competition in the room but also a lot of teamwork, collaboration and laughter. Participants came away with a deeper understanding of the goals that our nation - and this university - has committed to achieving and also with renewed motivation to make a positive difference in the real world.



## Inaugural Gumboot Gala makes a splash

We recently helped kick-start an exciting new community event in Launceston. With the Inveresk campus located in the suburb of Invermay - affectionately known as 'the swamp' - Community Garden Coordinator Jeff McClintock came up with the idea of an event centred around the humble gumboot (handy footwear in a swamp). In partnership with Interweave Arts, Launceston Tramway Museum and City of Launceston's ABCDE community development program, the inaugural Gumboot Gala took place on 3 June 2023.

Under a clear blue sky, Gumboot Gala was a joyful celebration of art, action and music. The Inveresk Community Garden was the venue for several impressive art installations, including yam-bombed water tanks, sculptures and decorated gumboots. Gumboot throwing championships added a touch of drama, and live music by Invermay band Cotton Pony had the crowd jiving the afternoon away. Free tram rides added further interest, as did the 'echidna arch' entry feature, made by University of Tasmania Architecture and Design students.

Sustainability was incorporated into Gumboot Gala in many ways. Old gumboots were repurposed as artworks, a three-bin system (compostables, recyclables and landfill) was used, and a well-attended hot composting workshop was conducted by Jeff. Attendees wandered through the Inveresk Community Garden and the event as a whole contributed to the social and economic wellbeing of Launceston.



For a first-time event, Gumboot Gala was very well attended and appreciated, with the Examiner Newspaper labelling it a 'smash hit'. Interweave Arts are keen to add it to their events calendar, so there is a good chance that it will happen again next year. Plenty of time to practice your gumboot throwing!

(Photos: Shane Westley)



## Growing sustainability in the city

The University's edible campus project for Hobart is really sprouting leaves. The City SLUGS (Student Living University Gardening Society) have been working away on three different gardens whilst learning practical skills, making friends and practicing their sustainability values!

### Hobart Apartments - Plaza garden

- This is the 'open to the public' garden consisting of 14 wicking beds, 5 worm farms and 2 recently retrofitted raised garden beds. We've been enriching the soil, tending to our flock of worms and growing a diverse range of food plants. The plan moving forward is to:
- Continue retrofitting the rest of the raised garden beds.
  - Plant pollinator-attracting flowers in the centre of the plaza.
  - Acquire additional raised wicking beds.
  - Bring climbing vines in to soften the metal grating and
  - Construct a green arbour over the central square to create a secluded nook for that 'secret garden' feeling.

### 42 Melville Street - Upper Ground (UG) garden

This garden is easily accessible to students living in the Melville St apartments, but is also available to students at the Hobart Apartments if they want to get involved. It was recently overgrown with non-native ornamental plants such as climbing jasmine and pittosporum. We've replaced these with an edible food garden (but left some of the beautiful native dicksonia antarctica - soft tree fern) and we look forward to installing worm farms and regularly harvesting an abundance of food from this garden!



**42 Melville St - Level 3 Skyounge garden**  
This garden is also accessible to 42 Melville and Hobart Apartments students (but also has an amazing view). Similarly to UG, it was converted to food production, with an emphasis on herbs and leafy greens. Again, we'll be installing some worm farms up here for on-site recycling of food scraps into 'black gold' (worm castings) and worm tea (wonderful but don't drink it!) for the enrichment of the soil in the beds.

For current students living in the city apartments (HA or 42 Melville) join through QPay. For any questions please contact our Student Gardens Project Officer (South), Alex Mearthur.



**New to the team**  
Laurel Cuff recently joined the Sustainability team here at University of Tasmania as Sustainability Projects Officer (South). She brings many years of social work practice, community development, policy and teaching experience to the role and has a passion for reconnecting the social and natural worlds. She calls herself an Eco Social Worker. Don't know what that is? Get in touch! [laurel.cuff@utas.edu.au](mailto:laurel.cuff@utas.edu.au)



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*First Nations peoples around the globe provide the greatest inspiration for sustainable living based on deep connection with, and respect for, our natural world. We acknowledge the traditional owners of lutruwita and pay our respects to elders past and present.*

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