

# Student Sustainability Survey Results

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## 1 Results

The Sustainability Survey had 1,752 responses from University of Tasmania students. With over 33,000 students enrolled at the University, the response rate to the survey was about 5%. The survey was conducted to establish a baseline data set in order to gauge the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives over time. It is anticipated that surveys will be conducted biennially to provide a longitudinal data set.

The following sections present the demographics of respondents and then an overview of survey findings. Note that a more in-depth analysis is underway for presentation in a separate report.

### 1.1 Demographics

The age range of respondents (Figure 1) demonstrates a good cross section of the student cohort and is in line with the age range of enrolled students. Over 40% of responses were aged 18-24. Females represented 67% of the respondents and males 31%. There were 24 respondents (1.3%) who either preferred not to specify their gender, or identified as 'other'.

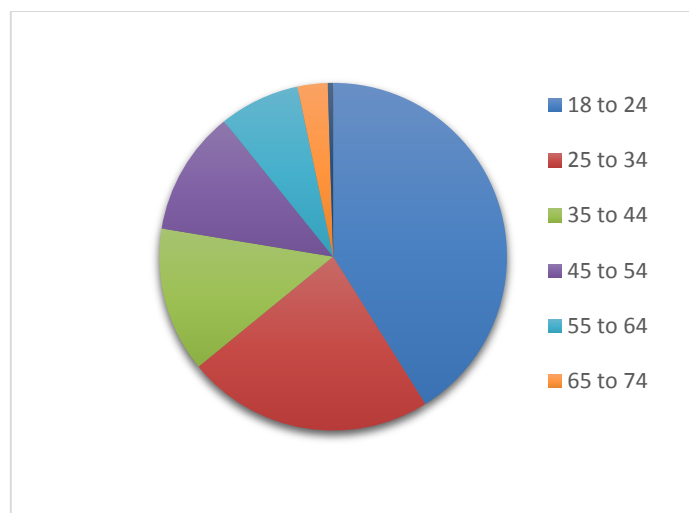
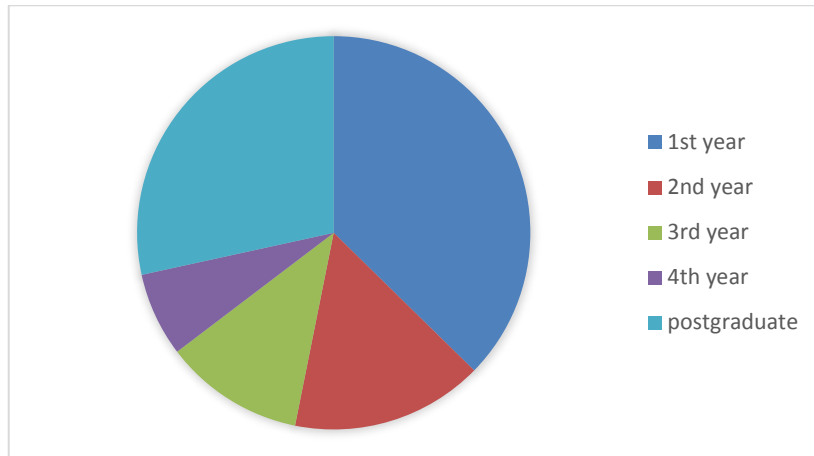


Figure 1 Age of respondents

On-campus students represented 67.2% of responses, while 32.8% were from students studying primarily via distance. Figure 2 shows the percentage breakdown by current year of study, with respondents primarily first year (37.3%) followed by postgraduate (28.4%) students.



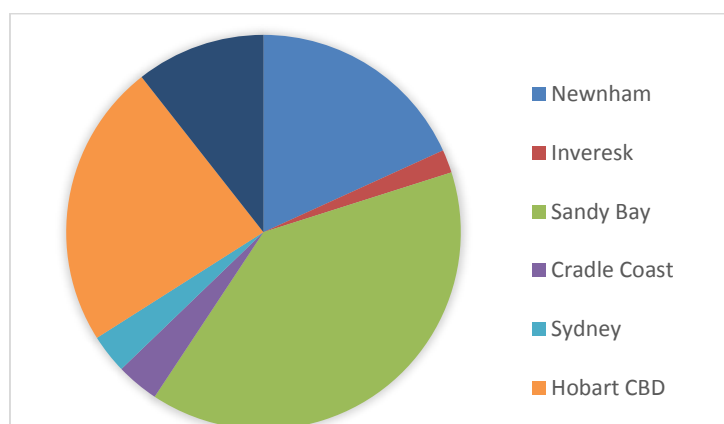
**Figure 2 Year level of respondents**

There was diversity in representation across Faculties and Institutes. The faculties most represented were Health (33.1%), Arts (18.6%) and Science, Engineering and Technology (17.9%). Table 1 details the percentage of responses from each of the Faculties and Institutes.

**Table 1 Percentage of responses from each of the Faculties/Institutes/Divisions**

Faculty/Institute	Response (%)
<b>Health</b>	33.1%
<b>Arts</b>	18.6%
<b>Science, Engineering and Technology</b>	17.9%
<b>Education</b>	9.6%
<b>Tasmanian School of Business and Economics</b>	8.2%
<b>Australian Maritime College</b>	3.8%
<b>Law</b>	3.7%
<b>Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies</b>	3.2%
<b>Menzies Institute for Medical Research</b>	1.8%

Representation across locations is shown in Figure 3. Over 35% of responses were from Sandy Bay students. Hobart CBD represented 23% of responses, with Newnham representing 18%. The greatest representation of the total sample population, however, was from the Cradle Coast Campus with over 10% of all students enrolled on the Cradle Coast completing the survey.



**Figure 3 Respondent's primary place of study**

The following section provides an overview of the common attributes of survey respondents. The information provided above and the information in the next section are intended to enable the reader to contextualize the survey results while acknowledging that the picture painted will only ever be partial and an interpretation.

## 1.2 Characterising the UTAS student

This section provides some descriptive information on how sustainability is understood and embodied in the lives of the survey respondents. [NB *Literature on self-awareness and the gap between theory and practice will be reviewed in future reports*]

### 1.2.1 Sustainability Knowledge

Figure 4 illustrates respondents' perceptions of how well-informed they are about sustainability issues in general and specific to the University. Self-assessed understandings about issues relevant to the University were strongly correlated (0.878) to respondents' understanding about sustainability in general. On average, however, respondents slightly disagreed (3.82) with the question *I clearly understand sustainability issues relevant to our institution*, while the average response to general understanding of sustainability was slight agreement (4.24).

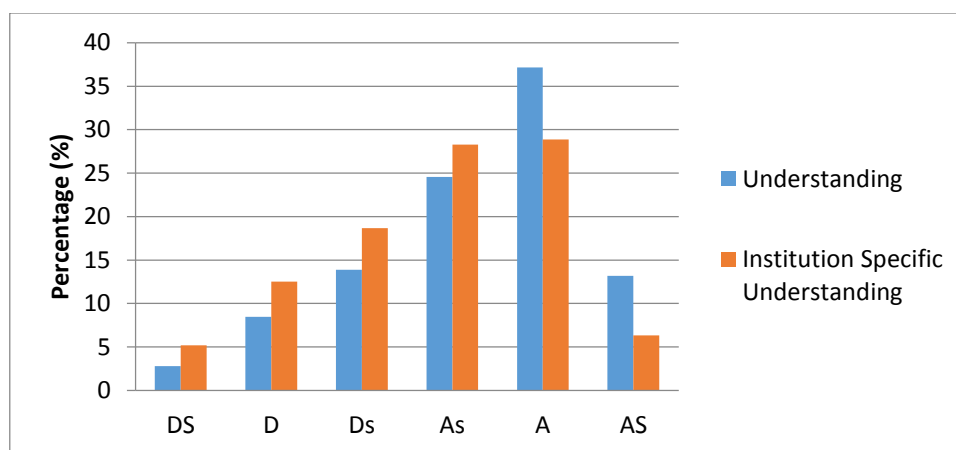


Figure 4 Percentage rating of respondents self-assessed understanding of general and institution specific sustainability issues (where DS – disagree strongly, D – disagree, Ds – disagree slightly, As – agree slightly, A – agree, AS – agree strongly)

### 1.2.2 Engaging in Sustainability

Figure 5 shows the responses to questions: *I look for opportunities to get involved with sustainability initiatives* and *I actively encourage other people to adopt sustainable behaviours*. The responses show a greater willingness to encourage others to adopt sustainability behaviours than to seek out opportunities to participate in sustainability initiatives personally. While the majority of responses both aligned with *occasionally*, 31% of respondents selected either *never* or *rarely* for getting involved with sustainability initiatives compared with 18% or respondents who *never* or *rarely* encouraged others to adopt sustainable behaviours.

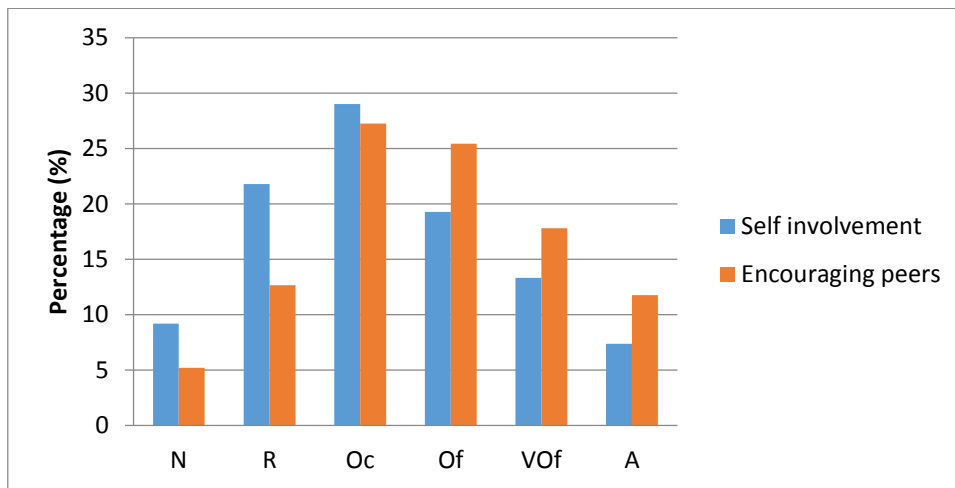


Figure 5 Percentage of respondents who actively seek opportunities to be involved in sustainability initiatives and who encourage others to adopt sustainable behaviours (where N – never, R – rarely, Oc – occasionally, Of – often, VOf – very often, A – always)

### 1.2.3 Sustainable Behaviours

Figure 6 compares waste sorting behaviour while studying and NOT studying. The results show that location is a minimal variable to overall waste sorting behaviour. Sorting of waste from recyclable to non-recyclable was the only behaviour that over 40% of respondents selected *always*.

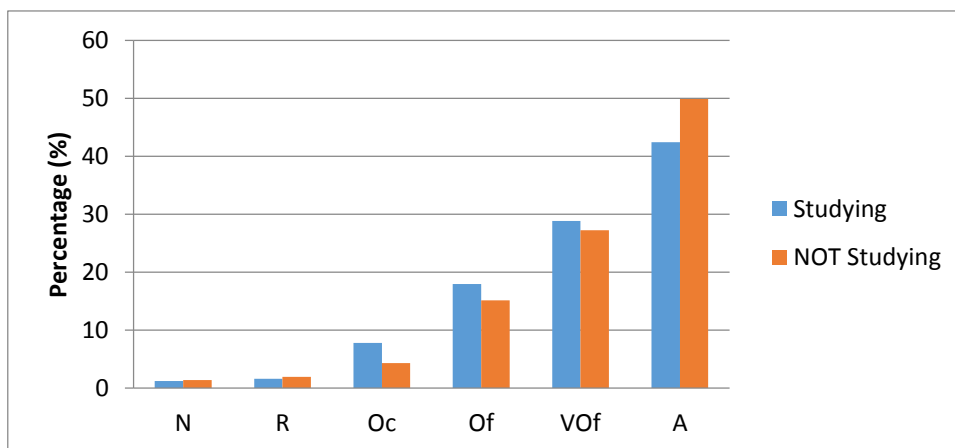


Figure 6 Comparison between sorting of waste while NOT studying and while studying (where N – never, R – rarely, Oc – occasionally, Of – often, VOf – very often, A – always)

The percentage of respondents seeking low carbon footprint transport options is shown in Figure 7. The majority of respondents used low carbon footprint transport *occasionally* (24%) and *often* (21%). Responses were similar when considering environmentally friendly food purchases, also shown in Figure 7. The majority of respondents selected *often* (24%), *occasionally* (23%) and *very often* (22%).

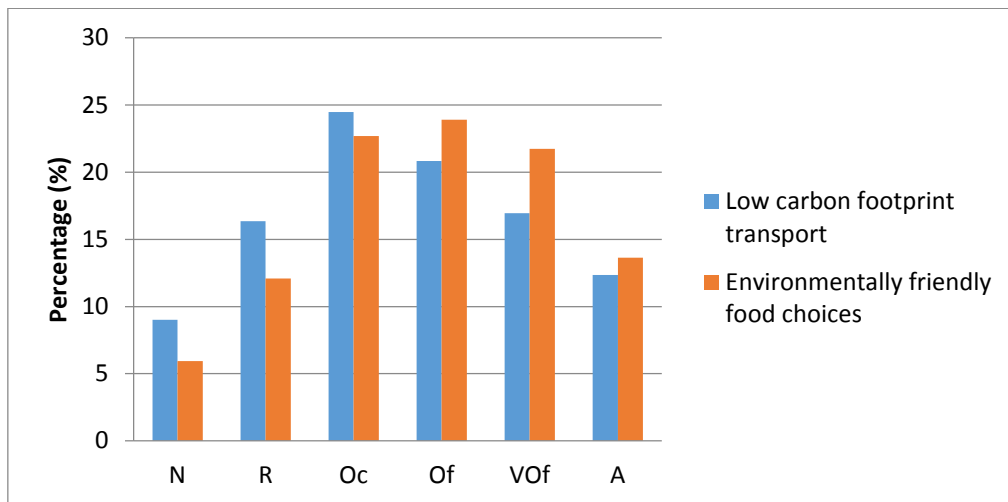


Figure 7 Percentage of respondents seeking low carbon footprint transport (where N – never, R – rarely, Oc – occasionally, Of – often, VOf – very often, A – always)

Figure 8 presents the percentage of respondents that can be regarded as either aligned with the New Environment Paradigm or with the Dominant Social Paradigm. Those aligning to the new environment paradigm are considered to have pro-ecological ideologies. Respondents who answered in the *neither agree nor disagree* category were included in the response representing the dominant social paradigm.

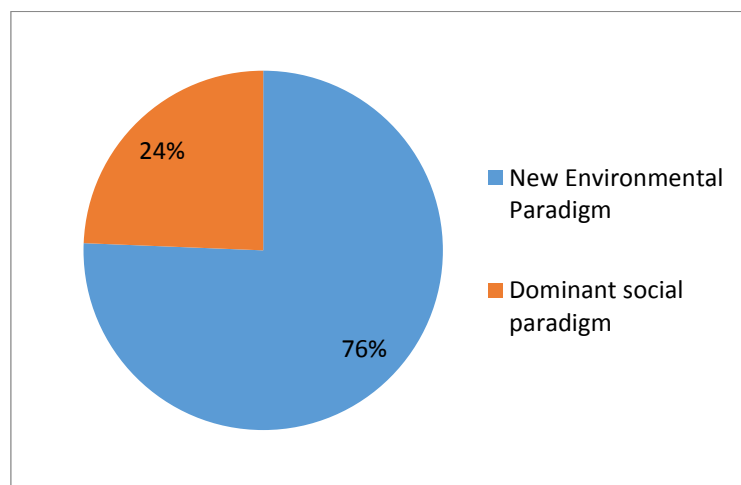


Figure 8 Consolidated response percentages from New Environment Paradigm survey questions

An interpretation of the data regarding characteristics of respondents is that the majority of respondents have some understanding of sustainability, however deep engagement is minimal. For the most part, respondents selected answers that were mid-range and only two questions received greater than 35% of positive responses – general sustainability understanding and recycling.

### 1.3 Sustainability and the Institution

This section presents the survey results that relate directly to the perceptions respondents have of sustainability at the University of Tasmania.

#### 1.3.1 Institutional Leadership

Figure 9 depicts the respondents' perceptions of University of Tasmania senior management support for sustainability and as role models. Over 50% of respondents answered either *don't know* or *neither agree nor disagree* (shown in graph as nAnD) to both questions related to the topic. An almost equal amount of respondents answered agree (23%) and disagree (21%) when considering leaders as role models of sustainability, while 14% more respondents agreed that leaders were supportive of sustainability initiatives than disagreed.

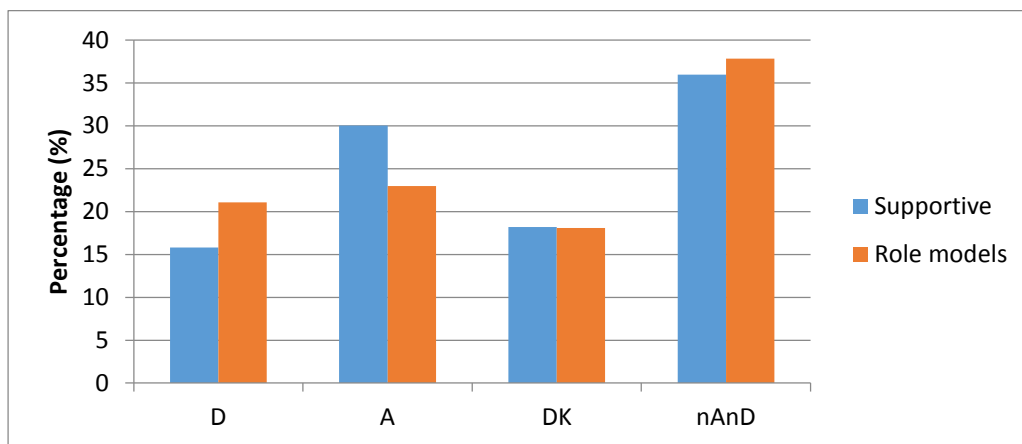


Figure 9 Graph showing the perceived support for sustainability initiative by leadership (blue) and leadership as role models for sustainability (orange) (where D – disagree, A – agree, DK – don't know, nAnD – neither agree nor disagree)

Figure 10 considers views on the University of Tasmania having a defined commitment to sustainability and also how clearly this has been communicated. The figure shows that while over 40% of respondents agree that the University has a defined commitment to sustainability, only 24% considered the commitment to be well communicated.

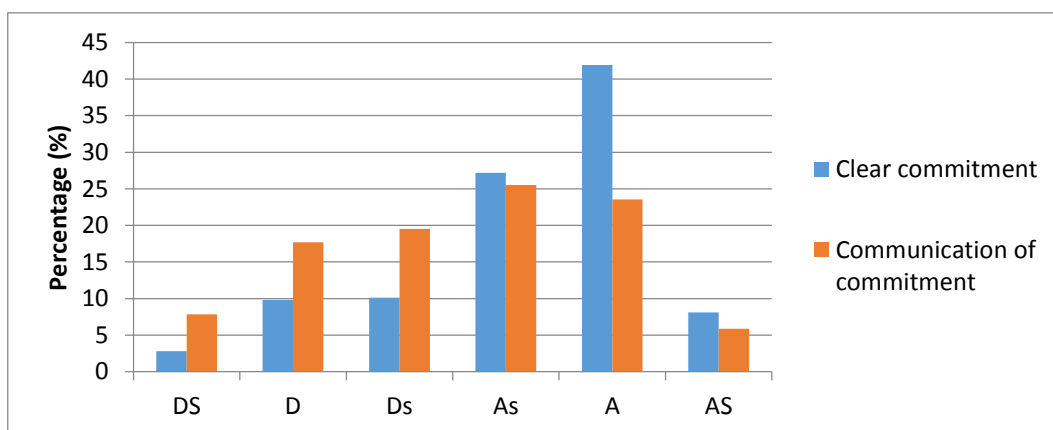


Figure 10 Graph showing how well defined (blue) and how clearly communicated (orange) the Institutional commitment to sustainability is regarded to be by respondents (where DS – disagree strongly, D – disagree, Ds – disagree slightly, As – agree slightly, A – agree, AS – agree strongly)

### 1.3.2 Carbon neutrality

Figure 11 shows a percentage breakdown for the support of the University transitioning to carbon neutrality. The question defined carbon neutrality in the question as: “no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere”. As shown by the graph, over 80% of respondents agreed that it was important for the University to be carbon neutral.

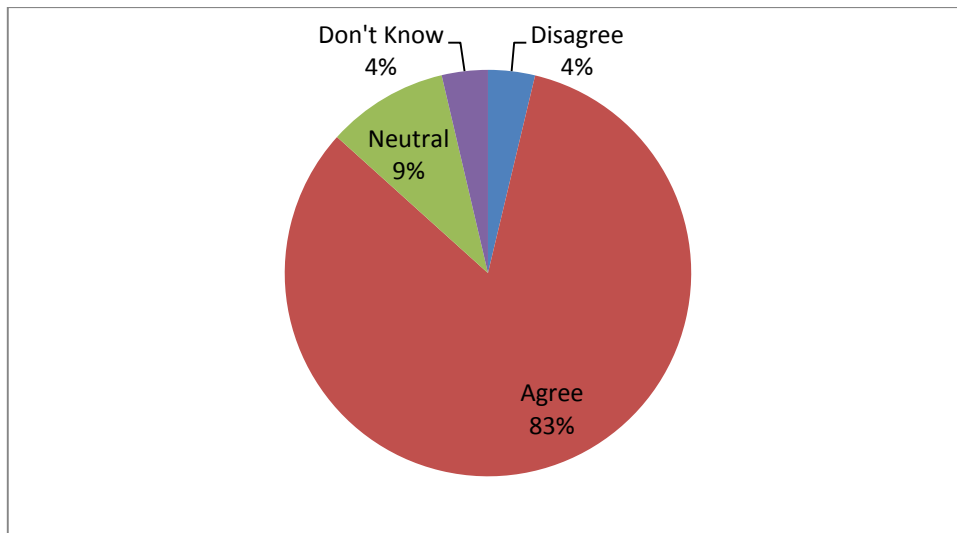


Figure 11 Percentage of respondents that think it is important for the University to be carbon neutral

### 1.3.3 Facilities and Operations

The infrastructure and processes at the University were considered to be amenable to performing sustainability behaviours shown by the blue columns in Figure 12. At the same time, there was agreement from respondents that the University could be implementing more sustainability initiatives in infrastructure and processes (shown in orange). Further to this, incorporating the natural environment into buildings was considered important to 81% of respondents (Figure 13).

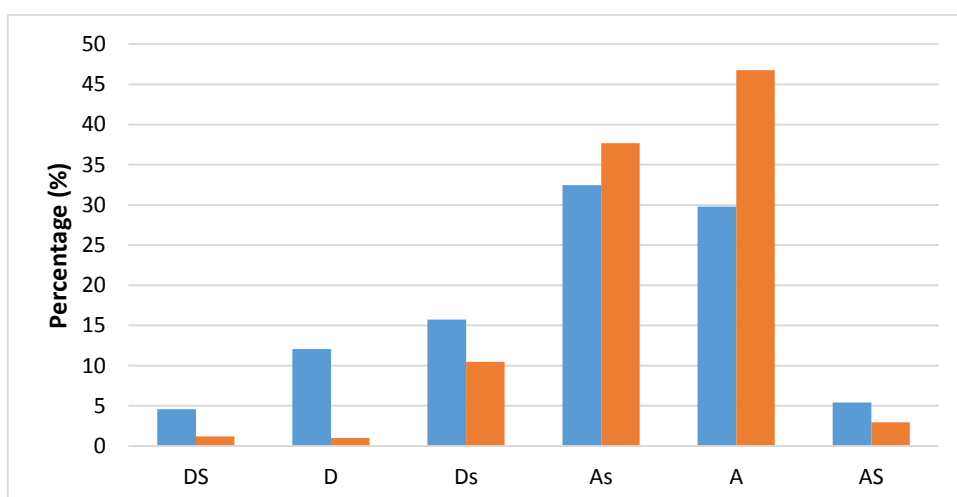


Figure 12 Graph showing the level of agreement towards the University facilities as being well-equipped to support sustainability behavior (blue) and as facilities needing improvement to do so (orange) (where DS – disagree strongly, D – disagree, Ds – disagree slightly, As – agree slightly, A – agree, AS – agree strongly)

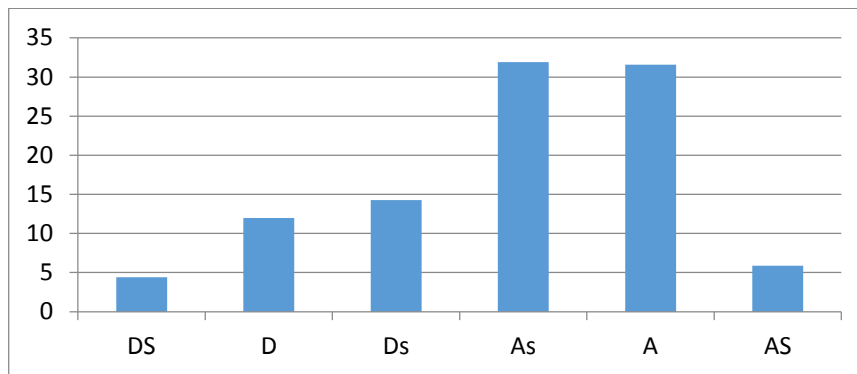


Figure 13 Perceived innovation in efforts to make University operations more sustainable (where DS – disagree strongly, D – disagree, Ds – disagree slightly, As – agree slightly, A – agree, AS – agree strongly)

### 1.3.4 Commitments in curriculum

The following graph (Figure 14) illustrates the ambiguity of respondent’s perception of sustainability coverage in their selected course. The majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting that sustainability is not a prominent topic covered in the courses studied by respondents.

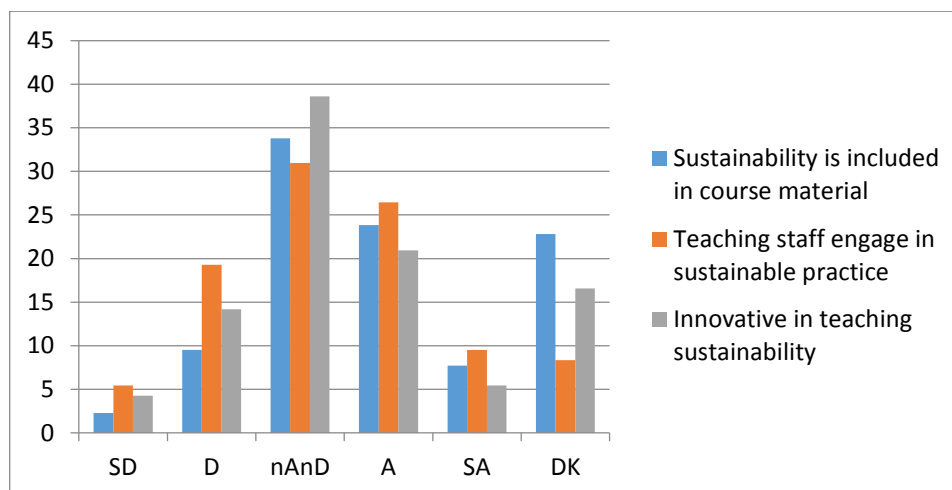


Figure 14 Responses to questions related to the inclusion of sustainability in respondent’s courses (where SD – strongly disagree, D – disagree, A – agree, SA – strongly agree, nAnD – neither agree nor disagree, DK – don’t know)

The above results are interesting to consider in light of the data in Figure 15 that shows how respondents answered the question *I think sustainability is an important topic to study at the University.*



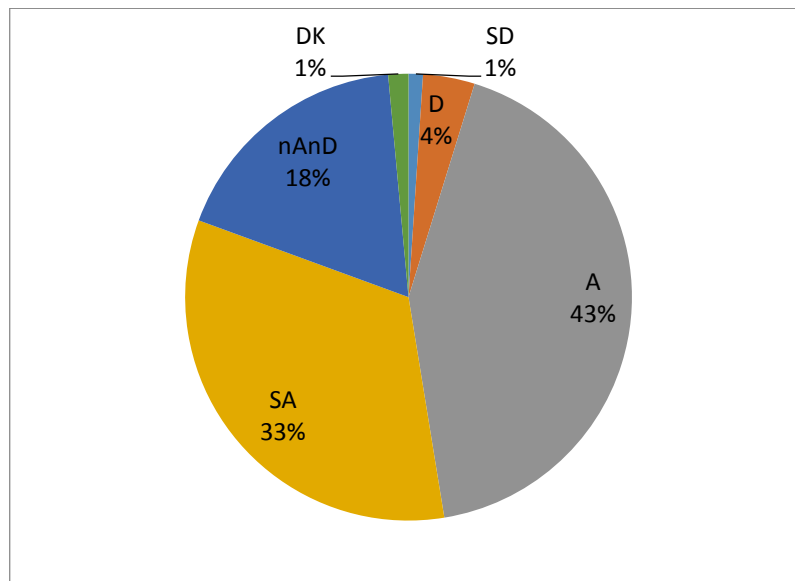


Figure 15 How respondents viewed sustainability as an important topic to study at University

Figure 16 shows the perceived relevance of sustainability to respondent’s learning area and also across the curriculum. While this relevance is acknowledged by respondents, there is less agreement from respondents regarding the impact of sustainability issues on personal job prospects. [NB This can be related to the futurity literature in that people tend not to perceive issues of significance as directly affecting them.]

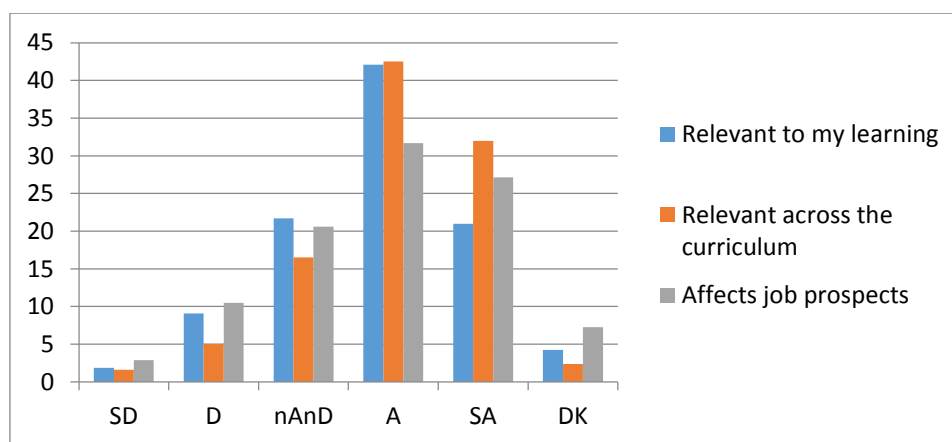


Figure 16 Perceived relevance of sustainability across curricula areas and also impact on job prospects (where SD – strongly disagree, D – disagree, A – agree, SA – strongly agree, nAnD – neither agree nor disagree, DK – don’t know)

### 1.3.5 Experiencing sustainability

Figure 17 presents data gathered from respondents on how abundant they consider the opportunities for involvement in sustainability initiatives at the University as a student, whether they believe students can make a difference to sustainability and also if they would like to get more involved. The results indicate that over 70% of respondents agree that students can make a difference. Over 50% expressed an interest in being involved, however less than 30% agreed that there were many opportunities to do so.

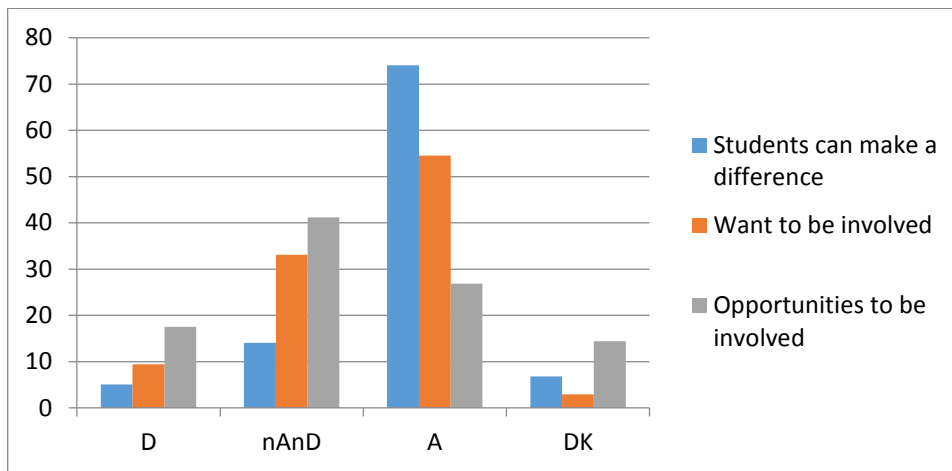


Figure 17 Graph showing responses to the questions: 'students can make a difference to sustainability issues at the University' (blue), 'I would like to get more involved in sustainability initiatives' (orange) and 'there are many opportunities for me to get involved in sustainability initiatives as a student' (grey) (where D – disagree, A – agree, nAnD – neither agree nor disagree, DK – don't know)

Respondents were asked if they considered being socially connected important (Figure 18). The majority of respondents agreed that it was important (81%), however almost 50% of respondents did not consider themselves to be socially connected through the University.

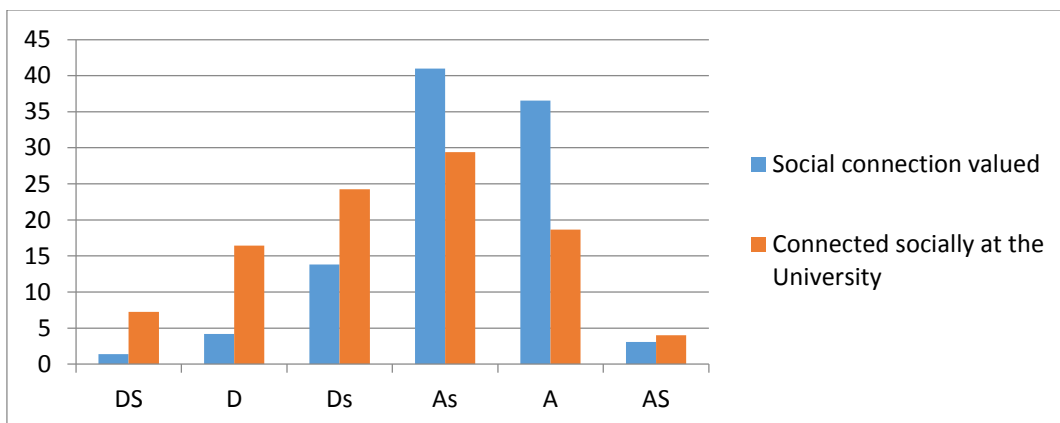


Figure 18 Percentage breakdown of respondent's perception of social sustainability at the University (where DS – disagree strongly, D – disagree, Ds – disagree slightly, As – agree slightly, A – agree, AS – agree strongly)



The word cloud below shows the thirty most frequently cited words from the 1027 responses (Figure 21). The responses tended to be oriented towards macro scale actions than those identified in the previous figure. Renewable energy was the most prominent action of the 100 coded responses.



Figure 21 Word cloud illustrating what respondents viewed as the most significant change the University could make to be more sustainable

### 1.5.1 The one big (personal) change

The questions were posed to respondents *What is the biggest change you could PERSONALLY make in order to decrease the environmental impact of your direct campus activities?* and *What is the main thing stopping you from making that change?* Word clouds of the most 30 frequently cited words from each of the questions responses is shown Figures 22 and 23.

From 100 coded responses, the two most prominent actions to decrease environmental impact of direct campus activities were to reduce printing and driving and increase public transport use.

From the 100 coded responses, either the habit/desire or necessity to print reading materials when electric copies were available was the most commonly noted barrier. The second most noted barrier was lack of time.



Figure 22 Word cloud of the most frequently cited activities respondents suggested to reduce personal environmental impact of their campus activities



Figure 23 Word cloud of the most frequently cited barriers to making the change noted in Figure 22.

### 1.6 Summary

Figures 24 and 25 present how respondents consider their behaviour to have been influenced by the University’s education and influence. Figure 24 suggests that respondents consider the University having had a positive influence on their personal sustainability-related behaviours. Whereas Figure 25 presents respondents overall satisfaction with attending the University of Tasmania, returning an over 70% rating as a positive experience.

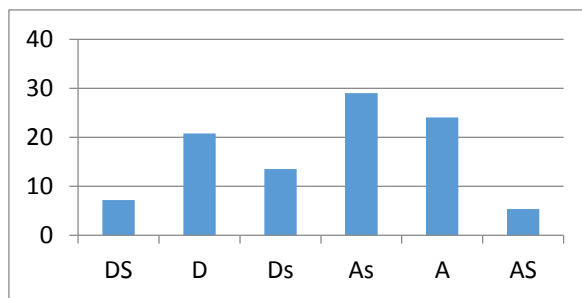


Figure 24 Percentage break down of the responses to the question ‘I believe my personal sustainability-related behaviours have improved through the University’s education and influence’

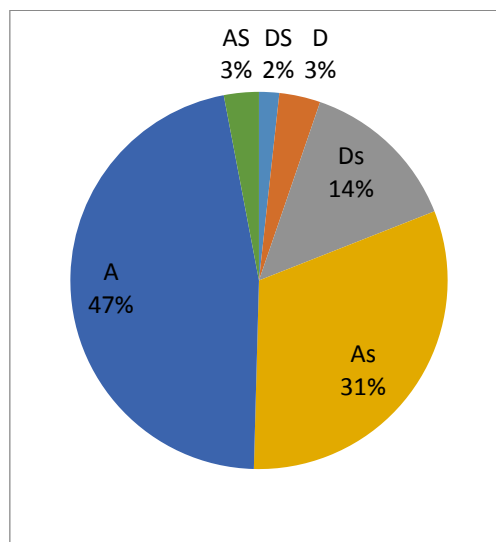


Figure 25 Overall satisfaction with attending the University of Tasmania