



Issue 26 | November-December | Year in Review

## This year in sustainability...

### What a year!

There's been a lot to celebrate in the sustainability space at UTAS in 2022!

One of the major achievements this year was UTAS becoming the first Australasian institution to achieve a **Gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Ratings System (STARS)**. This was the result of a mammoth effort from staff and students across the university working on a diverse range of sustainability projects that contribute to this rating.

The University of Tasmania was also named the #1 institution in the world for climate action, as ranked by the **Times Higher Education Impact Rankings**. Again, this was a whole-of-institution effort, awarded based on our climate focus in teaching and learning, research, community engagement and operations.

UTAS has also won a number of high-profile awards this year, such as recognising the Sustainability Integration Program for Students (SIPS) with an **International Green Gown Award for Student Engagement** and Australasian Green Gown Awards for **Next Generation Learning and Skills, Benefitting Society, and Sustainability Champion - Student**.

This year also saw the release of the **Emissions Reduction Strategic Plan**, with UTAS setting the target to reduce gross greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030. With that comes a bold new set of initiatives, including the development of an internal carbon price, and self-generated carbon sequestration projects right here in Tasmania.

### Community sustainability questions answered at Sustainability Drop-In Session

On the 23rd November, the Office of the Vice Chancellor and the Sustainability Team hosted a sustainability drop-in session, where staff, students, and the community could ask their burning sustainability-related questions.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Rufus Black opened the session with a look back to past sustainability achievements, including the University's progression to achieve STARS Gold, **the use of sustainable construction materials and methods throughout the Northern Transformation project**, and our ranking as **the top institution in the world for action on climate change**.

Chief Sustainability Officer Corey Peterson followed with a look to the future of sustainability at UTAS. Some highlights to look out for over the coming years will be the introduction of an internal carbon price, removing natural gas as a power source and transitioning to an all-electric university, introducing the Liftango ride share scheme to provide sustainable transport options for staff, and achieving a Platinum STARS ranking by 2025.

The presentation was followed by an enthusiastic discussion with the community, with questions ranging from the social sustainability implications of the city move, to student food insecurity, increased support for community gardening, access to active transport options, and much more.

If you missed the session, you can view the slides and a recording of the presentation on the [Intranet here](#).

There will be four additional sustainability drop-in sessions held in 2023, so come along, contribute to sustainability discussions and have your sustainability questions answered!

### Celebrating staff members who made an impact this year

For the past five years, the University of Tasmania has participated in Green Impact, a program that challenges teams of staff members at universities all over the world to make sustainable changes in their workplaces.

The staff teams this year completed over 140 actions that included things like creating mug libraries, hosting beach clean ups, bringing a worm farm into the tea room, having plastic-free morning teas, and heaps more.

Congratulations to the CoSE Office team, kanamaluka TUSA Launceston team, and the People and Wellbeing team who achieved a Bronze award this year, and to Waste Watchers Cradle Coast who took home the Gold!

Congratulations also to Julia Tate from the CoSE Office team who was crowned the Green Impact Staff Champion!

CoSE Office also won an award for Engagement Innovation, for their International Compost Awareness Day event where they brought a portable worm farm into the office tea room, to demonstrate how easy it is to compost at home.

Waste Watchers Cradle Coast also took home the Community Action award for their support for the Celebration of the Mutton Bird Harvest.

Thank you also to Pickled Pear, Future Students, TUSA Sydney, and Rural Clinical School, who participated in our audit day.

Thank you our incredible student auditors, who met with staff teams to record their sustainability actions throughout the year - Chen, Kelly, Veronica, Leti, Michelle, Cleo, Ellen, Emily, and Doris.

If you want to take the next step on your sustainability journey, why not start a Green Impact team in your workplace next year? Get in touch at [green.impact@utas.edu.au](mailto:green.impact@utas.edu.au)

### Highlights of the year from the Sustainability Team

**Corey Peterson, Chief Sustainability Officer:** Achieving a STARS Gold rating and doing so well in the Times Higher Education Impact ranking were highlights for me this year. The continuing understanding and valuing of a holistic sustainability approach across the University has been very affirming for me (and the team) that we are on the right track both in the outcomes we want to help the University achieve, but that we are responding to and supporting students and staff that want to contribute to these outcomes. With this broader support, the University can also start to have productive conversations about moving beyond sustainability to encompass a more regenerative approach.

**Carmen Primo Perez, Senior Sustainability Officer:** What a year! I feel like it has been the busiest year ever for the Sustainability Team. Too many things happened to name them all, but I am especially proud of having been involved in the development of our first Emissions Reduction Strategic Plan, with a very ambitious target and a clear pathway to reach it. This has also been a year of recognition for the UTAS journey in sustainability, including being ranked #1 in climate action by the THE Impact Ranking, and achieving a Gold Rating in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS).

**Catherine Elliott, Senior Sustainability Officer:** One big highlight for me has been our SIPS program winning an International Green Gown Award for Student Engagement. We do have incredible students and staff mentors, but to be a finalist and then win alongside the other incredible nominees was a real surprise. I love working with passionate, creative and committed people. I enjoy seeing student and staff projects making change. The changes we are making are exciting and it is good to be able to celebrate this, at the same time we have a lot to do over the next eight years. The most important part of our programs for me is diversity, and it is good to feel curious about the new challenges and ideas people will bring to our programs next year, it is in this diversity that we can tackle the complex challenges we face.

**Jeff McClintock, Community Garden Coordinator:** A big highlight for me this year (apart from making copious amounts of compost in the new Comet Composting machine), has been my weekly gardening sessions at Inveresk with a small group of students from the nearby Big Picture school. At 10am each Thursday the students wander across to the garden and we work together on different gardening projects, which in the last few months have included building trellises (using jute netting), planting and harvesting peas, and planting potatoes, corn and tomatoes. As well as getting lots of good gardening work done, we've had a lot of fun and the students have learnt a thing or two about growing food along the way.

A second highlight was the sunflower planting activity that I helped facilitate on the Newnham campus as part of Mental Health Week in October. This involved preparing a planting area right outside the Student Services Building, and growing hundreds of sunflower seedlings for distribution all around the state. On the day, students and staff were invited to plant a sunflower and write a message of hope on a card which was placed next to the sunflower. A total of 65 sunflowers were planted on the day and as I write these are now coming into bloom, creating a joyous spectacle in one of the highest profile places on the campus.



**Ian Ayre, Sustainability Projects Officer:** At the end of my first year working with the Sustainability Team, what has had the greatest impression on me is the energy and inspiration that comes as a result of networking with such a wide range of passionate people. From events such as Agfest, to helping with Global Climate Change Week, to working with young SIPS interns, to presenting at conferences, both in person and online, as well as many other events and activities, the real privilege of the past 12 months for me has been the opportunity to meet and swap ideas with so many people working in a multitude of different ways for a more sustainable future. Networking reminds me that there are many people creating change in places and within groups that I don't normally see in day to day life. It gives me hope that we are not on the fringes, we are all part of a large and diverse community of change-makers, and we are making a difference!

**Elen Sorensen, Sustainability Projects Officer:** It's been a massive year, but the best part for me is connecting with so many students and staff members who are so passionate about sustainability, and have so many fantastic ideas about the future of sustainability at UTAS. We've had so many events, like AgFest, the SDG Game, the Sustainability Showcases, and more, where we've been able to connect with the community and share our collective passion for sustainability. Looking forward to an even bigger 2023!

**Cathy Walker, Sustainability Projects Officer:** The highlight of the year for me has been joining the sustainability team as the Sustainability Projects Officer Cradle Coast, I love my job so much! I am so proud of the work I have done with the Green Impact program. It felt great to inspire others to get involved with the program and take-home awards in their first year participating in the program. I look forward to what 2023 brings.



Students in Inveresk, looking after the garden by collecting food scraps for the Comet composter.



Exploring hot compost bays and worm farms at Paddy's Patch garden in Sandy Bay

Thank you for your support for sustainability in 2022, we look forward to sharing more with you in the new year!



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