

STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY REPORT

2024



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Executive summary

In March 2024, the University of Tasmania conducted the fourth biennial Sustainability Survey with staff and students. This report discusses the students' survey responses.

Students rated the University's sustainability activity, transparency and communications higher in 2024 compared to previous years. Student views on sustainability are generally positive, recognising that the University has a clearly defined commitment to sustainability, and that it is active in this space. The survey indicates that most students agreed that the University has influenced them to engage in more sustainable behaviour and respondents rated UTAS's effort towards sustainability 7.9 out of 10. This continues the steady improvement over previous years. In addition, most respondents believe the University should maintain its commitment to climate action.

As in previous years, responses to questions relating to student behaviours revealed that students want to act sustainably in a variety of ways, but time, convenience and accessibility were barriers to making such a change. This should be considered when implementing new sustainability initiatives and reviewing current sustainability processes at the University to ensure that they are as convenient and accessible as possible. Although there has been significant effort to provide these enablers in the last few years, there is more to be done.

Questions relating to students' sustainability experience at the University showed positive results, with more students wanting to be more engaged with sustainability overall than in previous years, and they feel more supported by their peers to engage in sustainable practices.

Similarly, positive results were seen in teaching and learning questions, with most students believing that sustainability is important to their learning, and it is relevant to all aspects of the curriculum, which supports further integration into teaching. Many students attest to the effort their lecturers and tutors have made in doing so, with an overall increase over time. Most respondents viewed the University as being innovative in the way it teaches sustainability.

Food-security related questions revealed that the prevalence of food insecurity among students responding to the survey is 53% (with 29% of students having severe

food insecurity). A separate report on <u>Prevalence of Food Insecurity at the University of Tasmania</u> for both students and staff provides additional detail. The University, recognising the need for a plan to transition to more equitable and sustainable food systems across our campuses, has developed and is implementing the <u>Healthy</u>, <u>Sustainable</u>, and Equitable Food Strategic Plan (2023-2028).

Results in the student worldviews section (which builds on the 'new ecological paradigm' questions asked in past surveys) showed that most students favoured more ecological ideas. An overwhelming majority of respondents believed that the balance of nature can be easily upset, the earth has limited resources and there are limits to growth, even for developed nations. These results have been consistent over time.

1 Introduction

The University of Tasmania Strategic Framework for Sustainability guides the University's efforts to become a leader in sustainability. Responding to the need for appropriate data to guide these efforts, the University Sustainability Survey project was initiated, with the first surveys (students and staff) conducted in 2016 to provide baseline data on sustainability perceptions, aspirations and behaviours of staff and students in relation to concerns about the future and the responsibilities and performance of the University. The surveys are conducted biennially, and the results are used to inform the development and implementation of the University's sustainability strategies and plans, as well as the delivery of sustainability initiatives and programs in support of University staff and students.

This report was mostly prepared by the Sustainability Team, and it outlines key findings of the 2024 Student Sustainability Survey. The <u>Staff Sustainability Survey report</u> is available as a separate document. The section 'Food security on campus', designed to support the Sustainability Committee's Sustainable Food Systems Working Group's efforts, was developed by academic staff Ms Sandra Murray (School of Health Science) and Dr Katherine Kent (Centre for Rural Health). A more comprehensive report on <u>Prevalence of Food Insecurity at the University of Tasmania</u> for both staff and students has been also published separately.

The intention of this report is not to provide a comprehensive study of all aspects of the Survey, but to highlight important trends over time, as well as to interpret points in the Survey that stand out. Responses to most Survey questions have been included in this report and the most relevant are represented in graphical form.

The University thanks the students who have taken the time to participate in the 2024 Survey.

2 About the survey

2.1 Method

The 2024 University of Tasmania (UTAS) Student Sustainability Survey was conducted in tandem with the Staff Sustainability Survey, which was based on the Sustainability Culture Indicator (developed by Awake P.L.).

Data for both surveys were collected by Mr Corey Peterson, Chief Sustainability Officer, on behalf of the University Sustainability Committee. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, with consent implied by completing the online survey. Approval for this survey has been granted by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (Ref.H0015525).

All University of Tasmania students were invited to participate in the 2024 UTAS Student Sustainability Survey. To recruit participants, bulk emails were sent to students inviting them to participate, published on the student News portal and on display screens on campuses. To incentivise survey participation, students were given the option to enter the draw to win one of six \$100 gift cards. The survey was open from 14-28 March 2024.

Qualtrics, the software platform used to run the survey, and Microsoft Excel were used to conduct data analysis. This report is a summation of the quantitative data collected by the survey and a thematic analysis of responses to qualitative data (i.e., text-based questions). Where possible, responses have been compared to identical questions asked in all previous surveys. However, the response scale for some questions were changed in 2022 or 2024, therefore comparisons should be made with caution.

This report has been compiled in a way to effectively show a subset of the data collected by the Survey. The data can be parsed further by demographic variables. For more information on correlating survey data with specific Colleges, geographical location or other variables, please contact the Sustainability Manager (Strategic Analysis and Reporting), Dr. Carmen Primo Perez.

2.2 Participation and statistical confidence

In 2024, 1,602 students completed the survey, encompassing about 5.8% of enrolled students (95% confidence level, margin of error +/-2.4%). Since 2018, the number of Survey responses has declined slightly, which could be a consequence of a lower student population overall or a reduction in student engagement with the campus in general because of an increase of online modes of study. However, the confidence level has remained high through time. Due to only marginal difference in statistical confidence between each survey year, we have high confidence in our year-to-year comparisons (noting the response scale change in some questions may impair this confidence).

Most students participating in the 2024 Sustainability Survey were from the College of Health and Medicine (CoHM), followed by the College of Sciences and Engineering (CoSE), both having the highest percentage of participants of all time. Participation from the College of Arts, Law and Education (CALE), as well as College of Business and Economics (CoBE), was consequently reduced (Table 2.1). It is important to note that these response rates by colleges have not been normalised regarding changing College enrolment numbers. There has been a noticeable rise in respondents who are in their 1st year of study at UTAS, with a fall in the respondents who are in their 2nd, 3rd, and 5 or more years in 2024 (Table 2.1).

Most respondents were studying a bachelor's degree at the time of the survey, which reflect the student population. However, many participants were postgraduate students (well above the student population level), which might reflect a higher level of engagement with sustainability matters at that level. Likewise, most respondents have been on-campus students throughout all the surveys, despite the increase in the percentage of distance students' enrolments since the COVID pandemic (54% in 2023) (Table 2.1).

The highest percentage of respondents has consistently been in the 18-24 years old category, with decreasing percentages of participation in older ages, reflecting the University student population. There is a higher participation of female respondents than males (Table 2.1). This translates to only a small bias, as there is a higher proportion of females in the general student population.

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reflects the proportion of student population demographics (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Student respondents demographic profile

	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
College					
CALE	32%	23%	25%	23%	21%
СоНМ	35%	29%	26%	28%	37%
CoSE	25%	25%	26%	29%	31%
CoBE (including UC)	8%	13%	18%	14%	8%
Other	0%	10%	5%	7%	2%
Qualification					
Undergraduate Certificate				13%	16%
Diploma/Advanced Diploma				14%	14%
Associate Degree				2%	1%
Bachelor (incl. double degree)				40%	38%
Honours				4%	3%
Postgraduate				25%	26%
Short course				1%	1%
Other				1%	2%
Length of study at UTAS					
1st year	37%	31%	37%	45%	52%
2nd year	16%	19%	17%	24%	20%
3rd year	11%	15%	10%	14%	13%
4th year	7%	9%	6%	7%	8%
5 years or more	28%	26%	29%	10%	7%
Mode of study					
On-campus	67%	78%	66%	56%	58%
Distance	33%	22%	34%	44%	42%
Enrolment type					
Domestic	84%	82%	80%	84%	82%
International	16%	18%	20%	16%	18%
Gender					
Female	67%	67%	70%	69%	68%
Male	31%	31%	28%	28%	28%
Non-binary/Other	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Prefer not to say	6%	7%	5%	1%	1%

	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Age					
18 -24	41%	54%	42%	42%	44%
25 - 34	23%	22%	26%	27%	26%
35 - 44	14%	9%	13%	14%	15%
45 - 54	12%	7%	9%	9%	8%
55 - 64	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%
65 - 74	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
> 75	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Aboriginal/Torres St Islander					
Neither					94%
Aboriginal					3.3%
Torres Strait Islander					0.1%
Both					0.4%
Prefer not to say					2.6%

3 Results

3.1 Views on sustainability

This section focuses on results from questions targeting students' opinions on the University's commitment and approach to sustainability. Both the University's commitment to sustainability and communication efforts were rated highly in 2024, with a noticeable increase in the 'Agree strongly' response, and a reduction in all disagree related responses (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2). The response option 'I don't know' was added to these two questions this year, acknowledging that some students might simply not be interested or aware. A small percentage of students selected this response, with the percentage being similar independently of the number of years they have studied at the University, but students being more likely to 'not know' when studying online. This could be an indicator of the need to better communicate about the University's sustainability commitments with distance students.

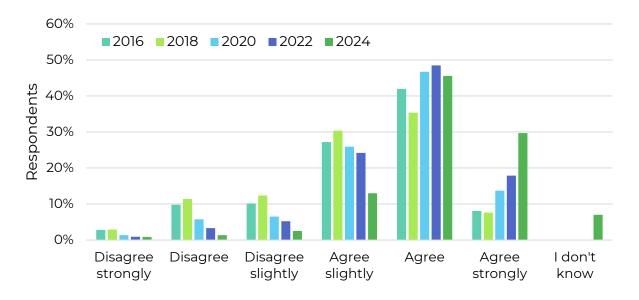


Figure 3.1. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase "The University has a clearly defined commitment to sustainability".

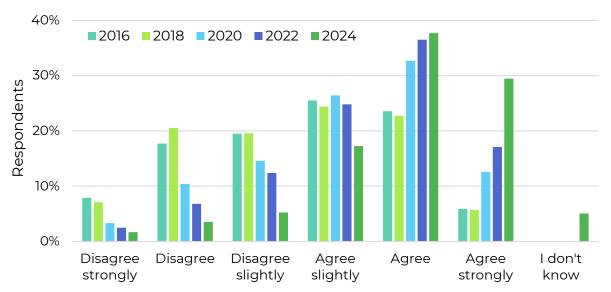


Figure 3.2. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "The University's commitment to sustainability has been clearly communicated".

For other questions in this section (Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4), although the responses were positive with slightly higher agreement overall and a trend of gradually decreasing disagreement, more respondents selected 'slightly agree' and fewer respondents selected 'strongly agree' in 2024 compared to previous years.

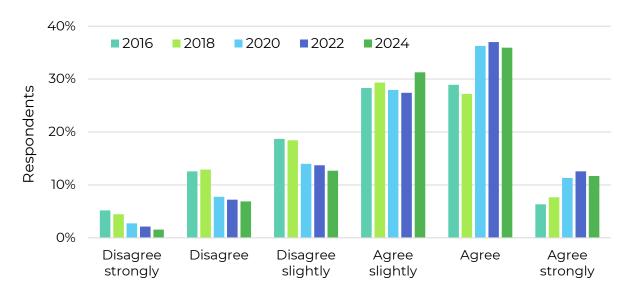


Figure 3.3. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "I clearly understand sustainability issues relevant to our University".

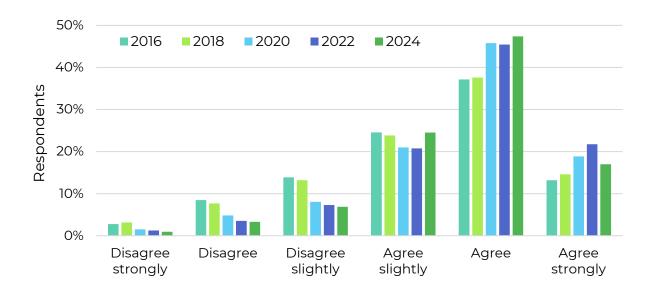


Figure 3.4. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "I feel like I am well informed and educated about sustainability issues in general".

An exception to this were the responses for questions related to facilities and infrastructure (Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6)., where there was a clear increase in the 'agree' and 'agree strongly responses' indicating that students think that facilities support sustainability behaviours, but more could be done in this area. It is important to note that the response scale used in Figure 3.6 changed in 2022, hence only the last two surveys are represented.

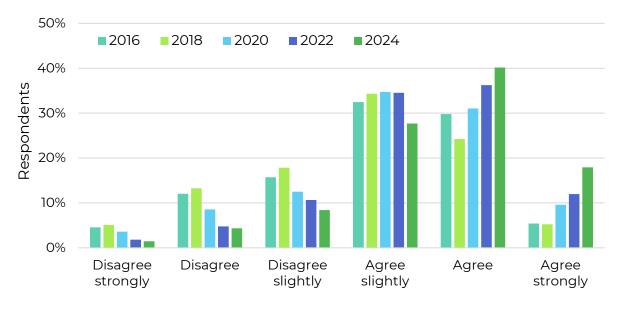


Figure 3.5. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "The facilities in the University are well-equipped to support sustainable behaviours".

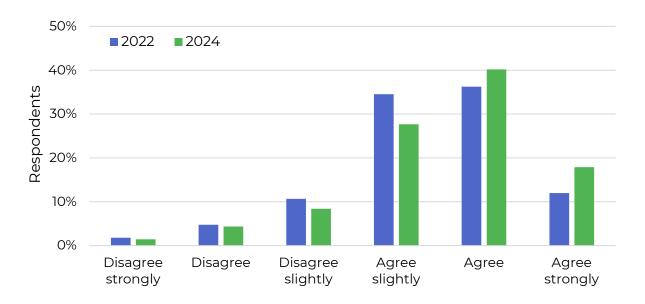


Figure 3.6. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "I would like to see the University implement more sustainability initiatives on its infrastructure and in processes".

Some 85% of respondents rated UTAS's effort towards sustainability at 7/10 or above (Figure 3.7). The weighted average of responses was 7.9, showing a steady improvement from 7.2 out of 10 in 2022, 6.7 in 2020, 5.9 in 2018, and 6.1 in 2016.

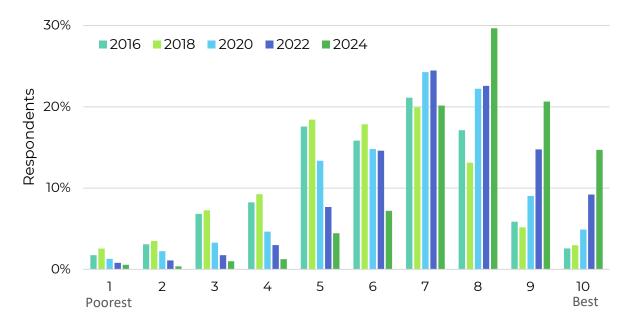


Figure 3.7. Percentage of responses to the question: "On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the University's current level of effort with regard to sustainability (with 10 being the best)?"

In initial surveys, the topics of carbon neutrality and divestment from fossil fuels were covered by two different questions. These topics were combined in a single question from 2022 (Figure 3.8). In 2020, 89.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the university should maintain its carbon neutral certification and 78% agreed or strongly agreed the university should completely divest from fossil fuels. In 2024 the overall level of agreement to the statement: "The University should maintain its commitment to broader climate action" was maintained (97%).

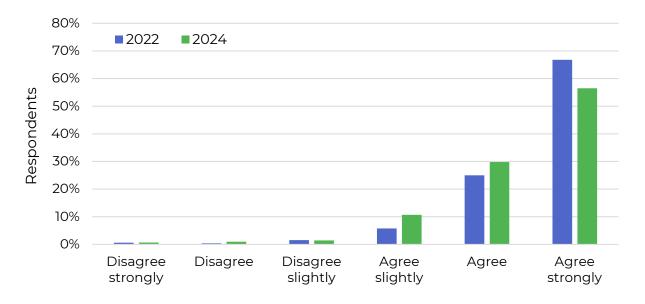


Figure 3.8. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "The University has been carbon neutral certified since 2016, completed divestment from fossil fuels in 2021 and is a Race to Zero signatory. The University should maintain its commitment to broader climate action."

The 2024 survey included a new question enquiring about the frequency in which students felt strong emotions in relation to climate change during the previous year. Over three quarters of the students who answered this question indicated that they had strong emotions about climate change often, very often or all the time (Figure 3.9). The survey did not ask about the type of emotions experienced by respondents, but it is reasonable to assume that most respondents would have felt negative emotions (although some positive emotions linked to engagement with climate actions have also been observed in research studies).

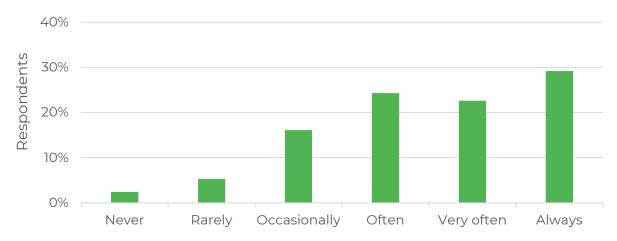


Figure 3.9. Percentage of responses indicating frequency of feeling strong emotions about climate change.

The last two surveys also explored students' awareness of modern slavery. Students were presented with the University's Modern Slavery statement, outlining what the University is doing to minimise the risks of modern slavery at the University and in its supply chains. Some 81% of respondents, down from 84% in 2022, indicated that they were aware of the concept of modern slavery (Figure 3.10) and 15% of respondents stated they have encountered some form modern slavery in their work or personal lives, lower than 18% in 2022 (Figure 3.11). The option 'Prefer not to say' was newly added in 2024 survey; 9% of respondents selected this option.

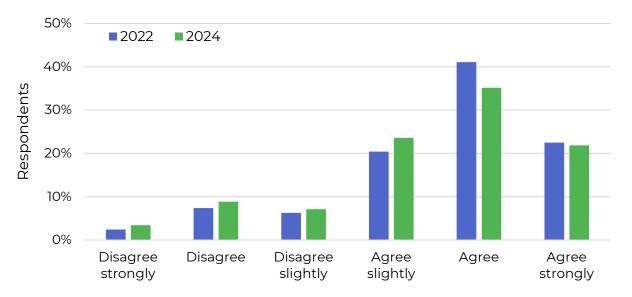


Figure 3.10. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: "Before reading this statement above, I was familiar with the concept of modern slavery".

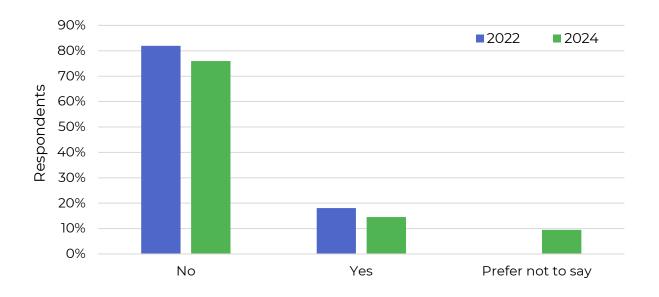


Figure 3.11. Percentage of responses to the question: "Have you encountered modern slavery in your work or personal life?"

3.2 Behaviours relating to sustainability

This section explores how students engage with sustainability in the University and their personal lives. Questions in this section have been split into two parts: oncampus and off-campus behaviours.

Survey results indicate that most respondents are making conscious choices in relation to consumption and use of resources both on and off campus. However, as in past surveys, respondents were less likely to choose transport options with the lowest carbon footprint often or more frequently, with some 20% rarely or never doing so. This may be due to students preferring to drive to campus (or off campus locations) for convenience or time constraints; however, it is also possible that some students do not have access to adequate public transport or that active transport is less practical (e.g., if living far from campus, need to do school drop offs/pickups, etc.).

Comparison with previous years regarding looking for opportunities to get involved with sustainability 'off-campus' shows a clear increase in the frequency in which students choose to do so (Figure 3.12).

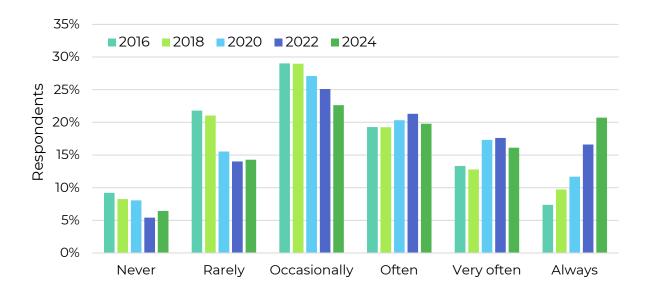


Figure 3.12. Percentage of responses indicating frequency of looking for "opportunities to get involved with sustainability initiatives while off-campus".

Interestingly, on-campus students are more likely to look for opportunities to get involved with sustainability initiatives off campus (22% always; 57% often or more frequently) than on campus (19% always; 51% often or more). This could mean that there is space for the University to try new ways of engaging students on campus. Results may also suggest that a part of the cohort is already involved with initiatives off-campus, leaving less time for on-campus commitments.

3.3 Sustainability experience

Students were asked to indicate their agreement with various statements in relation to their experiences with sustainability at the university. Note that graphs in this section group all the 'agree' related answers under a general 'agree' category, and all the 'disagree' related answers under a 'disagree' category'. This change is due to an error in 2016 and 2018 surveys (where the 'strongly agree' response was not offered as an option), and because the response scale changed in 2024 (when the option 'neither agree nor disagree' was replaced with 'slightly agree' and 'slightly disagree'). Hence, comparison of results over time should be made with caution.

There is a trend showing that more respondents than in the past surveys have agreed to statements related to willingness to get involved in sustainability initiatives at the university (Figure 3.13), and opportunities to do so (Figure 3.14), as well as university leaders being sustainability role models (Figure 3.15) and supporting

sustainability initiatives (Figure 3.16). Although some of the increase in agreement in 2024 survey results may be due to respondents being 'forced' to agree or disagree (as the 'neither agree nor disagree is no longer an option), it is clear that more respondents were inclined to agree than disagree in these questions.

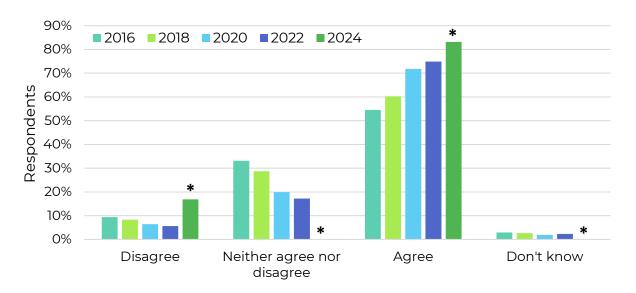


Figure 3.13. Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: 'I would like to get more involved in sustainability initiatives. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

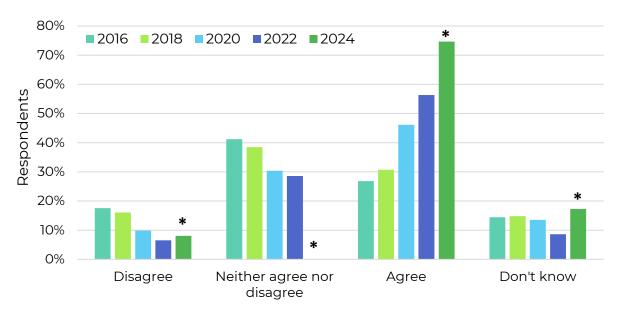


Figure 3.14. Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: 'There are many opportunities for me to get involved in sustainability initiatives as a student'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

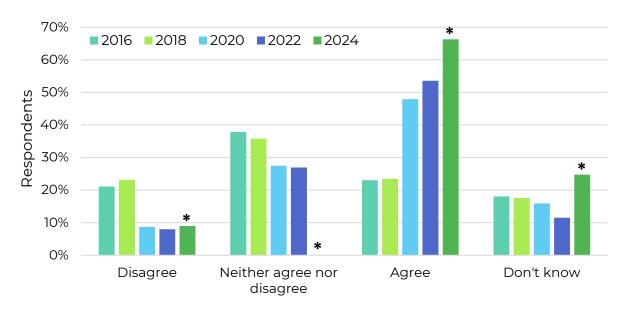


Figure 3.15. Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: 'The leaders of the university make good role models towards sustainability'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

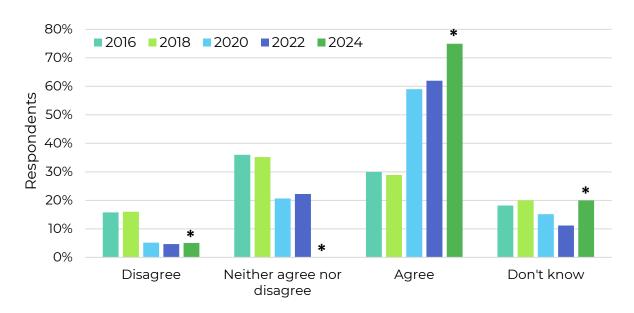


Figure 3.16. Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: 'The leaders of the university are supportive of sustainability initiatives. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

The same trend was observed for the statement "Students can make a big difference to sustainability issues at the University", noting that this statement had the highest 'agree' responses in this section (Figure 3.17).

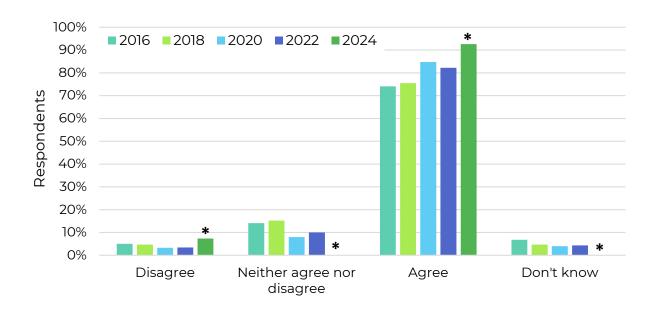


Figure 3.17. Respondents' level of agreement with the statement: 'Students can make a big difference to sustainability issues at the University'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

Other questions also had a high level of agree responses:

- 'I feel valued as a student' (up from 63% in 2022 to 83%)
- 'I feel well supported by my peers to engage with sustainability activities on campus' (up from 46% in 2022 to 64%)
- 'I feel like I have a lot of control over the size of the "ecological footprint" that I leave through my study activities at university' (up from 56% in 2022 to 69%)
- 'I would like more opportunities to link my learning at university with sustainability projects on campus' (up from 64% in 2022 to 74%)
- 'Being socially connected to others is important to me' (drop from 90% in 2022 to 88%)

The continuous increasing numbers of positive responses to the questions in this section are extremely encouraging as it shows that initiatives implemented by the University are having an impact. Students seem to be recognising the opportunities the University is presenting to engage in sustainable practices.

Room for improvement in this area involves students considering themselves to be a part of some social group at UTAS, with almost half of respondents selecting a 'disagree' response in this question. Not surprisingly, the proportion is higher for distance students (almost two thirds of respondents) than on-campus students (less

than a third). It seems that students themselves are engaging in sustainable practices but not sufficiently socially connected with their peers, especially in the case of online students who never come to campus. As social sustainability is a key aspect to holistic sustainability, this area could be a good target for the University moving forward.

3.4 Sustainability in teaching and learning

In this section, students were asked about their perceptions and opinions in relation to their learning experience at the university. Note that graphs in this section also group all the 'agree' related answers under a general 'agree' category, and all the 'disagree' related answers under a 'disagree' category' because of a scale changed in 2024 (see section 3.3). Hence, comparison of results over time should be made with caution.

There has been a slow but steady increase in agreement to the statement 'I think sustainability is an important topic to study at university' (Figure 3.18), with most respondents (94%) selecting an 'agree' response in 2024, up from 76% in 2016).

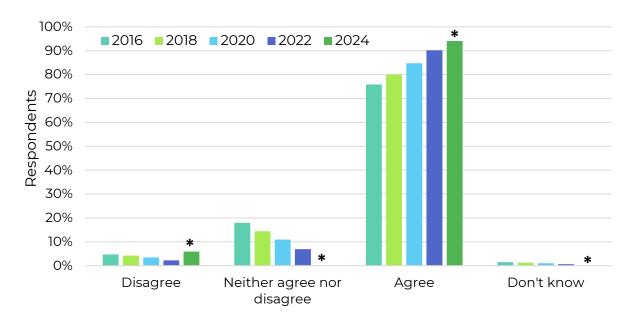


Figure 3.18. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: 'I think sustainability is an important topic to study at university'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

Most students also agreed that their lecturers and teachers include sustainability in their teaching, although there was also a noticeable increase in 'disagree' responses

in 2024 (when the option 'neither agree nor disagree' was not offered as a response) (Figure 3.19). Most students also think that 'The University is very innovative in its approach to teaching about sustainability' (Figure 3.20).

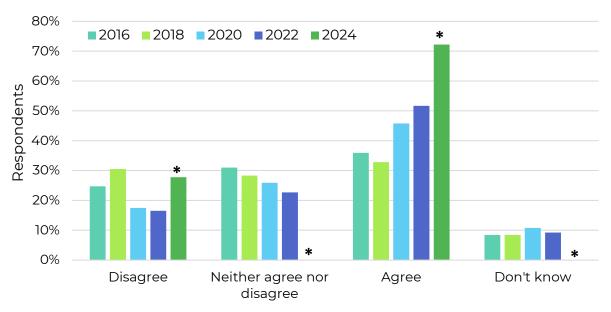


Figure 3.19. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: 'My lecturers and teachers include sustainability in their teaching'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

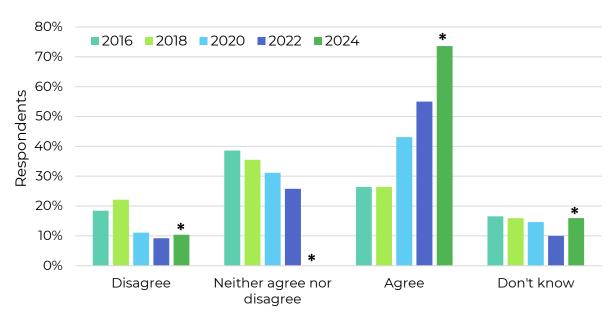


Figure 3.20. Respondents' level of agreement with the phrase: 'The University is very innovative in its approach to teaching about sustainability'. * Note that there was a change in the response scale in 2024 as explained at the start of this section.

Results for other questions in this section included:

- 93% of respondents (88% in 2022) agreed to the statement 'I believe that sustainability issues will affect my personal life in the future'.
- 91% of respondents (87% in 2022) agreed to the statement 'I believe that sustainability is relevant across all areas of the curriculum'.
- 84% of respondents (74% in 2022) agreed to the statement 'I consider principles of sustainability during my course'.

The results of this section show that students, whether sustainability- minded or not, acknowledge that sustainability will be a relevant factor in both their professional and personal life in the future, although over one in five students do not believe their job prospects may be affected by sustainability issues.

3.5 Food security on campus

This section provides a snapshot of high-level results for questions related to student food insecurity. A separate report on <u>Prevalence of Food Insecurity at the University of Tasmania</u> including more detailed results for students and staff has been published separately.

A person is food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. Food insecurity can be experienced at different levels of severity. Key findings (Figure 3.21) include:

- The prevalence of food insecurity among students has increased from two in five (42%) in 2022, to more than one in two (53%) students in 2024.
- There has been a substantial increase in severe food insecurity among students, which has risen from 17% in 2022 to 29% in 2024.

The University recognises the urgent need to rapidly build on current activities and implement many new ones. The University's <u>Healthy, Sustainable, and Equitable Food Strategic Plan 2023-2028</u> seeks to achieve just that with efforts prioritised to uphold everyone's right to healthy food.

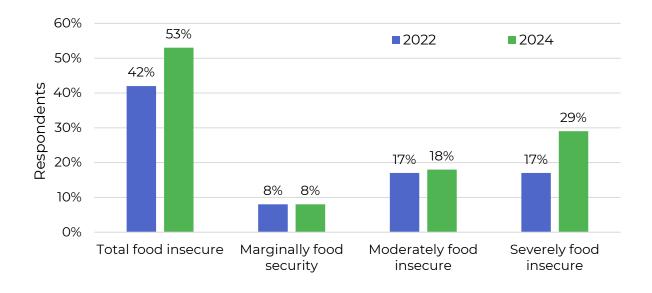


Figure 3.21. Student food security status according to the USDA 6-item Household Food Security Short Form.

3.6 Worldviews

In this section students were asked to indicate their agreement with six high-level statements regarding the relationship between humans and nature. The same change to the response scale applied here as in Section 3.3.

Most respondents have historically favoured ecologically minded ideas, with a clear increase for all statements in 2024 results (noting that this could be partly because of the change in response scale, where respondents were 'forced' to agree or disagree, although there was an option to respond 'I don't know").

- 90% (85% in 2022) of respondents agreed that 'The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset'.
- 75% (72% in 2022) of respondents disagreed that 'Plants and animals exist primarily to be used by humans'.
- 84% (78% in 2022) of respondents agreed that 'The Earth is like a spaceship with only limited room and resources'.
- 83% (77% in 2022) of respondents agreed that 'There are limits to economic growth even for developed countries like ours'.
- 72% (69% in 2022) of respondents disagreed that 'Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature'.

 72% (53% in 2022) of respondents disagreed that 'Modifying the environment for human use rarely causes serious problems' (noting that this noticeable increase maybe due to the use of the word 'seldom' instead of 'rarely', which may have been confusing, especially to international students).

3.7 Written responses

Survey participants were asked what they could do to reduce the environmental impact of their campus activities, barriers to making those changes, what they believe the University is doing well regarding sustainability, and what it could do better in being a more sustainable institution. While most questions in the Survey were quantitative, with responses made on a scale, these final questions were 'open field', allowing respondents to answer in their own words. These questions were not compulsory to complete the survey.

3.7.1 Personal change on campus

On-campus students and distance students who occasionally come to campus for their studies were asked, "What is the biggest change you could personally make to decrease the environmental impact of your direct campus activities?"

Responses to this question covered several themes, with transport being the most prominent (Figure 3.22). Various students mentioned travelling to campus by means other than cars, carpooling, or using electric cars. While this included taking a bus or walking, various responses specifically mentioned commuting by bicycle, which has implications for the provision of safe cycle routes and end-of-trip facilities at UTAS campuses. The students' comments regarding transport issues back the active transport focus in the Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Other significant themes include waste management in relation to maximising recycling efforts, offering donation programs, the conscious reduction of plastic and other single-use products such as beverages containers and food packaging, and encouraging the use of reusable alternatives. Additional topics covered the reduction in resource use such as water, paper and electricity, and the promotion on renewable energy and diets that include more sustainable food choices.



Figure 3.22. Personal sustainability changes students believe they could make to decrease the environmental impact of their campus activities.

A follow up question about barriers for realising these positive environmental changes was then asked, with responses including factors both within and outside of the University's ability to influence. The most frequently identified barrier was time, which is consistent with past years surveys. Other barriers included students' financial constraints, as well as issues concerning accessibility and a lack of alternatives (Figure 3.23). For example, some respondents indicated that they lived too far from campus to use active transport, and public transport was limited, unreliable, and schedule was inconvenient, with some students having to take more than one bus to get to campus. For bike riders, the insufficient infrastructure for riding safely was also a concern.

Perhaps related to time, several students indicated that convenience (or lack of) was also a barrier to enacting environmental actions. Other themes include bad weather, laziness, busy schedules, lack of knowledge and awareness of available resources that could facilitate the change (often referring to others' awareness). It is worth noting that several students indicated there was nothing stopping them from effecting the change (Figure 3.23).

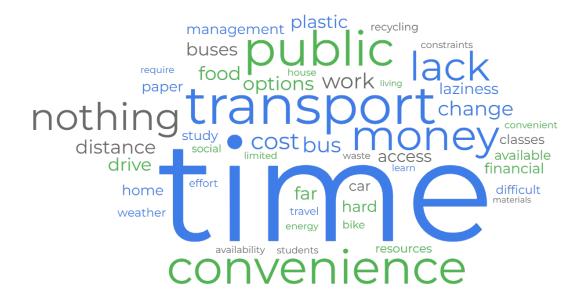


Figure 3.23. Barriers that students perceive to be preventing making changes to decrease the environmental impact of their campus activities.

3.7.2 University initiatives

All students (on-campus and distance) were asked what they thought the University is already doing well, could do better, and the most important change the University could make to be more sustainable. When asked to name *one* sustainability behaviour, activity or practice that they believe "UTAS does well", most respondents mentioned waste management (Figure 3.24). This recognises the efforts on implementing the University's Waste Minimisation Action Plan, and existing programs such as Recycling Walls, Re-Use Program, and FOGO waste collection.

Despite a celebrated move to carbon neutrality in 2016 and divestment from fossil fuel related investments in 2021, only a few students mentioned climate action as their 'one behaviour' that they see UTAS doing well. This may be because this status is now taken for granted. Given the very high levels of student support for the University's carbon neutral status and other action on climate as indicated in responses in earlier questions in the Survey (see, for example, Figure 3.8). It could also be that the visibility of waste management efforts, with deployment of brightly coloured three-bin waste systems (compostable, recycling and landfill) and the prevalence of 'recycling walls' over the past two years, drove responses to this topic.

Perhaps reflecting an effort to embed sustainability across the University's teaching and learning in recent times, sustainability education was also a prominent theme.



Figure 3.24. Students' perceptions of what the University is doing well regarding sustainability.

On the other hand, there was a broad range of categories of sustainability practices and/or behaviours on which students believe UTAS could improve (Figure 3.25). Even though students perceived that the University is doing well in waste management, this theme also emerged in written responses related to improvement, suggesting there is more to do in this area. This may also be indicative of the high profile that the issue of waste has in people's daily lives.

Other areas that were noted for improvement included better student engagement (especially online only students), resource use (many responses mentioning energy specifically), making buildings more sustainable, food and gardens, and sustainability education/awareness. Further research would be needed to determine to what extent these represent areas considered in need of improvement based on student experiences on campus, and what extent they represent a general list of sustainability issues that are on people's minds more generally.

Following on from this question, a related but distinct final question asked students to identify what they believe is the most important change that the University could make to operate in a more sustainable way. The top themes that emerged from the written responses are similar to the previous question and included energy (with many comments relating to renewable energy from solar), transport, green spaces,

food, waste, and education/awareness issues (Figure 3.26). These are all priority areas of the University's Strategic Framework for Sustainability.

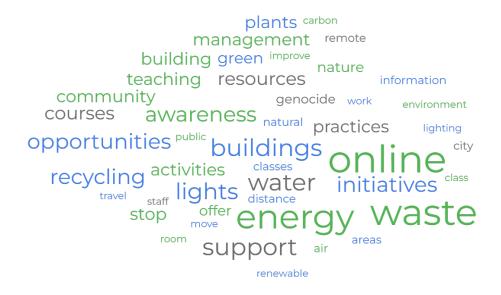


Figure 3.25. Students' perceptions of what the University could improve regarding sustainability.

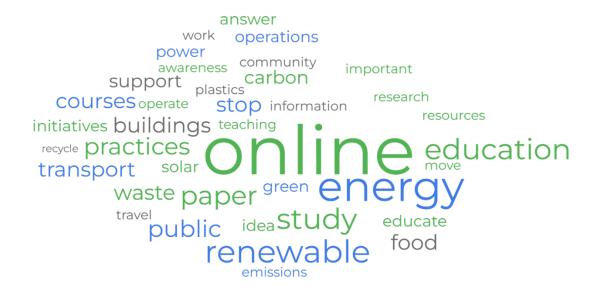


Figure 3.26 Students' perceptions of what is the most important change the University could make to operate in a more sustainable way.

4 Conclusion

Overall, the 2024 Sustainability Survey has shown positive results and an improvement from previous surveys, with most responses to the questions showing a high awareness of, and interest in, sustainability. The general positive trend also indicates that University strategies and initiatives are effective. This is important for the University to continue to support and deliver change to become a global leader in sustainability. The results of this survey in relation to student attitudes, experiences and values can be used to guide University sustainability initiatives in the future.

As fewer students have chosen to participate in the survey compared to other years (although the results remain significant), new methods of marketing for the survey may need to be implemented to further increase the significance in the representation of the student body's views and practices regarding sustainability. This could be done through the more active encouragement of engagement from lecturers and tutors across all discipline areas, as well as more clubs' and societies' social media platforms.