



UNIVERSITY *of*  
TASMANIA

# University of Tasmania Strategic Framework for Sustainability

February 2020



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# Executive summary

The University of Tasmania is committed to operating and focusing on sustainable outcomes for ourselves, our surrounding communities and the world. While respecting the traditional owners and their deep history with these lands and waters, we will strive to act in the best interests of not only the current generation but of generations to come. We will holistically embed this in the ethos of our operating model, our teaching, learning and research activities, and through engagement with our partners and stakeholders.

The University Strategic Plan 2019-2024 identifies the contributions we wish to make for Tasmania, as well as nationally and globally, across several key outcome areas: education, health, culture, social, economy and environment.

Our Strategic Framework for Sustainability provides a collective focus on activities in and for sustainability across the University and in so doing encapsulates our commitment across four areas:

- Goal 1: A leader in sustainability governance and implementation
- Goal 2: A leader in sustainability education and research
- Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement activities deliver sustainability outcomes
- Goal 4: A university committed to sustainability in its facilities and operations management.

Achievement of these goals is guided by whole-of-institution aspirational, absolute and continuous improvement targets. Progress to attainment is framed through our contribution areas and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and assessed and reported on annually.

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# Our commitment, our aspiration

The University of Tasmania has proclaimed its strong commitment to sustainability through the University's statement of values, sustainability vision and mission statements and various governance instruments.

Our Statement of Values rests on a proven history of a sustainable model of a 1,000-year tradition of higher education and enduring foundations of shared purpose and notes that "[we] work in a unique setting and actively partner with the communities in which we live, in support of a healthy, civil and sustainable society. At the same time, we are outwardly focused and part of a global community, engaging with the rest of Australia and the world."<sup>1</sup>

The finite qualities of islands remind us that ecologically and socially we need to be a sustainable place; we must work with ecosystems, not against them, and the definition to a community provided by our island's watery boundaries reminds us that we must work together. Tasmania has environmental values that are of global significance and, as islanders, we have obligations of stewardship. As we think about that stewardship and the broader

tasks of being sustainable, we are guided in our thinking by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>2</sup>

Building on these guiding statements, our sustainability framework provides an essential foundation for the University to undertake a holistic approach to sustainability. This effort is an ongoing formative process that assists in coordinating, guiding and giving coherence to the project of sustainability at the University. As a sustainable university, we will focus our efforts on embedding sustainability principles into all facets of the University: learning and teaching, research, community engagement and operations.

## Sustainability vision<sup>3</sup>

The University of Tasmania plays a vital role in leading our place-based and globally-connected communities in understanding and delivering sustainable futures.

## Sustainability mission<sup>4</sup>

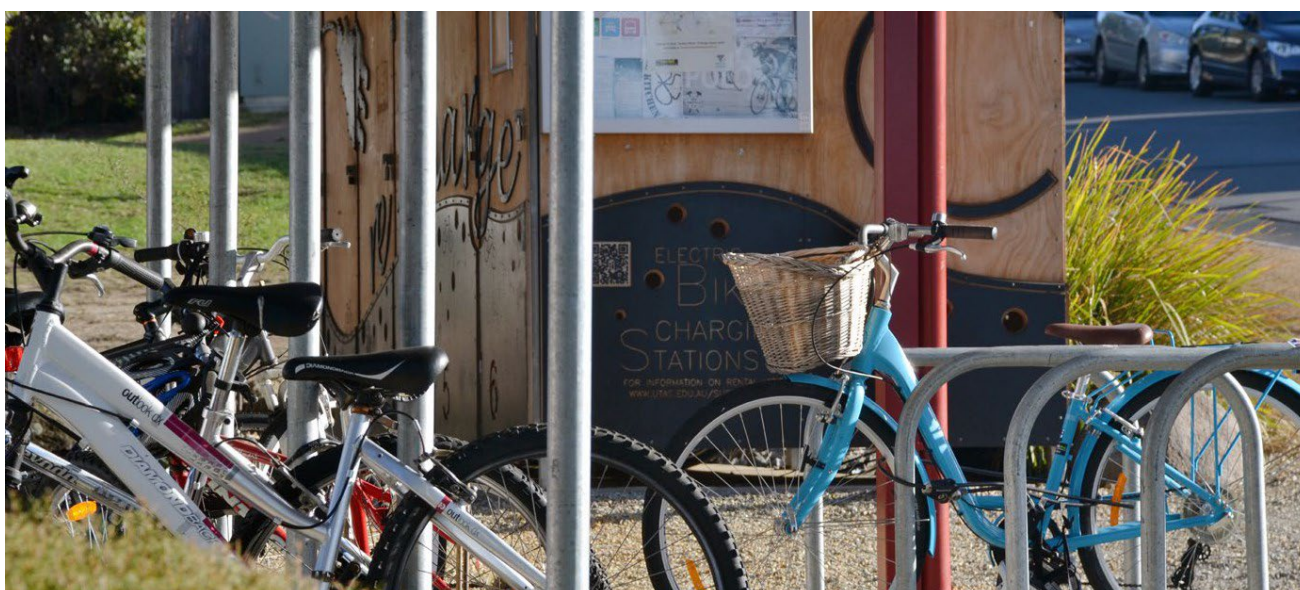
Sustainability is essential to planetary health and human flourishing. Through our operations and academic activities, we have a vital role in facilitating sustainable forms of living. We uphold that sustainability is central to open and rigorous learning and knowledge creation that also recognises thousands of human generations of Tasmanian Aboriginal and other traditional knowledges and value systems. We are committed to embodying sustainable forms of production and consumption within the University and enable pathways towards a just and viable future. We commit to accountability and authenticity in our endeavours. We empower the University's students, staff and alumni to be facilitators in their fields and contribute to sustainable living now and into the future.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.utas.edu.au/ourvalues/utas-statement-of-values>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ap-unsdsn.org/regional-initiatives/universities-sdgs/university-commitment>

<sup>3</sup> Full University of Tasmania Sustainability Vision statement available at [www.utas.edu.au/sustainability](http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability)

<sup>4</sup> Full University of Tasmania Sustainability Mission statement available at [www.utas.edu.au/sustainability](http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability)



# Why a sustainable university?

Locally and globally, communities are facing urgent and unprecedented challenges and opportunities to deliver a sustainable<sup>5</sup> future for our planet. The University of Tasmania's commitment to sustainability arises from extensive consultation with our community, which desires that our University be a sustainable, innovative, global university and expect all staff and students to incorporate sustainability into their decisions and actions.

This commitment reflects the understanding that sustainability is an opportunity across all facets of University activity, including learning and teaching, research, community engagement activities and operations.



<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

# Our community, our efforts

The University of Tasmania has already established a reputation locally, nationally and internationally as a leader in sustainability, including a core contribution to establishing a United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development. This is evident through our:

- international contribution to research (e.g. climate change, environment, sociocultural change, agriculture and health)
- award-winning teaching programs (e.g. Sustainability Integration Program for Students, involving students and staff in delivering sustainability outcomes)
- sustainability achievements and acknowledgements (e.g. Green Star-rated buildings, Green Gown International and Australasia Awards, Australian Property Institute Awards, Masters Builders Association Excellence Awards, Community Achievement Awards).

We have demonstrated our ability to attract external funding and partnerships, deliver efficiencies and operate more effectively to build a sustainable future for our University, but this work now needs to be further highlighted, linked and leveraged.

The University of Tasmania’s locally and globally-focused teaching, research, and community engagement agendas support use of education as a central tool to achieve a sustainable university. The University and Tasmania can continue to expand our approach to explore ways to work towards sustainability by creating a healthier, more literate, more environmentally and culturally sustainable, and more equitable society. In this way, the University will become a showcase of sustainability and sustainable development both locally and globally.

Oversight of the University’s sustainability framework is the responsibility of the University’s Sustainability Committee and primarily led through cross-institutional collaboration, in partnership with academic and professional staff, students – through the Tasmanian University Union

and other student stakeholder groups, as well as the broader community of alumni, stakeholders and the Tasmanian community.

Our Strategic Framework for Sustainability provides a collective focus on activities in sustainability across the University and in so doing encapsulates our commitment to our community, including:

- acknowledging the invasion and dispossession of Tasmanian Aboriginal land and recognising the deep history of **sustainable Aboriginal cultural practices and activities**, the University commits to ongoing conversations and actions to apply Aboriginal sustainability knowledge and activities to decolonise our curriculum
- helping **students** to understand broad issues of sustainability on a local and global scale, investigating students’ views on sustainability and encouraging them to be an active and creative partner in helping realise a more sustainable future for the University and its community
- recognising the positive contribution of our **staff** in shaping activities and

outcomes, by embedding sustainability across the University and growing our excellent reputation for sector leadership

- inviting our **alumni, business associates and suppliers, community members, partners and other stakeholders’** involvement in partnering with the University to work within the objectives of the sustainability framework.

The University Strategic Plan 2019-2024 identifies the contributions we wish to make for Tasmania, as well as nationally and globally, across several key outcome areas (see Figure 1)<sup>6</sup>.

The Strategic Framework for Sustainability (the Framework) provides an approach to guide delivery and track contributions to these outcomes. This is accomplished through embedding the principles, strategies and associated objectives across all institutional activity areas and into normal business operations across all colleges and divisions.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1170409/UTAS-Strategic-Direction-Brochure.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1170409/UTAS-Strategic-Direction-Brochure.pdf)



Figure 1: University community contribution focus areas.

# Our approach

This framework supports the University's existing governance structures and strategic commitments to embed sustainability across all institutional activities. This will be accomplished through inclusion of sustainability into all strategies, plans and reporting. Undertaking a framework approach versus a standalone strategy acknowledges the integrative nature of sustainability and respects existing efforts across the University. At the same time, such a framework seeks to provide a strong mechanism to further deliver sustainability outcomes within and beyond the University.

Our approach to the sustainability framework takes its context from the United Nations-brokered Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Learning in Future Environments Index (LiFE) and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). Our institutional goals are based on the underpinning rationale of the SDGs as a broad approach to sustainable development. The LiFE index allows a tertiary-education-focused strategic approach for embedding sustainability across the institution and STARS provides a monitoring and reporting framework of the progress of implementing sustainability across the institution.

## Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals<sup>7</sup> (Figure 2), through the United Nations (UN) Development Programme, integrate environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects and recognise their linkages in achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions, including in other UN programs. Therefore, with the aim of being a global, sustainable and responsible leading institution, the Framework will be aligned with these goals.

The SDGs are specifically named as a University curriculum focus and there is a clear alignment between the SDGs and many of our research themes as described in following sections.



<sup>7</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Figure 2: Sustainable Development Goals. Image source: Stockholm University – Stockholm Resilience Centre.

## University of Tasmania Strategic Framework for Sustainability

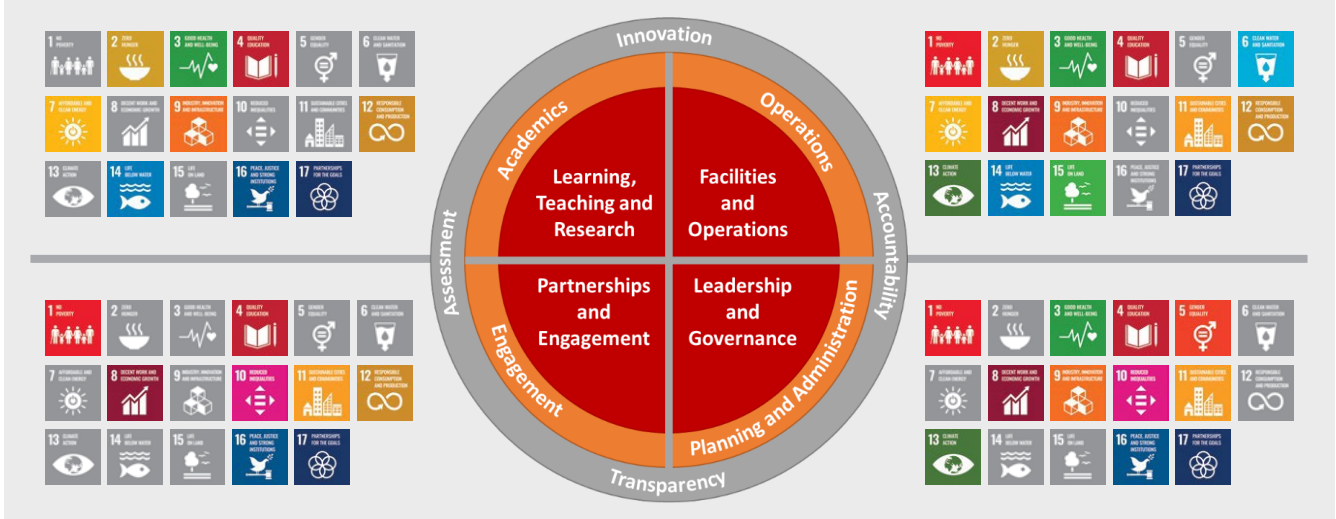


Figure 3: Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) Index priority areas (red) mapped to the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) categories and sub-categories (orange) with University of Tasmania activity areas reflected in the SDGs.

The University is positioned through our policies<sup>8</sup> and strategies to leverage the SDGs through:

- stated goals of economic and environmental sustainability, socially equitable, health optimisation and innovation<sup>9</sup>
- a curriculum that seeks to allow students to broaden and personalise their experience by integrating studies with extracurricular involvement and future aspirations, including leadership and service opportunities, community engagement, industry engagement and engagement with the big ideas and complex problems of our time<sup>10</sup>
- existing research strengths directly mirroring many of the 17 SDGs (e.g. Goal 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing, Goal 4 – Quality Education, Goal 13 – Climate Action, Goal 14 – Life Below Water, Goal 15 – Life on Land)<sup>11</sup>
- participation in Universitas Indonesia (UI) GreenMetric and *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings, which both map to the SDGs
- high-level strategic commitments to research excellence and a specific focus on educational attainment for

all Tasmanians through broad course offerings and regional campuses<sup>12</sup>

- established partnerships with the Tasmanian Government and major urban local governments that provide for a whole-of-state approach to support implementation of activities that reflect the Global Goals – from primary school, to senior secondary, to degrees, to research
- the University's unique position as one of the largest employers in the state and a world-renowned academic institution to influence change from local to international levels.

### Learning in Future Environments Index

Based on the Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) Index<sup>13</sup> (Figure 3), developed by the tertiary education sector, our Strategic Framework for Sustainability provides a holistic approach that enables delivery of efficacious sustainability outcomes across the institution. The LiFE Index has been identified by the Sustainability Committee as the tool to provide a strategic approach for embedding sustainability holistically across the institution. The index has four priority areas that guide this framework: leadership and governance; learning, teaching and research; facilities and operations; and partnerships and engagement. The LiFE

Index allows an ongoing process for engaging stakeholders campus-wide with self-assessment elements to ascertain progress against definitions of good practice.

### Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS)

While the LiFE Index provides a strategic framework for embedding sustainability across an institution, STARS<sup>14</sup> provides a mechanism to measure progress through a reporting framework designed by the tertiary sector (Figure 3). Both LiFE and STARS share a common holistic structure, as shown in Figure 3 in the red core areas and coordinated orange band around this. These approaches share the common elements of a focus on innovation.

STARS involves an annual collection of data resulting in a comprehensive report and rating (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum). The collection of the data in STARS is directly mapped to the SDGs, is used as a basis for the *Times Higher Education* Impact Ranking methodology and complements other University reporting efforts (e.g. TEFMA<sup>15</sup>, NGRS<sup>16</sup>) and ranking system participation (e.g. UI GreenMetric).

8 <http://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

9 Various documents, including Strategic Plan 2019-2024 as well as research, teaching and learning and community engagement strategies, Sustainability Policy and in signing declarations such as Talloires or through membership in international organisations such as Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS)

10 <http://www.utas.edu.au/dvc-students-education>

11 [http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/807997/Strategic-Research-Plan-2014-2018.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/807997/Strategic-Research-Plan-2014-2018.pdf)

12 <http://www.utas.edu.au/vc/open-to-talent>

13 <http://life.acts.asn.au/>

14 <https://stars.aashe.org/pages/about/stars-overview.html>

15 <https://www.tefma.com>

16 <http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-science-data/greenhouse-gas-measurement/nger>



# Our current commitment

The University's current commitment to sustainability is demonstrated by commitments and initiatives already undertaken, building on our Statement of Values and sustainability vision and mission statements. The four LiFE priority areas provide the framework to summarise this commitment.

## Leadership and governance

The University is globally-focused and sees the value of international approaches to education and sustainability. This has led to:

- Signing of international commitments, including the:
  - University Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>17</sup> initiative in 2019
  - Magna Charta Universitatum in 2013, a long tradition of excellence and commitment to free enquiry in the creation, preservation, communication and application of knowledge
  - Talloires Declaration in 2009<sup>18</sup>, an international, voluntary 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in University activities.
- Participation in several international programs, ranking activities and sectoral organisations, including:
  - United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise (UN RCE) in Education for Sustainable Development<sup>19</sup>
  - United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)<sup>20</sup>
  - Universitas Indonesia GreenMetric international ranking<sup>21</sup>
  - Times Higher Education Impact Ranking<sup>22</sup>

- Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS)<sup>23</sup>, the peak sectoral body for sustainability in higher education.

Institutional commitments and value statements through to strategies and detailed policies highlight University undertakings for sustainability through:

- The University's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024<sup>24</sup>:  
*'The finite qualities of islands remind us that ecologically and socially we need to be a sustainable place; we must work with ecosystems, not against them, and the definition of a community provided by our island's watery boundaries reminds us that we must work together. Tasmania has environmental values that are of global significance and, as islanders, we have obligations of stewardship. As we think about that stewardship and the broader task of being sustainable, we are guided in our thinking by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the recognition that our job is to find our way to create a model where prosperity, inclusivity, the environment and social and technological progress advance together, not in tension.'*

*We will 'find the distinctive sources of advantage that are needed to generate wealth, services and infrastructure to support a decent quality of life. Our job is to help find those sources, enable people to participate in the opportunities that they create and ensure we do it in an environmentally sustainable way.'*

*We will 'deliver our mission and our aspiration to see Tasmania as a place that is a model for the world of a sustainable, prosperous and inclusive society where people live well'.*

*We will 'develop the science, engineering and ways of working and living that provide an environmentally sustainable path to inclusive prosperity'.*

*We will 'develop the next generation of facilities across our regions, through the Northern Transformation Program and the Southern Future move to the Hobart CBD, that are distinctive, environmentally sustainable and highly efficient in their operation. These facilities are not to replace what we have but to enable a sustainable operating model for the University.'*

- Our Sustainability Mission<sup>25</sup> and Policy<sup>26</sup>, which specifically require development and implementation of a strategic approach to sustainability.
- Establishment of the Sustainability Committee<sup>27</sup> by the University Executive Team with oversight provided by the University Council.
- Resourcing commitments through staffing and sustainability activity budgets.
- Compliance reporting through the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting scheme.
- Voluntary reporting of environmental data through the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA) and participation in international sustainability-focused rankings (e.g. Universitas Indonesia GreenMetric and Times Higher Education Impact Rankings).
- Voluntary participation in the Australian Government Carbon Active Network and carbon neutral certification against international methodologies (one of only two Australian universities to achieve certification).

Various local, national and international awards for programs, projects, students and staff as well as successful grant-funding applications provide acknowledgement of the University's commitments and successes in sustainability endeavours, but also highlight the need to ensure governance and management instruments continue to support best practice and continuous improvement.

17 <https://ap-unsdsn.org/membership/>

18 <http://ulsf.org/talloires-declaration/>

19 <http://efs.tas.edu.au/>

20 <http://unsdsn.org/>

21 <http://greenmetric.ui.ac.id/>

22 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-impact-rankings-faqs>

23 <http://www.acts.asn.au/>

24 University of Tasmania Strategic Plan 2019-2024

25 <http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability/sustainability-mission>

26 Sustainability Policy

27 <http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability/sustainability-committee>

## Learning, teaching and research

Arising from the University becoming a Talloires Declaration signatory, the Education for Sustainability Community of Practice (EfS CoP)<sup>28</sup> was established in 2011 to facilitate academic leadership in sustainability education.

Central to sustainability education is the need to integrate environmental, economic and sociocultural knowledge. This integration is facilitated by our strategic commitment in our teaching strategies, including the University of Tasmania Education Model<sup>29</sup> to understand and support a reinterpretation of traditional disciplinary programs that is focused on the needs of students, Tasmania and the world, noting:

*‘We don’t just prepare our students for careers but increasingly we support their reskilling, upskilling, and preparedness to successfully engage in a global society throughout their lives.’*

*‘We need to recognise the importance of collaboration across colleges and the University.’*

The University also specifically focuses on sustainability across all disciplines and directly includes sustainability as a focus area, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals. Through this and complementary focus areas, *‘our graduates recognise and critically evaluate issues of social responsibility, ethical conduct and sustainability’*.<sup>30</sup>

Our Strategic Plan 2019-2024 illustrates how our colleges and divisions will each contribute to the broader institutional goals with respect to a holistic approach to sustainability. Interconnected to the broader University mission and approaches, each college and division

has noted specific strategic approaches, including:

- College of Arts, Law and Education – ‘Our research will be aligned with the State’s educational and social needs and priorities, situating Tasmania as a ‘social research laboratory’ of international standing’;
- College of Sciences and Engineering – ‘We will create an interdisciplinary response to the mitigation, adaptation and management of the impact of climate change for Tasmania, the Southern Ocean, Antarctica and the world’;
- College of Health and Medicine – ‘We will transform health outcomes through professional education and research that are of global importance and local relevance’;
- College of Business and Economics – ‘We will improve our research performance and refocus on areas that are important to the future prosperity of Tasmania, such as enterprise development, value/supply chain management, sustainable business practices, agribusiness and health management’;
- University College – ‘We believe in offering an equitable higher education option characterised by applied and experiential learning and teaching, a strong commitment to regional Tasmania, social inclusion and the creation of work-ready graduates’;
- Research Division – ‘Our research priorities will include helping Tasmania understand its history, identity and future; providing intensive value-adding to local industries where knowledge creates competitive advantage; and solving the distinctive social and sustainability challenges of our State’;
- Academic Division – ‘We will create a university experience that reflects our unique place and history in the world. The sense of community experienced by students will be strengthened by an inclusive environment that promotes engagement with what is special about Tasmania, its people and its quality of life’;

- Global and Marketing Division – ‘To create a sustainable future for the University, we need to attract more students with much greater diversity. We will do this through a distinctive brand [that is] deeply authentic, speaking to our place, mission and purpose’; and,
- Chief Operating Officer Division – ‘We will be guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals to become a community leader in sustainable practice by leveraging our scale, place and intent to contribute to a better society and environment.’

## Partnership and engagement

The University also focuses on our Tasmanian community through partnership with the State and local governments, Aboriginal and community organisations. Our Strategic Plan (2019-2024) notes the criticality that these partnerships be based on shared mission and values to deliver a better future and the *‘mission that requires us to work in deep and sustained partnerships, both internally and with the many other organisations and people across the State and around the world who are also committed to creating that better future’*.

These relationships are delivered under both the University Community and Partnerships Strategic Plan<sup>31</sup> and the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement<sup>32</sup>. The former explicitly includes a commitment to undertake community engagement activities that *‘maximise community wellbeing, university teaching and research, and sustainability’*.

The Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Engagement 2017-2020 enacts the University’s commitment to revitalise and embed its relationship with Aboriginal people, communities, businesses, culture and knowledge. The plan spans all areas of operation of the University

28 <http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability/learning-and-teaching-and-research/education-for-sustainability-community-of-practice>

29 <https://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/>

30 Graduate Quality Statement Policy

31 <https://www.utas.edu.au/community-and-partners>

32 <http://www.utas.edu.au/aboriginal-business/strategic-plan>

and is implemented in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal students, scholars and community. Stronger Aboriginal engagement contributes significantly to the breadth of the University's social, intellectual and cultural diversity.

Through high levels of regional and community engagement, the University brings together the strengths of existing individuals and organisations currently working towards environmental, economic and sociocultural sustainability. This engagement seeks to recognise and support the excellent work taking place around Tasmania that needs to be identified, validated, highlighted, linked and leveraged.

Our successful linkages into the broader Tasmanian community provide the University with a unique role to play as a sustainability leader, partner and contributor. This is evidenced through formal and informal partnerships with various community organisations and as a founding member of Education for Sustainability Tasmania<sup>33</sup>: A United Nations-recognised Regional Centre of Expertise<sup>34</sup>, one of five in Australia and 168 globally.

Links into the broader community through our suppliers via sustainable procurement efforts as well as a wide range of business and industry engagement activities also ensure that we are leveraging sustainable outcomes for our island home.

The University community is made up of its staff, students, alumni and supporters. Active engagement and empowerment of these community members, to live and work sustainably, is an important focus for the University. Included within this concept of community is recognition of the overlap between sustainability and wellbeing.<sup>35</sup> Our People Strategy is based on *'the kind of university we want to be: values-based, relational, diverse, and development-focused'*.

33 <http://efs.tas.edu.au/partners/>

34 <http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/rces-worldwide>

35 University of Tasmania commitment to a Framework for Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing in Universities commitment; <http://unistudentwellbeing.edu.au/framework>

Communications is central to engagement and thus the Sustainability Committee publishes periodic sustainability bulletins and maintains a landing page for sustainability on the University website, facilitating navigation to governance and strategy information, highlighting activities, programs and accomplishments and providing avenues for engagement.

As members of a global community, our international partnerships provide for staff and student exchanges of ideas and learning, as well as knowledge creation and application. Our network of global partners positions the University as a leader in solving issues relating to sustainability.

## Facilities and operations

The University Sustainability Policy explicitly encompasses ensuring delivery and maintenance of sustainable facilities and operations to:

- develop and manage sustainable resourcing strategies for the University's facilities and operations
- increase resilience of the University and its adaptability to a changing environment
- strengthen and diversify the University's income base to ensure that we have enough resources to deliver our core activities in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainability as set out in the policy<sup>36</sup>.
- operate in a sustainable way to improve environmental and social outcomes by reducing resource consumption (including energy and water), increasing resource recovery, reducing waste and pollution (including greenhouse gas emissions), maximising sustainable transport choices associated with the University, protecting and enhancing biodiversity on University properties, applying whole life costing models in the built environment, and embedding sustainable procurement principles.

In addition, other policies place a significant emphasis on ensuring our facilities and operations put priority on sustainable outcomes.

The University has had a continuing focus on operational environmental sustainability outcomes since 2008, including concentrated efforts in areas such as:

- transport through the Sustainable Transport Strategies 2012-16 and 2017-21
- built environment with several Green Building Council of Australia Green Star-rated developments and refurbishments following environmentally-sustainable design principles
- energy efficiency efforts such as lighting upgrades and management, and central heating upgrades
- onsite renewable energy installations, including supporting the Tasmanian University Union office spaces becoming one of the first student unions to be 100% onsite renewably-powered, provision of solar panels on bike hubs to support electric bike charging, and larger solar arrays on new student accommodation developments
- waste management focusing on reduced materials use (e.g., packaging, disposables) and provision of recycling infrastructure and services
- water conservation achieved through demand reduction, use efficiency and rainwater harvesting
- delivery of certified carbon neutrality, including carbon management and detailed carbon emissions inventories to meet international standards
- inclusion of sustainability as a core priority in our procurement strategy applying ISO 20400, addressing issues with modern slavery and other proactive purchasing activities.

The success of these efforts has been supported through high-level support, resource allocation, and achieving external grant funding and recognition through local, national and international awards, addressing issues with modern slavery and other proactive purchasing activities.

36 <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy/policies/governance-and-accountability/6.6-Sustainability-Policy>

# Our continuing commitment

The University is committed to embedding sustainability principles into all facets of our endeavours to ensure that the University's sustainability practices reflect and complement its desired standing and contribution in the local and global community. Based on the LiFE Index priority areas, the University has identified four goals and related actions directly related to the four LiFE elements to deliver our sustainability agenda.

Figure 4 identifies high-level strategies and primary lead(s) for each priority area, recognising that everyone has a role to play in achieving our sustainable university aspiration.



## University of Tasmania Strategic Framework for Sustainability

### Strategic intent

To intergrate sustainability across the curriculum and within research areas, including to deliver and facilitate extra-curricular opportunities in sustainability and to use the University as a 'living lab'.

### Primary lead(s)

- Academic Division
  - Research Division
  - Colleges
- Collaborating with other Divisions

### Strategic intent

To maintain to University's social mission focus in our partnerships and run a University-wide sustainability engagement program.

### Primary lead(s)

- Office of Vice-Chancellor
- Global Division
- COO Division
- Collaborating the Colleges and other Divisions



### Strategic intent

To ensure facilities and operations meet sectoral or world's best practice delivering operational sustainability outcomes.

### Primary lead(s)

- COO Division lead
- Collaborating with Colleges and other Divisions

### Strategic intent

To embed sustainability in University core business and culture to increase capacity to contribute to sustainable forms of development.

### Primary lead(s)

- University Council
- Academic Senate
- University Executive Team
- Collaborating with Colleges' leadership

Figure 4: High-level strategies and responsibilities for each priority area.

## Goal 1: A leader in sustainability governance and implementation

We will continue to be a leader in sustainability through consulting with our community, embedding, promoting and progressing sustainability across the University and within the broader community.

The University Council and senior management are committed to providing clear leadership, on behalf of students, staff and the broader University community, to ensure that sociocultural responsibility and environmental sustainability are as strategically important as financial sustainability. This will, in turn, support emerging leadership throughout the entire institution, including the University's creative partners, staff, students and the broader University community. Increasing responsibilities placed on senior management provide the impetus for governing bodies to review both financial and non-financial risks and opportunities, including any potential impact sustainability and climate change may have on an institution.

The Leadership and Governance LiFE Index category examines and encourages both ambitious strategic intent and focuses on building capacity through staff development. Alongside financial sustainability, embedding sociocultural and environmental sustainability into established processes and systems will ensure these remain strategically important issues and part of everyday institutional practices for long-term benefit.

The following leadership and governance actions support the University to deliver Goal 1:

- Make sustainability a part of the University's core business by:
  - acknowledging the contribution of Aboriginal deep history and knowledges through thousands of human generations and contemporary presence to the University's distinctive sense of Tasmanian belonging and identity; fostering Aboriginal social, cultural, intellectual and economic capacity; bringing to the foreground the University's Aboriginal cultural,

intellectual and community relationships in how we 'be' the University of Tasmania and add the strength of Aboriginal cultural values to the University Values

- explicitly integrating sustainability within learning and teaching, research, community engagement and operational activities, including through existing governance instruments and through active participation in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)<sup>37</sup> and delivering on our commitment to the SDSN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Initiative<sup>38</sup>
- identifying gaps and conflicting directions in current policies, strategies, implementation plans and procedures, and develop new policies and procedures as required, to deliver on all aspects of sustainability across the University, including health and wellbeing through inclusion in the People Strategy
- ensuring continued resource allocation for sustainability initiatives
- actively participate in the Australian Health-Promoting Universities Network<sup>39</sup> which works collaboratively to create healthier university campuses and communities
- integrating sustainability through effective evidence-based monitoring and formal institutional reporting (e.g., Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System) to also support participation in relevant performance-based ranking systems (e.g., UI GreenMetric, *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings).
- Increase the capacity of the University to contribute to sustainable forms of development in Tasmania, Australia and globally (see Goal 3).
- Increase the capacity of the University to attract local, national and international staff and students who have sustainability as a key driver by:
  - enhancing awareness of sustainability activities and outcomes across the University community, the tertiary education sector and the broader global community
  - integrating sustainability into the University brand and marketing this to prospective students
  - demonstrating commitment to staff and student wellbeing, validation and career progression
  - recognising staff and student innovations and effective approaches to leading sustainable practice.
- Support local, regional and social enterprise through business-community partnerships.
- Ensure University funds are invested in accordance with University Investment Policy which applies responsible investment approaches with the United Nations-supported Principles of Responsible Investing (PRI) guiding decisions on environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. A continuous improvement and review approach will be employed in acknowledgement of student and staff expectations and advocacy with respect to investment approaches and outcomes.<sup>40</sup>
- Deliver a comprehensive communications approach with respect to sustainability that raises awareness, considers students' concerns, spurs action and enhances the University brand.

## Responsibility

These actions are led by the University Executive Team, Academic Senate, University Council and the Tasmanian University Union with support from the Sustainability Committee, including input from student representatives.

<sup>37</sup> <http://unsdsn.org>

<sup>38</sup> <https://ap-unsdsn.org/membership/>

<sup>39</sup> <http://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2016/03/15/australian-universities-make-health-and-wellbeing-a-priority.html>

<sup>40</sup> [www.utas.edu.au/sustainability/sustainability-performance/sustainability-surveys](http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability/sustainability-performance/sustainability-surveys)

## Goal 2: A leader in sustainability education and research

Students, staff, alumni, tertiary education sector, government, industry and the local, national and international communities will recognise the University as a leader in sustainability education and research, including Indigenous knowledge arising from the deep connection and commitment to sustainability and knowledge of place. The University recognises that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community has a strong and deep history of sustainability practices through caring for Country, sea and waterways.

Learning, teaching and research constitute core purposes of an educational institution. It is through activities aligned to the Learning, Teaching and Research LIFE Index category that institutions will realise their full potential to address sociocultural responsibility, environmental sustainability and sustainable development. Through formal and informal curricula, skills training and development, knowledge transfer and research, institutions have a significant, positive long-term impact on society.

## Teaching and Learning

Ensuring students are exposed to and engaged in learning experiences that maximise their opportunities to graduate as sustainability-literate citizens is undoubtedly the most important step towards a sustainable future in a rapidly-changing world. Recognising opportunities for staff to be exposed to and participate in sustainability-related learning and teaching experiences is also a critical element in being a sustainable university.

The following teaching and learning actions support the University to deliver Goal 2:

- Integrate sustainability across the curriculum to meet the needs of current and prospective students, employers, and professional and statutory bodies, nationally and globally by:
  - supporting curriculum innovation, development and change towards sustainability understanding that domestic and international students may differ in awareness, understanding and applied context

- supporting teaching staff to embed critical inquiry about sustainability in their curriculum and pedagogy through professional development opportunities, guidance and recognising teaching loads
- mapping the curriculum against the Sustainable Development Goals for internal planning and in outward communications (e.g., course guides)
- monitoring and reporting inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum.
- Deliver and facilitate extracurricular opportunities to augment students' understanding of all aspects of sustainability and their capacity for sustainable living and working by:
  - implementing and facilitating innovative and transformative ways in which sustainability can enhance the student and staff experience
  - engaging students as partners in creating learning experiences relating to sustainability.
- Foster collaboration and innovation among education practitioners by:
  - strengthening the Education for Sustainability Community of Practice
  - supporting organisational learning towards a sustainable university, including from sector-leading activities, inductions and professional development offerings, and resourcing.
- Implement quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content and educational experiences that build independent resilient and confident learners, supported through shared celebrations, culture and community.
- Support using University campuses and facilities as well as our Tasmanian context for sustainability-related learning, within and outside the formal curriculum.
- Pursue synergies with research and teaching and learning potential by building on collaborations across organisational units and disciplines and other University research interests, operations, external partners, and resource allocations.

- Play a national and international role in profiling the University's sustainability education work and in contributing to, and learning from, good practice and developments globally by:
  - engaging international students for their views and understandings of sustainability by sharing their country's best practices
  - encouraging students and staff to maintain and strengthen their own networks *'to enable pathways towards sustainability in Tasmania and around the world'*<sup>41</sup>.

## Research

University expertise in sustainability research will continue to be applied to identifying issues and to creating solutions for international, national and local, environmental, economic and sociocultural problems. Through our discipline-based research as well as trans-disciplinary, application-focused and innovative approaches, we will contribute

41 Full University of Tasmania Sustainability Mission statement available at [www.utas.edu.au/sustainability](http://www.utas.edu.au/sustainability)



to creating a more sustainable, just and equitable future as a hub for sociocultural transformation and learning.

The following research actions support the University to deliver Goal 2:

- Increase the capacity of University researchers to create and disseminate new knowledge about sustainability by:
  - supporting discipline-based expertise
  - pursuing a systems-based and interdisciplinary approach to sustainability research, embracing broad environmental, economic and sociocultural perspectives
  - enhancing the staff and student experience by bringing together multi-discipline networks for sustainability and encouraging engagement from all disciplines
  - supporting research centres, groups and individuals with funding bids and project delivery, emphasising a solution-oriented approach.
- Engage all relevant communities and stakeholders to develop long-term impact for our sustainability research, where appropriate encouraging the co-design and co-production of research projects by:
  - implementation of our sustainability findings at relevant scales
  - improving communication of our sustainability research activities through targeted events, publications and digital media
  - promoting exchange of knowledge and influencing policy/strategy development with external stakeholders.
- Encourage students to further their sustainability education by facilitating research on sustainability across disciplines.
- To build, over time, a world-class Indigenous research program, positioning the University of Tasmania as a national/international leader in the field; this program will foster multidisciplinary Indigenous research

and Indigenous research relationships shaped by Indigenous perspectives and methodologies. In a two-way exchange, this research program extends access to Western knowledge for Indigenous students as well as opening Indigenous knowledge systems to non-Indigenous researchers.

- Play a national and international role through profiling the University's sustainability research, learning, shaping, and leading best practice and developments at a global level, particularly through strategic partnerships.

## Responsibility

These actions are led by our individual academics and professional staff, the Academic, Global and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) divisions in association with Academic Senate and the Division of the Chief Operating Officer.



### Goal 3: Partnerships and engagement activities deliver sustainability outcomes

The University will support strategic partnerships and engagement activities to enable delivery of sustainability outcomes for the University and the communities in which it operates.

Sustainability is only possible when there is collaboration and engagement. The difficulties posed for living and working sustainably and delivering sustainable development mean that progress is helped by the sharing of ideas and approaches. Working meaningfully with our partners, the University will seek to inspire and support creative solutions, challenge perceptions, provide insights, share expertise, and create opportunities.

The University has a civic and ethical duty to engage with the wider community to promote social inclusion, equity and justice. It will seek productive partnerships and engagement through external networks as well as through the critical internal communities of staff and students (past, present and future). For example, Aboriginal and University engagement brings a richness of Aboriginal culture, knowledges and belonging to Aboriginal identity and cultural breadth that will resonate through our University and into the broader non-Aboriginal Tasmanian community.

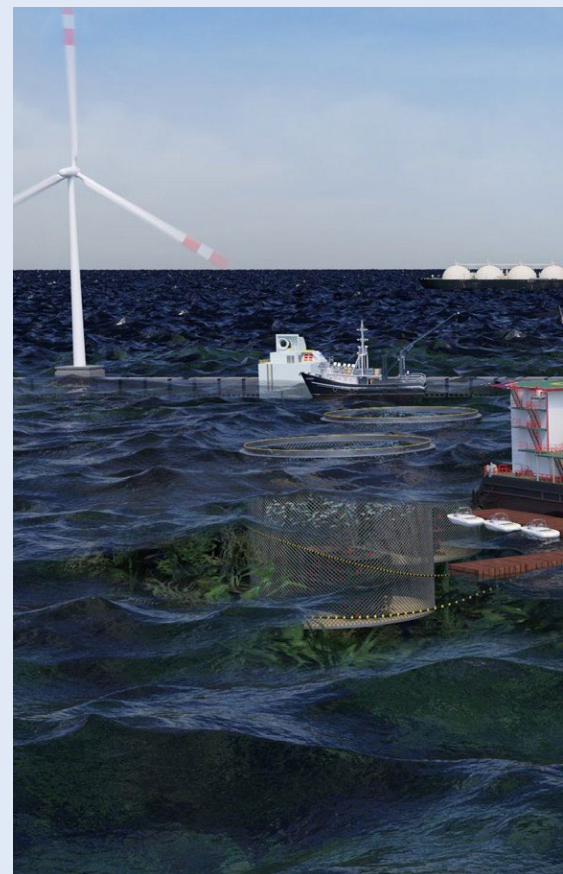
University relationships with business are often based around transactional activities, knowledge exchange or supporting workforce development with our community engaged with businesses of all kinds. Relationships that are based upon principles of meaningful partnerships and are developed for mutual benefit can help facilitate collaboration and cultures of innovation. These conditions are vital for change to occur and as such are significant to sustainable development.

Our global partnerships and engagement provide opportunities for knowledge creation and transfer between cultures.

The following partnership and engagement actions support the University to deliver Goal 3:

- Maintain the University's social mission focus in our community partnerships, which seeks to achieve better educational outcomes and improve health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians, contribute to the economic prosperity of the State as well as sociocultural and environmental enrichment.
- Run a University-wide sustainability engagement program, including regular sustainability-focused surveys of staff and students.
- Embed the practices of sociocultural responsibility based on the international standard (ISO) 26000 Social Responsibility to improve the impacts of development on our staff, natural environments and communities.
- Maintain and strengthen established partnerships and seek out new engagement opportunities with external stakeholders to explicitly include sustainability outcomes. For example:
  - Maintain and strengthen current international partnerships that support sustainability education, research and practice, embed sustainability into current international partnerships and create new international partnerships for sustainability
  - Maintain commitment to and involvement in Education for Sustainability Tasmania, which seeks to make a significant contribution to our Tasmanian community and the global learning space for education for sustainability, deliver more sustainable patterns of living, and achieve resilient, connected, educated communities, organisations and individuals<sup>42</sup>
- Encourage student participation and discover ways for students to gain study credits or other recognition for socially and environmentally responsible activities undertaken during their study
- Maintain our partnerships with local primary and secondary schools and learning institutions worldwide to continue to facilitate critical inquiry for sustainability within the community and encourage incorporating sustainability into study
- Maintain and strengthen the University of Tasmania - Tasmanian Government partnership
- Collaborate with various levels of government to continue to improve sustainable transport options, energy efficiencies, renewable energy generation, waste management, and apply circular economy principles
- Ensure all University contractor and supplier engagement includes a sustainability focus for all buildings, operations, supplies and services.

42 <http://efs.tas.edu.au/>

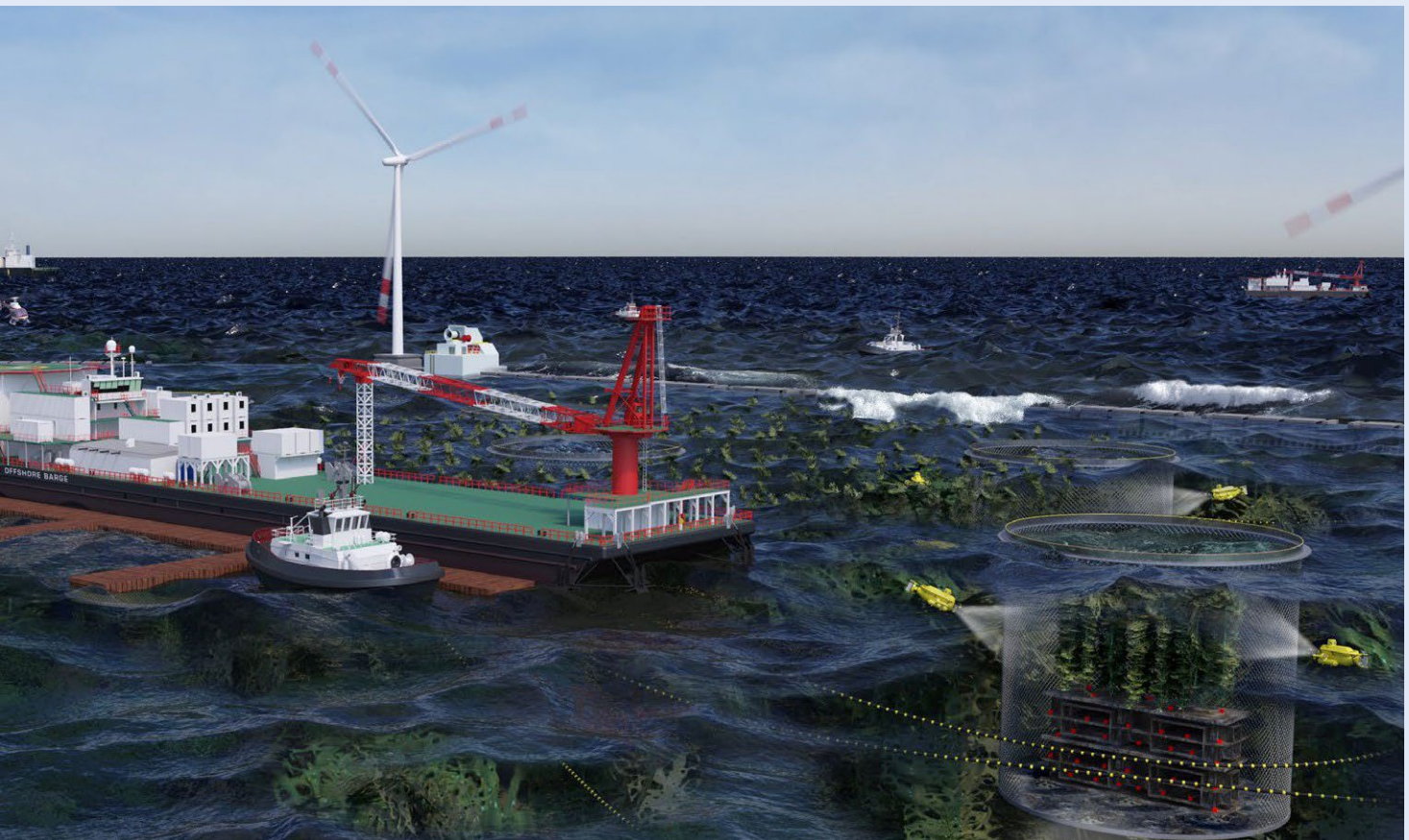




- Continue high-level involvement in sectoral sustainability efforts, such as through participation in the governance and operational levels of Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) and proactive participation in conferences and workshops.
- Continue to focus on internal engagement activities and engage students and staff as creative partners who understand and support sustainability as an integral aspect of University endeavours through:
  - formal channels such as the Sustainability Committee and workplace expectations and activities, including position descriptions, inductions and outreach activities
  - enabling online access and information exchange
  - targeted groups such as the Education for Sustainability Community of Practice, Sustainability Representatives, Riawunna, Student Life, the Tasmanian University Union and other student organisations and interested individuals
- integration into current activities and events (e.g., O-Week, Open Day) and through targeted initiatives (e.g. Sustainability Integration Program for Students – SIPS, Vice-Chancellor’s Leadership Program – VCLP) and communication channels (e.g., University news, social media).

## Responsibility

These actions are led by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Global Division and the Division of the Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with the Tasmanian University Union and other student organisations, other University colleges, institutes, centres and divisions.



## Goal 4: A university committed to sustainability in its facilities and operations management

To deliver our University mission while impacting positively on the natural environment and our broader communities, we will continue to develop and manage strategies and action plans to include a sustainability focus for our facilities and operations and for the procurement of goods and services.

The following facilities and operations actions support the University to deliver Goal 4:

- Maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of University processes, particularly through application of LEAN processes.
- Contribute to the University's long-term financial viability through a focus on improving its overall sustainability by:
  - focusing on cost-containing (e.g., energy efficiency, on-site renewable energy, waste minimisation, more efficient transport)
  - responsible investment as per University Investment Policy based on the United Nations-supported Principles of Responsible Investing (PRI) recognising the need for continuous improvement and review
  - diversifying income streams and income-generating activities that will create a positive financial contribution, return on investment and community impact.
- Develop detailed strategies and multi-year implementation plans with clear targets where applicable for operational sustainability focus areas that will guide and inform resource allocations to:
  - recognise the importance of

individual action to achieve operational sustainability outcomes by running a University-wide sustainability engagement program

- effectively apply industry-standard assessment frameworks, whole-life costing and circular economy models, especially when designing and procuring new buildings, refurbishing existing buildings and sourcing equipment
- minimise purchase of new equipment and materials by maximising re-use of existing University items

- embed sustainable procurement by ensuring the University is sourcing goods and services from socially, ethically and environmentally responsible businesses and conforming to international standards (e.g., ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement)
- ensure efficacious energy management and contribute to the Tasmanian Government 2022 target to be a 100% renewable-energy-powered State
- maintain carbon neutral certification and implement a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan to seek becoming carbon-positive
- manage the University's natural environment effectively for biodiversity with emphasis on protecting rare and threatened native species and minimising environmental harm.
- develop a sustainable food culture at the University based on:
  - focusing on environmentally and socially-positive practices and products;
  - minimising packaging use and ensuring what is used has low environmental impact by maximising re-use and recycling;
  - working with local food partners to increase the demand and supply of seasonal, local and organic food.
- maximise sustainable transport choices associated with the University by supporting staff, students and our suppliers with facilities, services, promotion of sustainable travel options to increase use of active and public transport and reduce single-occupant vehicle use as well as encourage greater use of video conferencing and other technology-enabled solutions to minimise physical journeys
- continue to pursue sustainable ICT projects to increase the energy efficiency of ICT facilities and operations and building systems and to minimise negative impact on the environment, including zero e-waste to landfill
- recognise that waste is most often a resource for someone else and apply a circular economy model to waste management, including reducing waste generated by the University community through reduced generation (avoidance), increased re-use and recycling and minimised disposal to landfill advancing to eliminating landfill disposal
- ensure water conservation by minimising consumption and increasing rainwater harvesting and use and recycling for use in greywater or irrigation activities
- maintain a perfect record of no stormwater pollution control incidents
- ensure all events run on campus meet the University Sustainable Event Guidelines<sup>43</sup>, including events organised by external users
- demonstrate continuous overall environmental improvement using international standards (e.g., ISO 14001) as guides.

## Responsibility

These actions are primarily led by the Division of the Chief Operating Officer in collaboration with other University colleges, institutes, centres and divisions.

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/160224/Tas-Sustainable-Event-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/160224/Tas-Sustainable-Event-Guidelines.pdf)



# Translating the Framework through the University

Our Sustainability Framework recognises that many policies, strategies, plans and procedures exist that contain (or could contain) elements that relate to a holistic institutional sustainability approach. This framework identifies ways to coordinate these elements through the Sustainability Committee and support action plans to deliver a sustainable University, including commitments to:

- Evaluate the status of integration of sustainability into all facets of the University by applying the LiFE Index and STARS with mapping to the SDGs and outcomes from the Strategic Plan (2019-2024), to recognise and, where appropriate, relate these to one another as well as identify gaps for additional focus.
- Engage in transparent dialogue with the University community and creative partners on the implementation of the framework and areas identified in the framework to ensure a communal approach to sustainability implementation.
- Review and develop policies, strategies, action plans, procedures and reporting approaches, including targets and measurements where appropriate, to ensure integration of sustainability across University activities through the colleges and divisions across the focus areas of learning and teaching, research, engagement, operations and governance.
- Ensure that contents and spirit of this framework are embedded in all new policies, strategies, plans, procedures, reporting and frameworks that govern the University's operations, leadership, learning, research and partnerships.
- Regularly monitor and report on the progress of Sustainability Framework implementation, with annual data management and collection recognised as a strong driver of focus.
- Update this framework as required in response to changing local, national and international contexts, and our own initiatives, to ensure that sustainability needs are identified, and practises strengthened.

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## Getting involved

There are many ways to get involved with the University of Tasmania's sustainability-related activities:

- UTAS Sustainability Committee: [utas.edu.au/sustainability](https://utas.edu.au/sustainability)
- Teaching and Learning
  - Students and Education: [S.E.LearningandTeaching@utas.edu.au](mailto:S.E.LearningandTeaching@utas.edu.au)
  - Strategic Plan for Learning and Teaching 2016-2020
  - UTAS Education for Sustainability Community of Practice: [efscop@utas.edu.au](mailto:efscop@utas.edu.au)
- Research at DVC Research: [dvc.research@utas.edu.au](mailto:dvc.research@utas.edu.au)
- Global Division
  - [Global.Division@utas.edu.au](mailto:Global.Division@utas.edu.au)
  - [Student.Mobility@utas.edu.au](mailto:Student.Mobility@utas.edu.au)
- Community, Engagement and Partnerships: [utas.edu.au/community-partnerships-and-regional-development](https://utas.edu.au/community-partnerships-and-regional-development)
- Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education: [utas.edu.au/riawunna](https://utas.edu.au/riawunna)
- College of Health and Medicine: [utas.edu.au/health](https://utas.edu.au/health)
- College of Arts, Law and Education: [utas.edu.au/arts-law-education](https://utas.edu.au/arts-law-education)
- College of Sciences and Engineering: [utas.edu.au/sciences-engineering](https://utas.edu.au/sciences-engineering)
- College of Business and Economics/Tasmanian School of Business and Economics: [utas.edu.au/business-and-economics/home](https://utas.edu.au/business-and-economics/home)
- University College [utas.edu.au/college](https://utas.edu.au/college)
- Division of the Chief Operating Officer:
  - [utas.edu.au/chief-operating-officer](https://utas.edu.au/chief-operating-officer)
  - Sustainable procurement team: [procure.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:procure.utas@utas.edu.au)
- Facilities and Operations
  - Sustainability team: [sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au)
  - Sustainability (Infrastructure Services and Development)
- Sustainability Integration Program for Students (SIPS)
  - SIPS coordinator: [SIPS.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:SIPS.utas@utas.edu.au)
- Education for Sustainability Tasmania: A United Nations recognised Regional Centre of Expertise
  - Efs Tasmania facilitator: [efstas@slt.org.au](mailto:efstas@slt.org.au)
  - Education for Sustainability Tasmania
- Tasmanian University Union (Environmental Officers and other sustainability-related positions, Student Representative Councils – North and South): [tuu.com.au](https://tuu.com.au)

