

# sustainability bulletin



ISSUE 13 April 2020



AT A GLANCE

Green House Gas Emission update

Green Impact Staff Engagement Program

## Our positive impacts on show

Based on 2019 data, UTAS submitted information for 13 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2020 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact rankings.

We are pleased to note that we achieved a score of 88.5 out of 100 that shows the positive impacts on our communities and globally of our efforts at 47 out of the 766 participating institutions. Significantly, our attainment of #3 of 376 on Climate Action (SDG13) based on our strength in climate-related research, our certified carbon neutral status and our environmental education activities as well as Tasmania's relatively low carbon energy supply. We also delivered well at #11 of 242 and #14 of 470 in the Life below Water (SDG14) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG11), respectively. We achieved in the top 100 across another six SDGs and in the top 200 in another four.

Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Black notes that in an era of pressing global challenge, it was critical not to lose sight of climate change as one of the greatest facing society. "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 UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This outcome in the Times Higher Education impact rankings are an endorsement of the fine work our researchers, students and staff are doing across the institution."

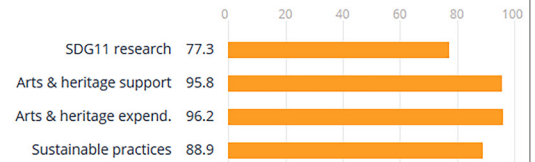
This demonstrates that while there is always more we can do, we have achieved much together that should be celebrated as we advance the University's new Strategic Framework for Sustainability to guide our ongoing efforts.

### 11

#### SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

QUALIFYING SDG - 26% OF OVERALL

SCORE **88.4** RANK **14** out of 470 institutions

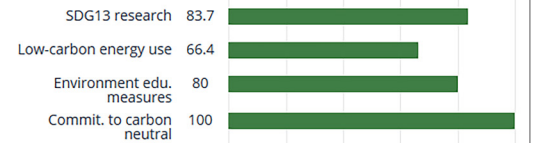


### 13

#### CLIMATE ACTION

QUALIFYING SDG - 26% OF OVERALL

SCORE **81.9** RANK **3** out of 376 institutions

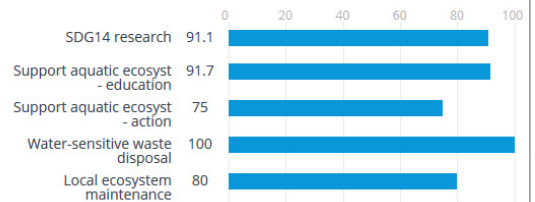


### 14

#### LIFE BELOW WATER

QUALIFYING SDG - 26% OF OVERALL

SCORE **87.7** RANK **11** out of 242 institutions

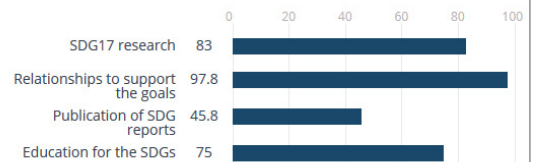


### 17

#### PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

MANDATORY QUALIFYING SDG - 22% OF OVERALL

SCORE **73.5** RANK **101-200** out of 807 institutions



Sustainability survey results for 2020 are in! PAGE 2 →



FOR UPDATES, INCLUDING SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE INFORMATION, NEWS AND EVENTS [utas.edu.au/sustainability](https://utas.edu.au/sustainability)

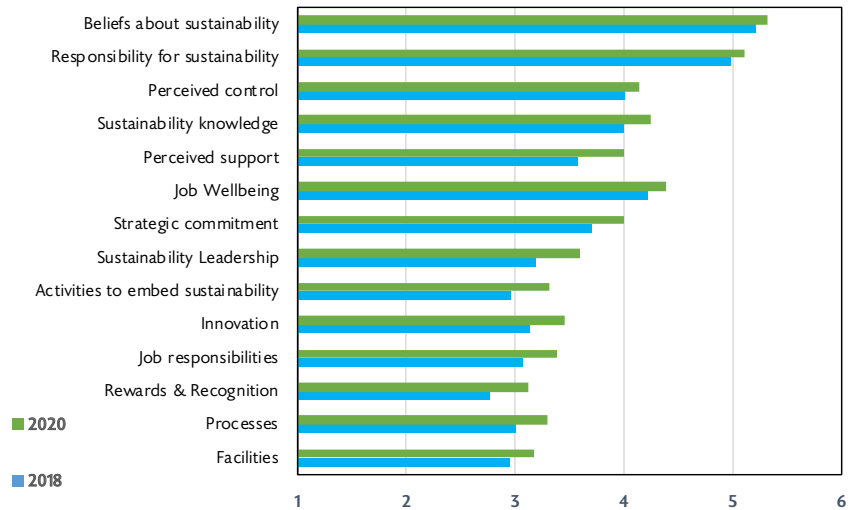
# Sustainability survey results for 2020

The third bi-annual sustainability survey of staff and students was conducted in March with a significant uplift in staff participation (735 this year versus 2018 – 575 and 2016 – 513) and students on par with previous years (1858 this year versus 2018 – 1,945 and 2016 – 1,752).

While the results for each survey are still being analysed and will be shared in full reports available from the UTAS Sustainability webpage, some initial findings include:

- For staff, all the key indicators have improved since 2018, with noted improvements in perceived institutional support, sustainability leadership, strategic commitment and activities to embed sustainability and communication.
- While still showing improvement, the five lowest scoring organisational enablers relate to provision of facilities and processes to support sustainable behaviours and reward & recognition for staff efforts to reduce environmental impacts and adopt sustainable practices.
- Overall, the rating of UTAS's effort regarding sustainability has increased to 5.92 out of 10, up from 5.47 in 2018 easily exceeding the mean for other universities, while still below that for other organisations.

UTAS Staff Results Comparison 2018 and 2020



Other questions were included to gauge staff responses for several specific statements, including



Having green space close by continued to be more important to staff (5.61 on 6 scale) compared to being socially connected to others (4.88 on 6 scale).

87%

supported University divestment from all fossil-fuel companies across all investment portfolios in line with that done for direct investments in December 2018.

90%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the University should publicly acknowledge the climate emergency and commit to initiatives in response.



For job wellbeing, there were improvements in feeling valued as an employee, being part of some social group at work and getting satisfaction from their job.

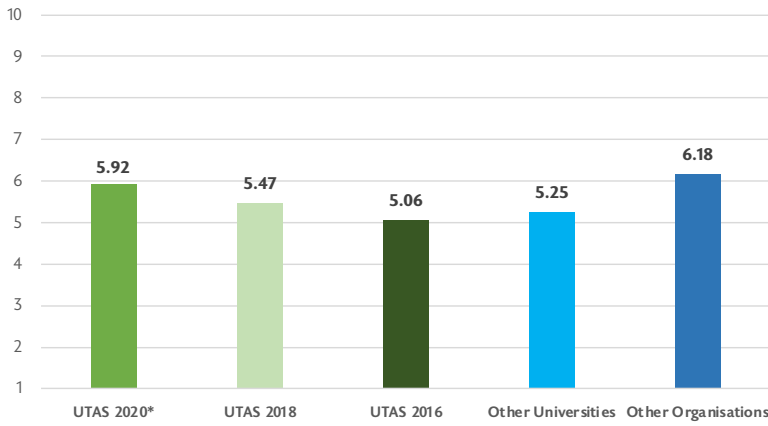
95%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the University should work towards elimination of fossil fuel-based and/or single-use plastics on campus.

95%

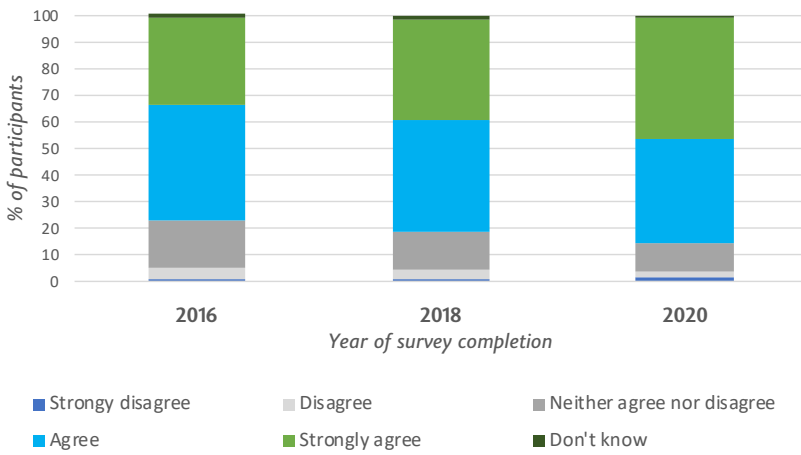
of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the University should maintain its certified carbon neutral status.

**"UTAS's current level of effort with regard to sustainability is..."**



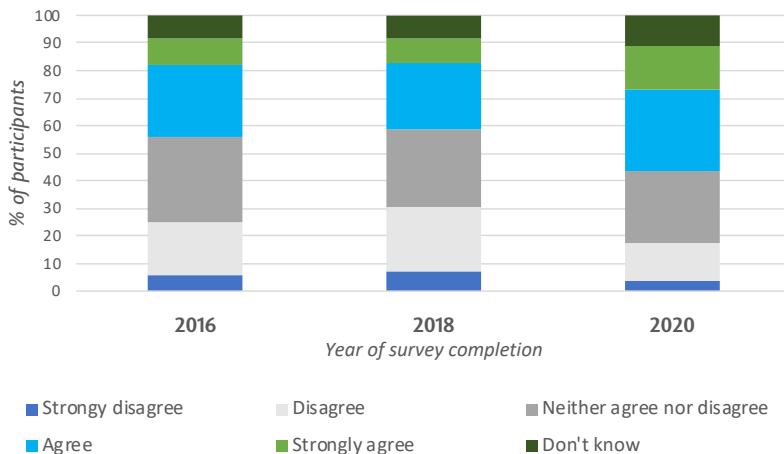
\*statistically significant increase ( $p < .01$ ) since 2018

**Student participants' level of agreement with the phrase "I think sustainability is an important subject to study at university" by survey year**



■ Strongly disagree    ■ Disagree    ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
■ Agree    ■ Strongly agree    ■ Don't know

**Student participants' level of agreement with the phrase "My lecturers and teachers include sustainability in their teaching" by survey year**



■ Strongly disagree    ■ Disagree    ■ Neither agree nor disagree  
■ Agree    ■ Strongly agree    ■ Don't know



For students, the overall demographic characteristics for the participants in the 2020 Student Sustainability Survey are consistent with the demographics from previous years.



For students, questions surrounding sustainability in the curriculum was of particular interest with many UTAS students expressing the belief that sustainability is important to their course curriculum.

**85%**

Approximately 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I think sustainability is an important topic to study at university". This figure is higher than in previous surveys (80% in 2018 and 76% in 2016).

**17%**

In contrast, only 17% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "My lecturers and tutors include sustainability in their teaching". This is an improvement from 2018 results of 30%.

**PRIZE WINNERS**

Thanks to everyone for participating in the Sustainability Survey 2020 and congratulations to the prize draw winners from each campus!

Gabrielle M (Sandy Bay)  
Meg H (Southern Tasmania)  
Asmita K (Sydney)

Mike T (Online/Distance)  
Justine G (Cradle Coast)  
Tiarna B (Northern Tasmania)

# Green House Gas Emission update

The University of Tasmania has been carbon neutral certified since 2016 under the Commonwealth [Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard](#) for Organisations (previously National Carbon Offset Standard). Carbon neutrality refers to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by reducing emissions where possible and compensating for the remainder of emissions with standard-based carbon offsets. The Climate Active certification requires the reporting of:

**Scope 1 emissions:** from activities under the University's direct control (e.g., vehicle fuel use, refrigerant gases)

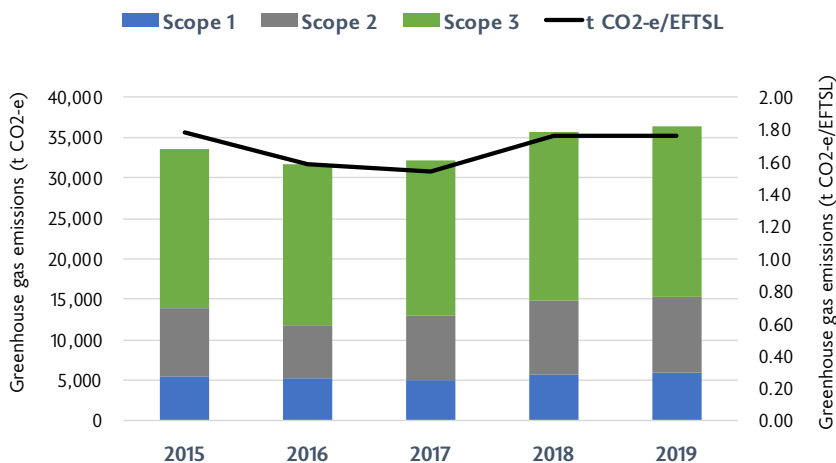
**Scope 2 emissions:** from the consumption of the electricity we buy

**Scope 3 emissions:** from other indirect emissions (e.g., business travel, waste, construction)

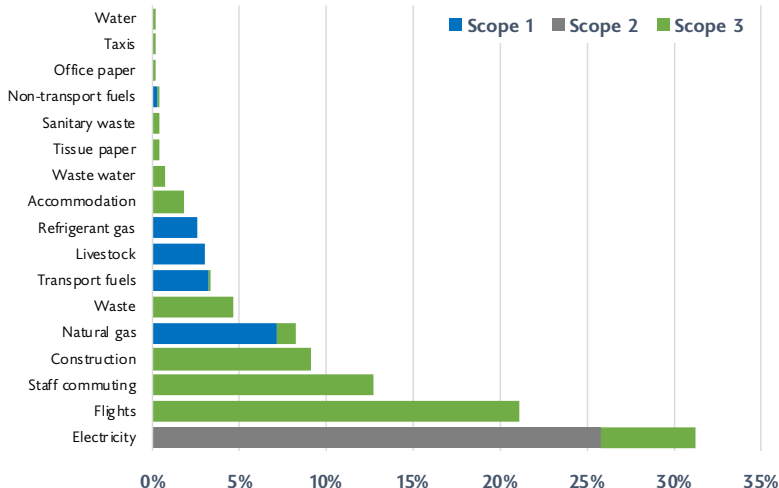
Since 2015 (baseline year), the University's emissions have fluctuated, partly because of the variation of emissions factors (especially electricity, our major emissions source), but also because of the construction, acquisition and occupation of new buildings (mainly for student accommodation) and emissions reduction efforts (e.g., energy efficiency works, sustainable transport initiatives).

In 2019, the University emitted 36,366 t CO<sub>2</sub>-e, an 8% increase from the baseline year. Emissions per Equivalent Full Time Load Student (EFTLS) were however 1% lower, with 1.75 t CO<sub>2</sub>-e emitted per EFTSL in 2019. Most emissions (58%) correspond to scope 3 emissions, however electricity (scope 2 and 3) is the main greenhouse gas emissions source when looking at each source individually, followed by business air travel and staff commuting.

Historical Greenhouse Gas Emissions



2019 Greenhouse Gas Emissions



## OFFSET PROJECTS

A carbon offset (or carbon credit) is generated from an activity that prevents or reduces emissions released to the atmosphere or removes emissions from the atmosphere.

The University invested in several projects to offset its 2019 greenhouse gas emissions:

- **Countries:** Australia, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Kenya
- **Scope:** Forest regeneration, biomass energy generation and wind energy generation
- **Co-benefits:** Diversification of local economy; increased local employment; protection of traditional cultural practices; protection of local native food sources; avoided loss of biodiversity (internationally certified); reduced local air pollution; reduced sedimentation of waterways; increased awareness of environmental issues.

Find out more information on carbon emissions and verified gold or equivalent standard offsets at the [Sustainability Greenhouse Gas Emissions webpage](#).







**Green Impact is a behaviour change and engagement program where individuals work in teams to undertake a diverse range of sustainability actions. Through the program you can learn about sustainability and social responsibility and celebrate the changes you are making.**

**In 2019, 15 teams working across Sandy Bay, Newnham, Inveresk and Cradle Coast Campuses took part in the program, completing more than 230 actions.**

**What's new in 2020?**

Due to the popularity of our Green Impact student day last year, this year we have expanded the program to create opportunities for students to work with Green Impact teams throughout the year. Actions within the toolkit have been mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the toolkit has been adapted to enable you to participate while working from home.

# Green Impact, our staff sustainability engagement program is open for 2020!

## Get involved with actions while working from home

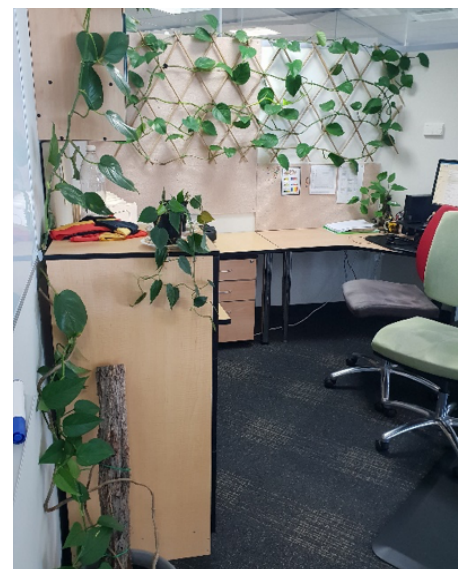
### Creative ideas for getting started with Green Impact while working from home!

1. Did you know, staff at the University are eligible for free membership of Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS)? Connect with other universities and learn about initiatives through signing up for the monthly ebulletin enACT (action B002).
2. Add sustainability to your regular staff meeting agenda or invite staff and students to a sustainability focused meeting. Invite all to provide feedback and contribute ideas for improving the sustainability of your workplace. The Sustainability Team can join and assist in facilitating this meeting (action B003).
3. What interesting flora or fauna live around your workplace? Learn more about our environments on campus and share insights with your colleagues about a unique, rare or threatened species (action B005).
4. Do you have living plants in your work area? Why not take a leaf out of Gary's book and share a cutting with a colleague (action B015).
5. How are you looking after your wellbeing while working from home? Create a positive physical or mental health initiative with colleagues and share your progress (action B016).
6. Reflect on your successes, now could be the time to submit an article for the staff intranet about how your College or Division is reducing their environmental impacts (action S001).
7. Acknowledge the work we still need to do for inclusivity and diversity, ensure a member of your team is part of the University's Ally Network (action S020).

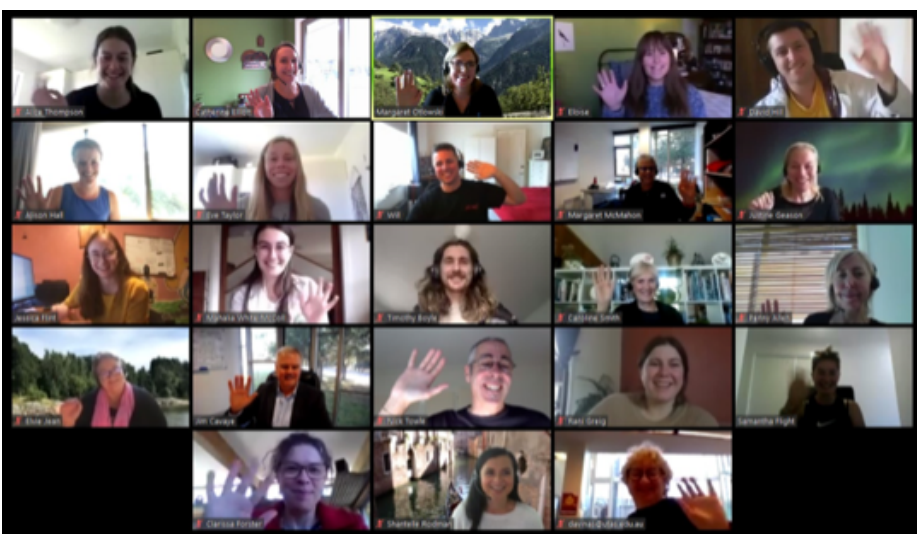
8. Are you interested in better understanding your workplace's carbon footprint? Contact the Sustainability Team ([sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au)) to calculate your budget centre's total carbon footprint for business flights for the previous calendar year and learn how these were offset (action S027).

9. Connect with the suppliers you most frequently use and find out about ways to reduce the amount of single-use packaging supplied with their products (action S033).

10. Take a moment to consider the clothing your workplace buys, connect with your suppliers to ensure that all clothing is ethically and responsibly sourced under ISO 20400 Sustainable Procurement guidelines (action G023).



Growing green walls in the Rural Clinical School in Burnie, this plant is not only brightening this workplace, Gary has also grown cuttings and shared these with colleagues.



First meeting for the Cradle Coast Campus's sustainability working group, led by Pro Vice Chancellor Jim Cavaye, attended by Sustainability Committee Chair Professor Margaret Otlowski and 29 staff and students.



**Do you have any creative ideas?**

If you have an idea or activity not covered in the toolkit you can submit this as a 'Wild Card' action or nominate an individual or team for a 'Special Award'.

Head to **Green Impact** to register or contact [sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:sustainability.utas@utas.edu.au) with any questions about the program.



# New recycling walls in Southern campuses

## Where are they located, how much has been collected and where do they go?

In December 2019 the University of Tasmania, with support from Hobart City Council, set up a pilot recycling wall for difficult to recycle items in the Social Sciences building on the Sandy Bay campus.

Both students and staff have enjoyed taking advantage of this new recycling initiative. This one wall has collected over 1000 bread tags, 15kg of e-waste, 20kg of batteries, in excess of 40 printer and toner cartridges, 52 x-rays and much more. All collections are either recycled locally or sent for free to the mainland for processing.

Given the immediate success of the pilot wall, the service is expanding to more southern campuses and buildings, with work underway determining how we can support these walls at all our campuses. The Corporate Services Building now has its own recycling wall in the lobby and the School of Creative Arts and Media was the first school or college to embrace the new service.

Our amazing sustainability project officer Will Plaister uses his DIY skills to refurbish pairs of

used 4-drawer filing cabinets sourced from the UTAS Re-use Program into 'Recycling Hubs'. This new service got its start through the excellent research and planning work of 2019 SIPS student interns and their staff mentor Jasper McCormack.

We hope our recycling walls will become a familiar sight to staff and students who work and study across different campuses. It's important to stress that the new DIY recycling hubs; while not perfect in appearance, themselves demonstrate the re-use ethos and are well-suited and practical for collection of recyclables.

The current streams collected include: pens, markers & highlighter, bread tags, mobile phones, batteries, contact lenses, blister pack and cases, small e-waste, toothbrushes & toothpaste tubes, printer and toner cartridges.

We receive many inquiries about soft plastics recycling. So far, we have been unable to locate a facility in Tasmania or Victoria that will accept our mixed soft plastics for recycling. There are several contributing factors for this, including a lack of demand for products made from

recycled soft plastics and the variability of soft plastic materials. Soft plastics recycling facilities are reliant on post-industrial, in contrast to post-consumer, plastics to increase material consistency. We encourage you to contact your suppliers before purchasing new equipment or supplies to request minimal packaging and to ask suppliers to identify where materials can be recycled. An increase in demand for products made from recycled plastic content is also needed, so ask your suppliers what options you have for this.

You can also support demand for recycled plastic products by asking suppliers what options they have for products made with recycled plastic content.

**If your school, college or building would like to be considered for a recycling hub or for more information about the pilot program please contact: [waste.utas@utas.edu.au](mailto:waste.utas@utas.edu.au)**

**For more information about the re-use program please visit:**

<https://www.warp-it.co.uk/company/utas> or email [reuse.program@utas.edu.au](mailto:reuse.program@utas.edu.au)



Recycling wall at the School of Creative Arts and Media made with repurposed filing cabinets from the Re-use Program



## New waste targets for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

In March 2020, the COAG set their first target for the Waste Response Strategy to “ban the export of plastic, paper, tyres and glass waste between July 2020 and December 2024.”

The ban signifies fundamental changes for waste management in Australia, including a circular economy approach that recognises waste as a resource instead of a problem and taking ownership for waste produced in Australia. The ban is designed to address many of the current challenges in the origin and generation of waste, for example improving kerbside recycling rates and driving up domestic demand for recycled products.

The University is encouraged by this new national approach that supports our activities and plans for waste management and procurement, as outlined in our Strategic Framework for Sustainability.

Read more about [the national strategy, waste targets and projected outcomes](#).



Parsley, Sage and Curry herbs grown by Rowena Zwart

## Bringing garden bounty to the tearoom, thank you to Rowena Zwart

A big thank you to ISD staff Rowena Zwart for sharing her home-grown garden bounty with colleagues including parsley, sage and curry herbs!

We've compiled a few uses of parsley, sage and curry along with some interesting facts.

**Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*):** This Mediterranean herb can be used to flavour salads, home-made sauces and garnish dishes. It can also be used to freshen up your breath.

**Sage (*Salvia officinalis*):** Fresh sage leaves are quite strong and aromatic so use sparingly to garnish or flavour. Sage is commonly used dried, mixed into marinades or combined with mashed potatoes and roast vegetables for an earthy flavour. Sage is also used as a spiritual tool, a sage stick is burnt to expel negative energy, soothe stress and be uplifting.

**Curry (*Helichrysum italicum*):** Leaves of curry plants are used in salads and stews, but they have a slightly bitter taste. It's a very versatile plant that can grow almost anywhere and is generally disease resistant. Its strong fragrance can help keep insects away from your garden bed.

## Exciting SIPS projects underway: connecting with biodiversity on campus



*Durvillaea* sp. or 'Bull Kelp' from the Lower Derwent Estuary

### Eloise Bennett's Marine Biodiversity Project

The proximity of the University of Tasmania to the Derwent Estuary is unique; for my SIPS project I aim to produce an educational walk that links the southern campuses and celebrates the rich biodiversity of the Derwent. The goal of my SIPS project is to raise awareness of the habitats the Derwent Estuary supports from shallow rocky reefs to sandy soft sediments, as well as to facilitate education on some of the rare and special species that reside there.

In doing so, I hope I can promote the Derwent Estuary not only as an ecologically significant place but also as an important entity which characterises the Hobart City skyline, defining the landscape, and the personality of this colourful city and our University.



2020 SIPS intern Rani Greig at Newnham Creek

### Rani Greig's River Biodiversity Project

My project looks at the Newnham Creek and what past activities and management have occurred. This will give us an indication of what kind of projects are needed to ensure that the creek continues to hold great value for the Newnham campus and the community. Continuing my project from home has had its challenges, however, staying connected to other interns and taking my dog for a walk to the creek has enabled me to stay on track and remain excited about my project.



The University of Tasmania has joined the **International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA)** with 40 other leading climate research universities to help accelerate the fight against climate change. The IUCA's united goal is to ensure all stakeholders have better access to research-based facts on climate change science, impacts, adaptations and mitigation.

## Upcoming events

**Virtual Sustainability Career Expo: 7 May**

**International Education Climate Action Summit 2020 Climate Action Network for International Educators (free online panel): 21 May**



\*Due to COVID-19 restrictions the Sustainability Team has had to cancel any physical attendance events for the foreseeable future. We are working to deliver our sustainability events on an online platform. Follow our **Facebook page** to stay up to date.