Environmental Sustainability Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) is committed to becoming a leader in environmental sustainability within the university sector. The University regards the implementation of leading environmental sustainability practices as critical to our performance as a world class teaching and research based organisation.

Section 2 - Policy

(2) The University aims to achieve our environmental sustainability goals through the ongoing development and implementation of an endorsed Environmental Sustainability Plan which supports environmental sustainability through:

a. ethical decision making in accordance with the Ethical Framework;
b. teaching and learning practices;
c. research;
d. the management of University campus and facilities; and
e. community engagement.

(3) The University will ensure the following principles are embedded across the University:

a. demonstration of a visible commitment to environmental sustainability by University leaders;
b. dedication of resources to support the ongoing implementation of environmental sustainability actions and targets in the Environmental Sustainability Plan;
c. demonstrating continuous improvement towards the achievement of the measures of success of our Environmental Sustainability Plan;
d. monitoring the implementation of the Environmental Sustainability Plan, and reporting on the University's achievement against our objectives on an annual basis to University Council, Executive Leadership Team and within the University's annual report;
e. actively promoting and engaging environmental sustainability initiatives to staff and students at the University; and
f. environmental sustainability actions to contribute to the targets set in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals 2015.

Section 3 - Our Sustainability Commitment

(4) The University will focus our sustainability efforts in the following areas:

Energy and Carbon

(5) The University will continue to work towards carbon neutrality.

(6) We will:

a. report our greenhouse gas emissions under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme and monitor our electricity consumption;
b. build strategic relationships with energy retailers and consider all opportunities for on-site renewable energy installations; and
c. seek to better understand our emissions from travel so that we can explore ways we can offset these emissions.

(7) In implementing our Investment Policy we will explore opportunities for portfolio investments aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and use divestment, where possible, as a means of transitioning to a low carbon economy.

(8) In implementing our Procurement Policy we will assess the sustainability practices of potential suppliers and give preference to those who can demonstrate alignment with our sustainability goals.

(9) For new buildings, our building design practices will maximise all opportunities to achieve a six-star Green Star 'Design & as Built' as a minimum.

Water

(10) We will:

a. reduce our mains water usage, increase the natural irrigation of our bushland campuses, and seek ways to re-use our water;
b. comply with the guidelines and standards for water, as required by our Local Councils, and always seek to protect the waterways, wetlands, and coastal areas upon which we operate;
c. prevent the pollution of our water systems and aquatic ecosystems; and
d. seek ways to minimise water consumption when planning new buildings and areas on our campuses.

(11) Our practices to manage our bushland campuses will give priority to effective water management, and water efficiency will be a consideration for all key projects.

Waste and Recycling

(12) We will:

a. establish and work towards a recycling rate target for our general solid waste;
b. educate our staff, students, contractors and community on waste and recycling through a variety of mechanisms and resources;
c. minimise the use of plastic and disposal items across our campuses;
d. establish preferred suppliers, in accordance with our Procurement Policy, who are aligned with our sustainability goals; and
e. dispose of hazardous waste in accordance with applicable regulations and statutes.

Biodiversity and Landscaping

(13) We will:

a. integrate Indigenous knowledge into the management of our bushland campuses;
b. proactively prepare for bushfires;
c. continue to plan to protect and conserve the biodiversity of the native flora and fauna on our campuses; and

d. continue to plan to protect and conserve the wetlands and aquatic ecosystems upon which we operate.

Engagement, Education and Research

(14) We will:

a. seek to maximise opportunities for our students to understand and engage in environmental sustainability practices throughout their studies;
b. establish and lead partnerships with local, regional and global stakeholders to deliver environmental sustainability research innovation projects;
c. engage with our wider community wherever possible to address sustainability challenges through our teaching, learning and research activities;
d. support our Colleges, Schools and Research Centres and Institutes to engage with our communities and partners to improve knowledge and practice in sustainability; and
e. increase staff and student awareness of our environmental sustainability initiatives to achieve strong stakeholder awareness, engagement, and behaviour change.

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Enquiries Contact	Infrastructure and Facilities Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.