

A group of four diverse students are standing behind a long wooden garden bed filled with various leafy green vegetables, including large-leafed greens and purple-leafed varieties. The student on the far left is a young woman with long dark hair wearing a blue and white striped sweater, holding a blue tote bag filled with harvested greens. Next to her is a young man wearing a white beanie, sunglasses, and a dark green jacket. In the center is a young woman wearing a white puffer jacket and a white baseball cap, waving her hand. On the far right is a young woman wearing a blue hijab and a black jacket, holding a bunch of harvested purple-leafed greens. The garden bed is situated on a mulched area. In the background, there is a modern building with large glass windows and a red brick section, surrounded by trees and a clear blue sky.

AUT

AUT SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2025

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 We encourage you to read this report online, rather than printing it.



FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

As a university committed to knowledge that works, sustainability is integral to how we teach, research and operate. This report outlines the progress the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has made under our outgoing Sustainability Plan in 2025, and the areas where further effort is required as we continue our sustainability journey.

The 91 sustainability-focused courses we offered in 2025 (up from 67 in 2020) and the growing number of students enrolled in one or more of these courses are strengthening sustainability literacy across our student community. Additionally, a growing proportion of our peer-reviewed research outputs aligned with one or more of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reaching 36% in 2025, which demonstrates the global relevance of our research. Through education and research, AUT is supporting the next generation of change makers and generating real-world impact that extends well beyond the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through enhancing biodiversity by planting 59 different native plant species on our North and South Campuses, to lowering our overall emissions by 34% between 2018 and 2025, we demonstrated progress towards more sustainable outcomes across our operations.

This report also marks the end of an era of measuring AUT’s sustainability progress against our 2018 and 2020 baselines. As this report shows, many of the University’s operations related targets were met several years ahead of time, largely as a result of COVID-19 era restrictions. Importantly, some of the reductions achieved during the pandemic have been sustained, reflecting the success of infrastructure changes and operational improvements.

In the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, AUT remains within the top 200 universities globally. In the QS Sustainability Rankings, AUT was ranked 277th overall, while continuing to perform strongly in two key indicators, including equality (35th in the world) and governance (123rd).

Later this year, AUT’s Regenerative Action and Sustainability Committee, which operates under a co-governance model, will publish the University’s first Regenerative Action and Sustainability (RAS) Plan. This Plan aligns with AUT’s Te Tiriti framework and the University’s strategy, Te Kete, and will guide our regenerative action and sustainability journey, its responsibilities and relationships out to 2030.

There is still much to do. By growing the sustainability literacy of our students, increasing sustainability-aligned research, and continuing to improve how we operate as an institution, AUT is leading by example in the transition to a safer, nature restored and more climate-resilient world.

Ngā mihi nui,

Professor Damon Salesa
Vice-Chancellor

INTRODUCTION

CO-CHAIRS OF THE REGENERATIVE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Sustainability continues to be an important focus for AUT. Our university strategy, Te Kete, emphasises its importance and states that: “Sustainability is central to our decision-making”. Te Kete also identifies that: “We are uniquely placed to build indigenous capabilities and to explore and develop the regenerative approaches to sustainability so crucial to our place in the world”. These are worthy and exciting aspirations, and we are making good progress towards achieving them. This Sustainability Report for 2025 reviews our progress under the AUT Sustainability Plan 2018–2025. We are currently developing our next iteration of this plan and are now explicitly embracing a regenerative action focus. This is an important next step as we seek to move from a generic sustain what we have mindset, into a more action-oriented regenerative and restorative approach.

Our progress over 2025, and prior years, provides a good foundation for this next stage and we look forward to building on this as we implement the new AUT Regenerative Action and Sustainability Plan (2026–2030).

PROGRESS IN OUR LEARNING AND TEACHING

In 2025, 5,595 students were enrolled in one or more sustainability-focused courses (20% of AUT students). Since 2020, the number of students enrolled in one or more sustainability-focused courses has increased by 10%. There were seven sustainability majors or minors offered in 2025, one more than what was offered in 2020. Since 2020, an increasing number of AUT students have access to sustainability majors, minors and courses.

During 2025 a group of Manaaki scholars worked together and held a climate change forum at AUT’s City Campus. The forum was focused on practical learning and incorporated a range of disciplines. About 80 students attended the Forum and learnt about climate change science and causes through the Climate Fresk programme. They also learnt about disaster risk management and were encouraged to make seven lifestyle shifts through Take the Jump – Kia Māia Te Peke, a grassroots movement. Qualitative information since 2020 indicates that every year some AUT students completed an interdisciplinary project encompassing sustainability concepts. However, there is no quantitative data to ascertain if all students have had that experience. Work is underway to establish a better view of this across AUT programmes.

PROGRESS IN OUR RESEARCH

Over 2025, 535 publications that contributed to one or more SDGs (36% of all outputs) were produced by our academics. This remains a significant increase from the 17% in 2020 and represents an increase in the proportion of publications when compared with 2024 (461).

There were 89 externally funded SDG-related research projects in 2025 which generated \$11.4 million. This was up from 76 projects in 2020. Whilst the number of SDG-related external research projects and funding amounts fluctuated substantially between 2020 and 2025, the number of projects and funding has increased between this period.

Over the period of the Plan, each year AUT established partnerships with organisations, focused on the SDGs. In May 2025, AUT became the first New Zealand organisation to become a member of the international Planetary Health Alliance. The Planetary Health Alliance (PHA) is a global consortium of over 470 organisations – including universities, NGOs, research institutes and government bodies – committed to understanding and addressing the impacts of global environmental change on human health and wellbeing.



PROGRESS IN OUR OPERATIONS

AUT’s CO₂e emissions in 2025 were 8,994 tonnes or a 34% decrease against our 2018 baseline and was achieved through decreases in emissions from air travel, fuel, natural gas, electricity, and several other sources. Our target was to halve total emissions by 2025. So this target was partially achieved. Emissions from air travel represent a significant component of our total emissions and in 2025 they were 48% below the 2018 baseline, so this target was also partially achieved.

64% of all staff used sustainable modes in 2025, whilst 68% of all students used sustainable modes to access their main campus. Our target was that 85% staff and students would use sustainable travel to access AUT, so this target was not achieved.

A target where we excelled was only planting indigenous species on our campuses. Between 2021 and 2025, 59 species of native trees, flaxes, rushes, ferns, vines and ground covers were planted across AUT’s three campuses, some of which were planted by our staff and students.

AUT’s energy emissions, from electricity and gas consumption within AUT buildings, decreased by 33% in comparison to our 2018 baseline, so we partially achieved this target. Reductions during the pandemic were locked in and decarbonisation projects (removing natural gas boilers at North and City Campuses) and energy efficiency initiatives contributed to this reduction.

The progress we have made as reflected in this annual report, is the result of our staff, students and partners who are willing to embrace and support sustainability initiatives, and we acknowledge and thank all who have contributed. Looking after our planet, and all life that depends upon it, requires a collective effort and we have much more to do. We look forward to the next iteration of our sustainability plan and the increased focus on regenerative action.

Professor Mark Orams

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research
Co-Chair of the Regenerative Action and Sustainability Committee

Professor Amanda Yates

Co-Chair of the Regenerative Action and Sustainability Committee,
Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Te Aitanga a Māhaki,
Rongowhakaata

OVERVIEW OF KEY TARGETS

The overview of key targets below highlights where we are progressing well and where more focus is needed.

LEARNING AND TEACHING – MOHIO-ORA

ALL UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES DEVELOP SUSTAINABILITY LITERACY, VALUES AND PRACTICES



0
compulsory sustainability courses offered compared to 2020

MORE STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABILITY MAJORS, MINORS OR COURSES



↑24
sustainability-focused courses and +2,9031 students enrolled since 2020

↑1
1 additional degree with a sustainability major or minor compared with 2020

RESEARCH – MOHIO-ORA

INTERNAL FUNDING THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROJECTS



2 out of 5 faculties included sustainability in internal research grant criteria

INCREASING PEER REVIEWED SDG RESEARCH OUTPUTS



535 research outputs contributed to a UNSDG

↑36%
since 2020
(Source: Dimensions)

EXTERNALLY FUNDED SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROJECTS



89 externally funded SDG-related research projects generated \$11.4 million

↑13 from 2020

PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY – HAPORI-ORA

AUT BECAME A FAIRTRADE SUPPORTING WORKPLACE



4.1 tonnes of Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade coffee consumed on AUT campuses

↓2.1 tonnes from 2020

LOW CARBON – HIRI-ORA

CO₂e REDUCED BY 50% BY 2025



↓34%
decrease since 2018*

CO₂e FROM ENERGY REDUCED BY 50% BY 2025



↓33%
decrease since 2018*

CARBON FOOTPRINT OF OUR ICT USAGE



↑99
tonnes increase since 2018**

WATER – WAI-ORA

MAINS WATER REDUCED BY 20% BY 2025



↓18%
increase since 2018

WASTE – PARAU

HALVE WASTE TO LANDFILL BY 2025

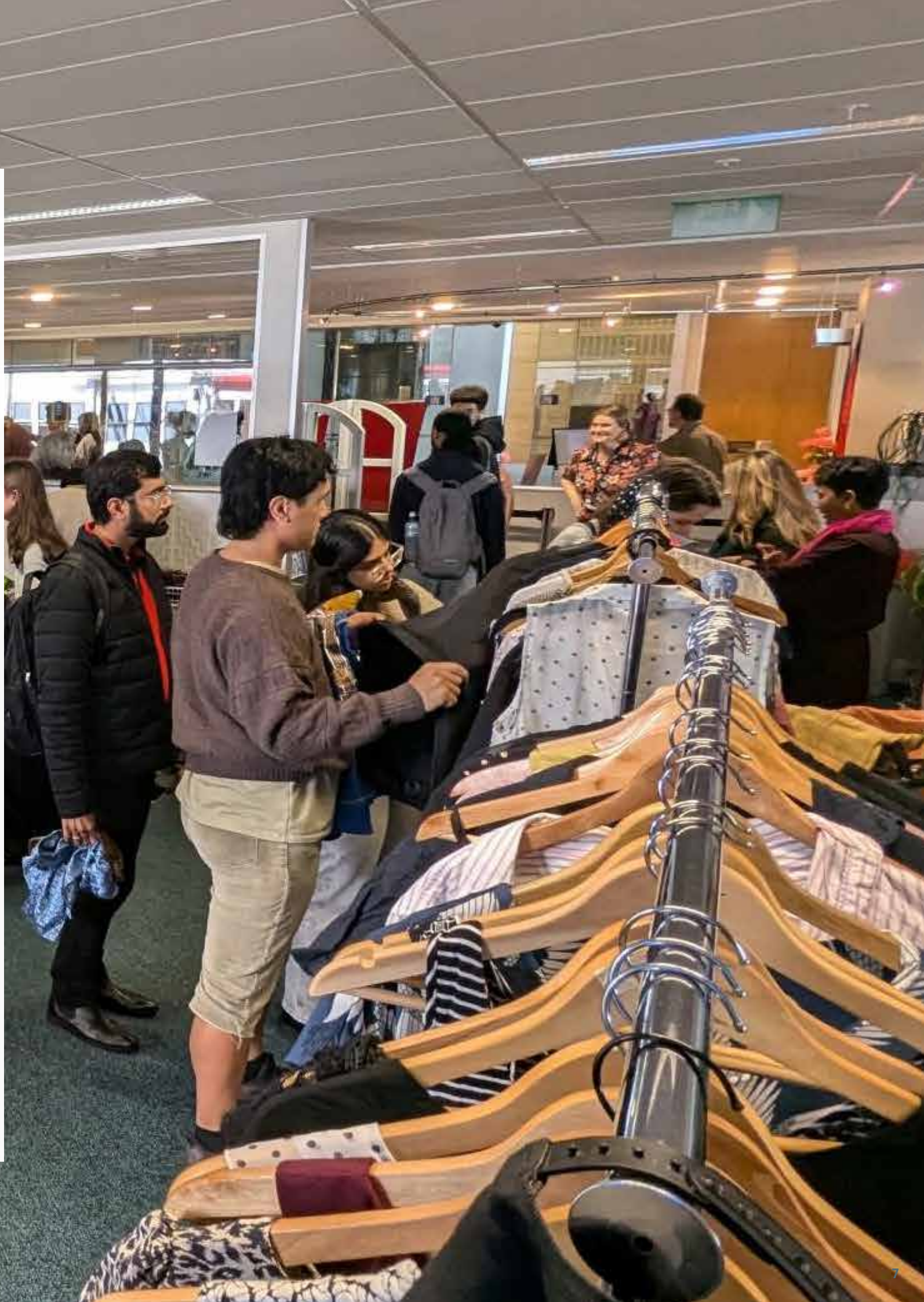


60% waste sent to landfill
40% composted and recycled

*AUT's CO₂e emissions inventory is independently verified against ISO 14064-1 Greenhouse Gases

**The 99 tonnes increase is because we reported on our emissions associated with Microsoft 365 data usage for the first time in 2024.

***A significant amount of this decrease relates to vacating our City Campus student accommodation building



AUT's Fresh Fits – Used Clothing Giveaway to AUT Students

AUT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN 2025

This 2025 Sustainability Report differs from previous reports; rather than solely reporting on annual progress towards each of the 26 targets that were established in AUT’s 2018 Sustainability Roadmap, it takes stock of progress towards these targets and considers the wider context and trends which influenced that progress for some of our key targets.

While progress towards a more sustainable and ultimately regenerative future requires reducing unsustainable actions and increasing sustainable actions, attaining enduring sustainability is also about changing hearts and minds and re-evaluating the values that currently underpin our ways of living on a planet with finite natural resources. For this reason, this report includes both quantitative measures and qualitative assessments to document tangible and less tangible progress and outcomes, which are prompting people to think about the natural world and our place in it with more care and manaakitanga.

Ultimately, this report marks a point in time for reflecting on the successes to date and areas for improvement. This will enable the University to build on the past half decade of progress and further strengthen AUT’s sustainability journey.

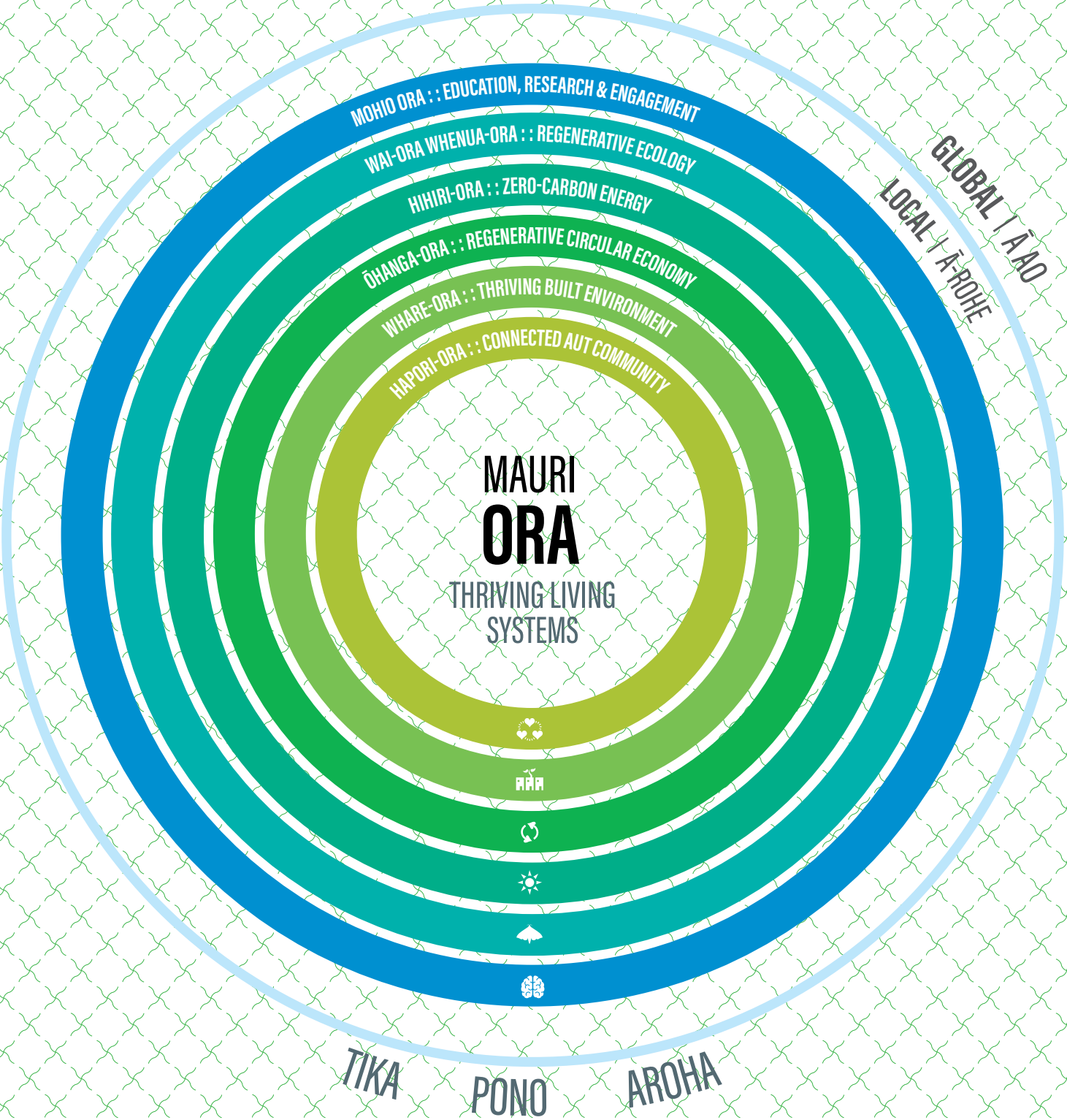
SUSTAINABILITY AT AUT AFTER 2025

Since developing and reporting on AUT’s Sustainability Plan, a lot of learning and change has happened, all of which is being used to develop AUT’s Regenerative Action and Sustainability (RAS) Plan. Whilst being ambitious we are developing actions and KPIs that are achievable within our capacity, funding, the support of our staff and students, and working in partnership.

The RAS Plan also reflects a transition from sustainability to regeneration. Typically, sustainability is where a current situation is maintained and there is little harm to future generations as positive and negative impacts are brought into balance. Contrasting this with regeneration, where projects are implemented at a systems level and achieve a net positive impact on the environment and community. Regenerative initiatives give back more to the planet and community than is taken. Implementing regenerative initiatives can be complex as we take a systems level approach; ultimately the achievements are more impactful and achieve net positive effects for the planet and people.

NGĀ TOHU MAURI ORA AUT REGENERATIVE ACTION & SUSTAINABILITY COMPASS

A TRANSITION TOOL FOR REGENERATION & RESILIENCE



OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TARGETS IN 2025			
THEME	NO.	TARGET	2025
Learning and Teaching	1	Ensure all undergraduate programmes develop sustainability literacy, values and practices, consistent with the AUT Graduate Profile.	
	2	Increasing number of students will have access to majors, minors or courses with a sustainability orientation.	
	3	All students will have the opportunity to work on an interdisciplinary project that encompasses the concepts of wellbeing, futures-thinking and connectivity.	
	4	Develop climate emergency and zero-carbon system change curriculum materials for academics.	
Research	5	Increase the number of mission-led and large-scale projects on the critical issues of our time, including projects which are tackling aspects of the climate emergency.	
	6	Providing internal funding mechanisms which support research projects that advance knowledge and its application to sustainability.	
	7	Host annual research events addressing climate emergency responses and system change (mitigation, adaptation, transformation).	
	8	Increasing numbers of peer reviewed research outputs that contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.	
	9	Support local companies that replace international supply chains through R&D.	
Partnerships and Community	10	Establishing partnerships with external organisations based on working together towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals and/or becoming low carbon.	
	11	Working towards AUT becoming a Fairtrade-registered organisation.	
Leadership	12	Generating sustainability research projects across AUT that attract external financial support.	
	13	Demonstrating innovation in sustainability professional practice within the curriculum and our research.	
Sustainability on Campus	14	Preferring indigenous planting, where appropriate.	
	15	85% of staff and students take sustainable transport to/from the University.	
	16	50% reduction in emissions from air travel.	
	17	Carbon emissions halved by 2025.	
	18	Emissions from energy reduced by 50% by 2025.	
	19	Mains water reduced by 20% by 2025.	
	20	Waste reduced by 50% by 2025.	
	21	Carbon footprint of our ICT usage reduced.	
	22	Improve the utilisation of computer hardware	
	23	AUT uses green supply chains, including locally sourced produce and materials.	
	24	50% of food offered on campus is a plant-based meal.	
	25	All new buildings meet AUT's Green Building Guide.	
	26	All internal fitouts meet the New Zealand Green Building Council's standards.	

Table 1. Targets in previous AUT sustainability reports

Achieved Partially achieved Not achieved



Generation 2100 Climate Advocacy Forum

TARGETS

For each of the five themes in the Sustainability Plan, an analysis of our performance against the key targets is provided below. The connection with each target to the SDGs and the Mauri Ora compass is also shown below.

THEME 1: LEARNING AND TEACHING

THEME 1 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Undergraduate programmes which develop sustainability literacy, values and practices STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED	The number of undergraduate programmes which included a compulsory sustainability course held steady at 34 between 2020 and 2025. So, we did not achieve the target of ensuring all undergraduate programmes develop sustainability literacy, values and practices, consistent with the AUT Graduate Profile. However, as indicated below, the growing number of sustainability-focused courses and rising student participation in them will have increased sustainability literacy amongst the student population.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 
Increasing number of students can access sustainability majors, minors or courses STATUS: ACHIEVED	There were seven sustainability majors or minors offered in 2025, one more than what was offered in 2020. The number of sustainability-focused courses that AUT offered increased from 67 in 2020 to 91 in 2025. The number of students taking one or more of these courses has increased from 2,903 (10% of AUT students in 2020) to 5,595 (20% of AUT students in 2025). An increasing number of students have had access to majors, minors or courses with a sustainability orientation. There were 14 sustainability-focused courses that were offered in 2024 but not offered in 2025. An additional 15 courses were offered for the first time in 2025. Half of these courses focused on either marine resources, ecosystems and dynamics or environmental science, policy and problem solving, including renewable energy.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 
All students work on an interdisciplinary project that encompasses sustainability concepts STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED	During 2025 a group of Manaaki scholars worked together and held a climate change forum at AUT's City Campus. The forum was focused on practical learning from a range of disciplines. About 80 students attended the Forum and learnt about climate change science and causes through the Climate Fresk programme, learnt about disaster risk management and were encouraged to make seven lifestyle shifts through Take the Jump – Kia Māia Te Peke, a grassroots movement. Qualitative information since 2020 indicates that every year AUT students completed an interdisciplinary project encompassing sustainability concepts. However, there is no quantitative data to ascertain if all students have had that experience. Work is underway to establish a better view of this across AUT programmes.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 

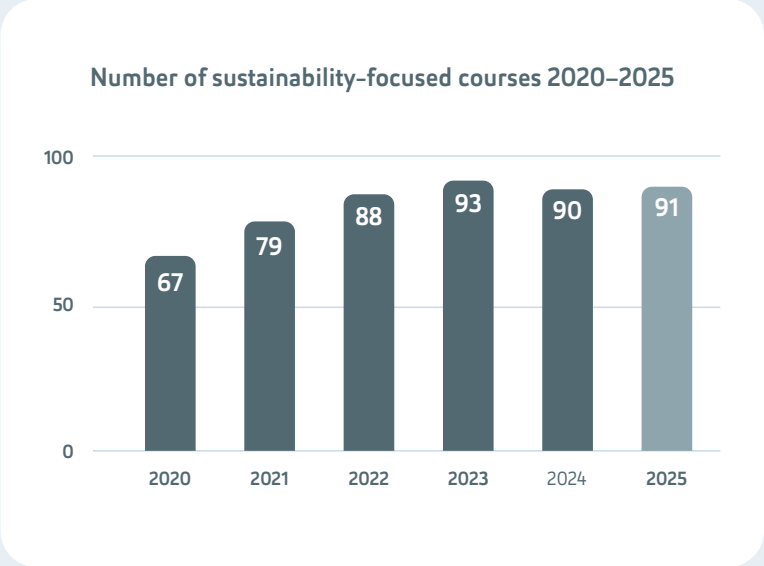


Figure 1: Number of AUT’s sustainability-focused courses 2020–2025

TAKE THE JUMP BY TRYING SEVEN SHIFTS TO PROTECT OUR EARTH AND LIVE WITH JOY

Clear, constructive, impactful, doable.

END CLUTTER

Keep electronic products for at least **seven years**

HOLIDAY LOCAL

Enjoy local excursions, be strategic when booking a flight

DRESS RETRO

Shop **second hand**

TRAVEL FRESH

Walk or bike, carpool and take public transport

GET PLANTING

Act to **preserve and protect** Aotearoa's unique biodiversity

SYSTEM CHANGE

At least **one shift** to nudge the system

EAT GREEN

Eat **mindfully**, more plant-based, local food, compost waste

THESE SHIFTS WILL DELIVER **27%** OF THE CHANGE NEEDED

From takethejump.org.nz

THEME 2:
RESEARCH

Internal funding, peer reviewed research outputs and external research funding which aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), generally increased over the period of the Plan.

THEME 2 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Increase mission-led and large-scale sustainability projects STATUS: ACHIEVED	Each year AUT undertook significant sustainability-focused research projects, thereby achieving this target. During 2025, AUT led an international team of scientists, that uncovered a dramatic shift in the movement patterns of New Zealand’s snapper. These findings have significant implications for conservation initiatives like the New Zealand government’s <i>Revitalising the Hauraki Gulf</i> programme. By establishing historical baselines for snapper movement behaviours, the study offers critical benchmarks for restoration and management.	
Internal funding mechanisms which support sustainability research projects STATUS: ACHIEVED	Toitū te marae a Tāne, toitū te marae a Tangaroa, toitū te iwi (If the forests endure and the seas endure, then the people will endure). The concept of sustainability is inherent in all things te ao Māori. That being said, from a Māori perspective, consideration of connections to and honouring all that has gone before, all that is, and all that is yet to come is fundamental, and almost does not need to be explicitly stated. In a Pakeha world we might label this “sustainability” and wish to see this as a criterion in such things as research grants, but for Māori it does not need to be made explicit because it is just the way that Māori view the world. For Te Ara Poutama Community Research Grants in 2025, the research priorities reflected this te ao Māori approach, where firstly, the research projects were grounded in community-based research of working in collaboration with Māori iwi or hapū, or with Pacific villages or communities. Secondly, that one or more of the mātauranga Māori themes was central to framing the community-based research, that is indigenous innovation, Taiao, Hauora/ Oranga, Mātauranga. And relatedly, that one or more of the UN SDGs was central to the research inquiry, outputs, and outcomes (benefits for the participating community). One example of the community-based research undertaken within Te Ara Poutama, by Associate Dean of Research Teena Brown Pulu, involved a documentary production team in Vava’u, and responded to mātauranga Māori by considering Taiao: Achieving environmental sustainability through iwi and hapū relationships with land and sea. The project was located in Tonga’s northern islands of Vava’u; there is an intersection between iwi and hapū relationships with land and sea and the Tongan concept of <i>kainga Tonga mo e fonua mo tahi</i>, a reference to kinship groups being interconnected with land and sea. The study was a visual ethnography of natural methods by which Tongan villages engineer the sustainability of marine environments and inshore fisheries, and the social-economic impacts of community marine management systems on families and fisher people.	

Internal funding mechanisms which support sustainability research projects continued	Overall, internal funding, within faculty contestable research funds, supported a wide range of sustainability-related research within the University. In total, two of the five faculties incorporated sustainability criteria into their research contestable fund, with another two faculties taking the University’s sustainability aspirations into account more generally when assessing applications or requiring applicants to indicate which SDGs their projects would align with, so this target was achieved. Generally, projects tackled environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability and in 2025 there was good alignment with many SDGs, in particular SDG3 (Good health and wellbeing), SDG4 (Quality education) and SDG17 (Partnerships for the goals). The range of research was diverse; a Faculty of Culture and Society project focused on helping student interpreters build intercultural competency, while Te Ara Poutama research conveyed diverse perspectives on Pacific community marine management as inshore fisheries face threats from overfishing, plastic and metal pollution and climate change, as noted above. There has been an uptick in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies featuring in health-oriented projects; either AI is used to assist with research which contributes towards socially aligned SDGs, or the appropriateness of the technology in health-related settings is critically evaluated. For instance, Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies contestable research funds were used to learn how AI can help with early detection of dementia and build technological capability within Māori communities; while projects within the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law considered the ethics of AI-driven technologies in youth mental healthcare.	
Increasing numbers of peer reviewed SDG research outputs STATUS: ACHIEVED	From 2020 to 2025 there was a steady increase in the number of peer reviewed research outputs that contribute towards the SDGs. As shown in the graph below, the number of research outputs has increased from 220 in 2020 to 535 in 2025. The quantity of these outputs as a proportion of overall peer reviewed research outputs has also more than doubled from 17% to 36% over the past six years, so this target was achieved by AUT staff.	

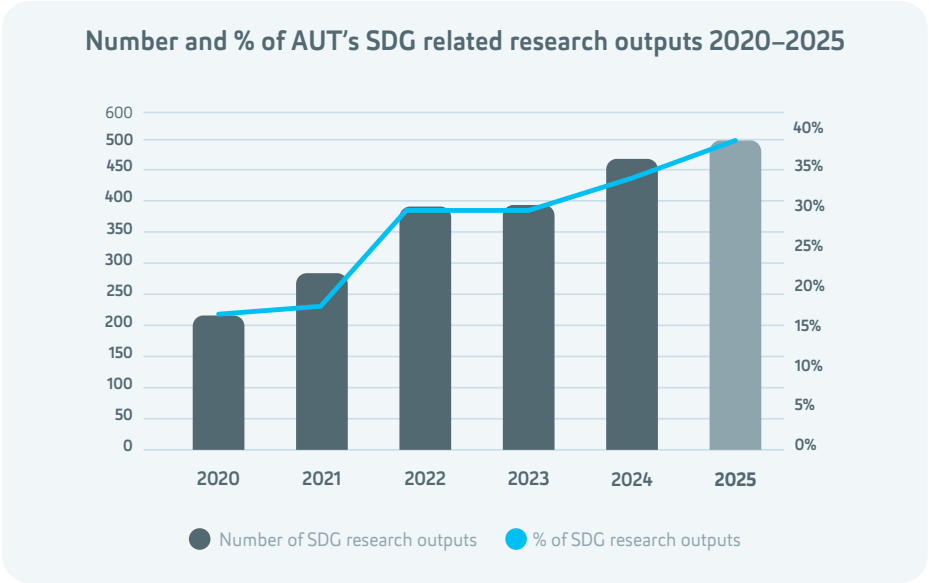


Figure 2: Number and % of AUT’s SDG related research outputs 2020–2025

THEME 3:
PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

THEME 3 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Establishing partnerships with external organisations focused on SDGs STATUS: ACHIEVED	In May 2025, AUT became the first New Zealand organisation to become a member of the international Planetary Health Alliance. The Planetary Health Alliance (PHA) is a global consortium of over 470 organisations – including universities, NGOs, research institutes and government bodies – committed to understanding and addressing the impacts of global environmental change on human health and wellbeing. In previous years AUT formed partnerships to progress work on the SDGs, so we achieved this target.	 Mohio-ora, Hapori-ora, Mauri ora, Whanaungatanga 
Working towards AUT becoming a Fairtrade-registered organisation STATUS: ACHIEVED	In 2025, AUT became a Fairtrade Supporting Workplace, which means we purchase two or more Fairtrade products over the year, so we achieved this target. Fairtrade products include tea and coffee used in our staff kitchens and cafes. In 2025, 4.1 tonnes of Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance coffee was consumed at our cafes. However, our coffee supplier now solely provides Rainforest Alliance coffee for our cafes, so for 2026 we are seeking other ways of supporting Fairtrade products at AUT.	 Whenua-ora, Wai-ora, Hapori-ora, Whanaungatanga 



THEME 4:
LEADERSHIP

THEME 4 – TARGETS TO 2026

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
External research funding STATUS: ACHIEVED	There were 89 externally funded SDG-related research projects in 2025 which generated \$11.4 million. This was up from 76 projects in 2020. The most common SDGs that this funding went towards in 2025 were SDG3 (Good health and wellbeing), SDG4 (Quality education) and SDG10 (Reduced inequalities). As the following graph shows, over the six-year reporting period, the number of SDG-related external research projects and funding amounts fluctuated substantially between 38 (\$2.5 million) in 2023 and 117 (\$31.4 million) in 2024. Overall, when comparing the amount of externally funded SDG-aligned in 2025 with 2020, the number of projects and funding has increased, so AUT achieved this target. In 2025, one project title mentioned an explicit use of AI. This was a project concerned with using AI to enable demand response strategies for electric vehicle charging systems.	 Mohio-ora, Whanaungatanga All SDGs
Innovation in sustainability within the curriculum and our research STATUS: ACHIEVED	In 2025, an international organisation co-directed by Professor Erica Hinckson was recognised with a prestigious Nobel Sustainability Trust Award. The Observatory was awarded in the category: Outstanding Research and Development for Intelligent and Sustainable Urban Solutions. It is a leading global source of evidence-based, open-source policy and spatial indicators, providing tools to benchmark and monitor progress towards healthy and sustainable cities. In subsequent years AUT's shown innovation in sustainability within the curriculum and our research, so we achieved this target.	 Mohio-ora, Whanaungatanga 

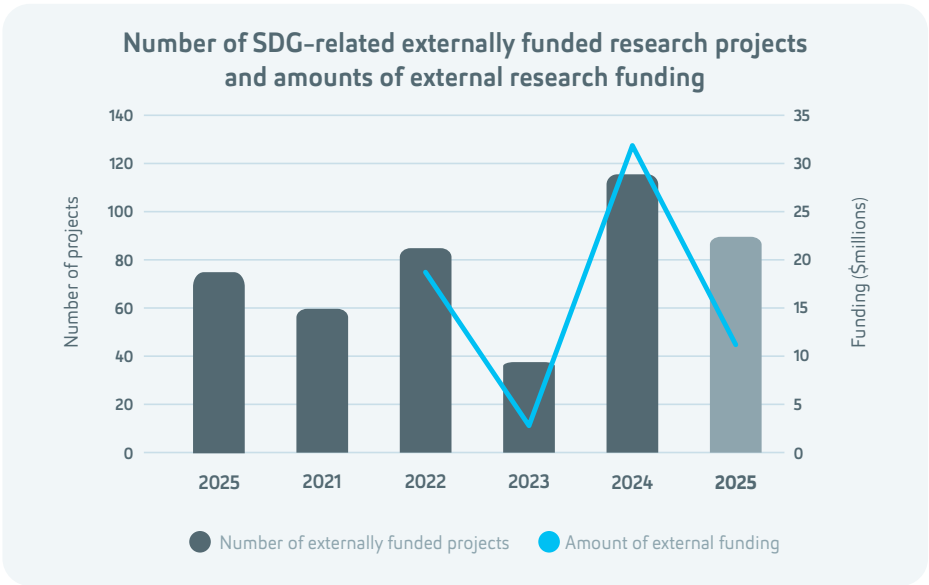


Figure 3: Number of SDG externally funded research projects and associated funding

THEME 5:
SUSTAINABILITY ON CAMPUS

Nation-wide and greater Auckland lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 and an initial closure of New Zealand’s borders to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents from March 2020, were measures taken to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. These measures had a noticeable effect on the University’s sustainability journey and carbon emissions in the first three years – 2020, 2021 and 2022. For this reason, 2020 and 2021 can be regarded as atypical years, when AUT’s air travel emissions, overall emissions, emissions from energy and mains water targets were met much sooner than anticipated.

All staff and students returned to AUT campuses in May 2022, which continued to impact AUT’s commuter travel emissions, overall CO₂e emissions, emissions from energy use, water and waste consumption.

In 2023, New Zealand’s borders were open for an entire year, and all staff and students were back on campus. So, 2023 marked the first year since the pandemic when all campuses returned to operating as normal. For this reason, it provided an opportunity to gain a clearer perspective on which pandemic-induced carbon reductions would persist. As will be elaborated on in the following sections, not all reductions in emissions were pandemic related; overall, energy emissions were decreasing due to decarbonisation projects and decreases in the carbon emissions factor.

THEME 5 – BIODIVERSITY TARGET TO 2026

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Preferring indigenous planting STATUS: ACHIEVED	Enhancing biodiversity on AUT campuses by planting only indigenous plants (except for fruit trees) was achieved each year. Table 1 opposite lists the 59 species of native trees, flaxes, rushes, ferns, vines and ground covers were planted across AUT’s three campuses between 2021 and 2025. Some of these native species (harakeke, mānuka, and oioi) were planted by AUT staff and students during native planting sessions at our North and South Campuses.	 Whenua-ora, Mauri-ora 



CONSERVATION STATUS (NZ THREAT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM)	PLANTS	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Not Threatened	Pūrei					
Not Threatened	Whekī					
Not Threatened	Hoheria					
At Risk – Declining	Kauri					
Not Threatened	Kohekohe					
Not Threatened	Kōtukutuku					
Not Threatened	Māhoe					
At Risk – Declining	Coastal Māhoe					
Not Threatened	Mānuka					
Not Threatened	Mataī					
Not Threatened	Miro					
Not Threatened	Oioi					
Not Threatened	Pōhutukawa					
Not Threatened	Whauwhaupaku					
Not Threatened	Pukatea					
Not Threatened	Putaputawētā					
Not Threatened	Māpou					
Not Threatened	Rewarewa					
Not Threatened	Rimu					
Not Threatened	Taraire					
Not Threatened	Tānekaha					
Critically Endangered	Akapukaea					
Not Threatened	Akeake					
Not Threatened	Puawānanga					
Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable	Maire tawake					
Not Threatened	Maire raunui					
At Risk – Naturally Uncommon	Coastal Maire					
At Risk – Naturally Uncommon	Elingamita					
At Risk – Relict	Ewekuri					
Not Threatened	Kahikatea					
Not Threatened	Kānuka					
Not Threatened	Kawaka					
Not Threatened	Kōwhai					
Not Threatened	Makamaka					
Not Threatened	Pōhuehue					
Not Threatened	Porokaiwhiri					
At Risk – Naturally Uncommon	Tawāpou					
Not Threatened	Ti Kōuka					
Not Threatened	Titoki					
Not Threatened	Tōtara					
Not Threatened	Tūrepo					
Not Threatened	Wharangi					
Not Threatened	Hīnau					
Not Threatened	Ngaio					
At Risk – Declining	Rātā rakau					
Threatened – Nationally Critical	Rātā moehau					
Not Threatened	Oro oro					
Not Threatened	Pūriri					
Not Threatened	Toro					
Regionally Endangered/Threatened in Tāmaki Makaurau	Coprosma Kirkii					
Not Threatened	Harakeke					
Not Threatened	Whau					
Not Threatened	Karaka (or kōpi)					
Not Threatened	Karamū					
Not Threatened	Kawakawa					
Not Threatened	Mānatu					
Not Threatened	Nikau					
Not Threatened	Puka					

Table 1: Plant species planted on the North and South Campuses over 2021–2025 period

THEME 5 – TRANSPORT TARGETS TO 2026

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
85% of staff and students take sustainable transport to/from the University STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED	Pandemic-related lockdowns and campus shutdowns throughout 2020 and 2021 prompted most staff and students to work and study off campus, which lowered commuter travel emissions. In 2022 and 2023, commuter travel emissions began rising again with a return of staff and students to campus. According to the 2023, 2024 and 2025 travel surveys, 71–77% of City Campus-based staff took sustainable modes of transport. For North and South Campus-based staff the figures were lower at 31–38% and 10–33% respectively. 75–88% of City Campus-based students took sustainable modes of transport. For North and South Campus-based students the figures were lower at 41–47% and 26–34% respectively. By 2025, 68% of all students used sustainable modes to access their main campus, whilst 64% of all staff used sustainable modes. Our target was to achieve 85% for both staff and students, so this target was not achieved. Disruptions to Auckland’s public transport network, and challenges like delayed completion of infrastructure projects, make commuter travel emissions beyond the University’s direct control and a very difficult area to address. For this reason, AUT continues to partner with Auckland Transport to encourage modal shift towards sustainable transport options.	 Waka-ora, Whanaungatanga 
50% reduction in emissions from air travel STATUS: PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	Pandemic-related travel restrictions in early 2020 drove AUT business travel to rapidly decrease. This resulted in an 87% decrease in AUT’s air travel emissions in 2020, compared with the 2018 baseline year. All AUT international business travel continued to be restricted in 2021, owing to the pandemic, and travel emissions dropped even lower in 2021 to 90% below the 2018 baseline year as shown in Figure 4 below. AUT’s Travel Policy was introduced in 2022 and with international borders reopening in July 2022, the new policy supported keeping AUT’s air travel CO₂e emissions low. Air travel emissions did not begin to rise substantially again until 2023, as the chart in Figure 5 (below) shows. Air travel emissions remained below pre-pandemic levels in 2023 and 2024 and in 2025 emissions from air travel were 48% below the 2018 baseline, so this target was partially achieved.	 Waka-ora, Whanaungatanga 

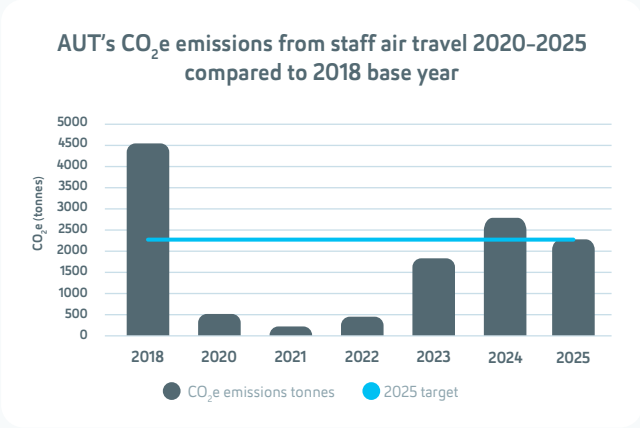


Figure 4: AUT’s CO₂e emissions from staff air travel 2020–2025 compared to 2018 base year

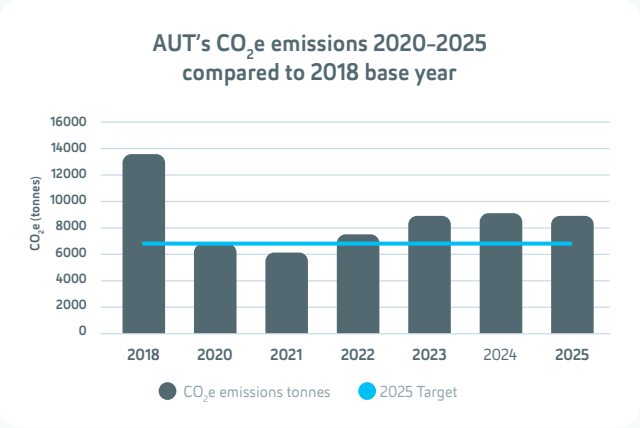


Figure 5: AUT’s CO₂e emissions 2020–2025 compared to 2018 base year

THEME 5 – CO₂e EMISSIONS, WATER AND WASTE TARGETS TO 2026

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Carbon emissions halved by 2025 STATUS: PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	During 2020 and 2021 this target was achieved, due to campus shutdowns during the two lockdowns, as well as operational and efficiency improvements. Since 2021, emissions increased but not to the pre-pandemic level, as shown in Figure 5 below. In 2025, AUT’s emissions were 8,994 tonnes or a 34% decrease against our 2018 baseline and was achieved through decreases in emissions from air travel, fuel, natural gas, electricity, and several other sources. This target is partially achieved.	 Hihiri-ora, Ki-tua 
Emissions from energy reduced by 50% by 2025 STATUS: PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	Between 2020–2022, AUT secured \$3.59 million in government funding to reduce its building-related energy emissions. This funding went towards energy efficiency measures and improvements, including the replacement of natural gas boilers and chillers with efficient heat pumps. These one-time infrastructure changes of swapping out fossil-fuel dependent infrastructure for low emissions alternatives helped lower AUT’s operational energy-related carbon emissions. Figure 6 shows AUT’s energy emissions that is from electricity and gas consumption within AUT buildings. In 2025, emissions from natural gas and electricity decreased by 33% in comparison to our 2018 baseline, so this target is partially achieved.	 Hihiri-ora, Ki-tua 

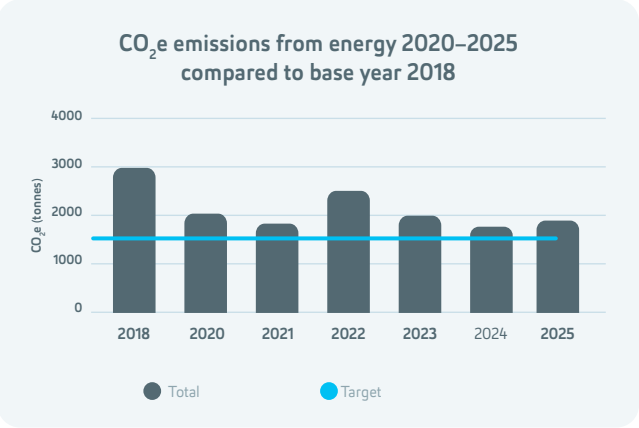


Figure 6: CO₂e emissions from energy 2020–2025 compared to base year 2018

THEME 5 – CO₂e EMISSIONS, WATER AND WASTE TARGETS continued

Mains water reduced by 20% by 2025 STATUS: PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	In 2020 and 2021, AUT worked with Watercare to make efficiency improvements to its water use, which included the rollout of smart meters in City and South Campus buildings. Infrastructure upgrades and using non-potable water for maintenance programmes were two other measures put in place. This means that AUT’s reduced mains water consumption between 2020–2022 (as seen in the chart in Figure 7 below) was driven by both pandemic-related restrictions – like lockdowns – as well as water efficiency measures. During the construction of Tukutuku, two 30,000L rainwater tanks were installed at the North Campus for flushing toilets. Water consumption in 2025 was 18% below the 2018 baseline, so AUT partially achieved this target. Vacating student accommodation (WR) building at the City Campus in 2025 contributed to some of the decrease, as in 2024 WR building used about 10% of AUT’s total water consumption.	 Wai-ora, Ki-tua 
Waste reduced by 50% by 2025 STATUS: PARTIALLY ACHIEVED	Waste and packaging were found to be consistent sustainability issues of concern for AUT’s staff and students, brought to light through the University’s materiality assessments. To address these concerns and divert compostables from landfill, AUT installed organic waste bins across the City Campus in 2022, with North and South Campuses following soon after. In 2023, a waste pilot project, run by Estates, involved trialling on-site waste sorting for the South Campus and most of the City Campus. The pilot project was found to change the ratio of waste going to landfill versus being recycled or composted from 80:20 in 2018 to 60:40 in 2023. Towards the end of 2024, on-site waste sorting was extended to the remainder of the City Campus and the North Campus. For 2025, 41% (or 185 tonnes) was recycled or composted and 59% (or 266 tonnes) went to landfill. This target was partially achieved.	 Ōhanga-ora, Whanaungatanga  

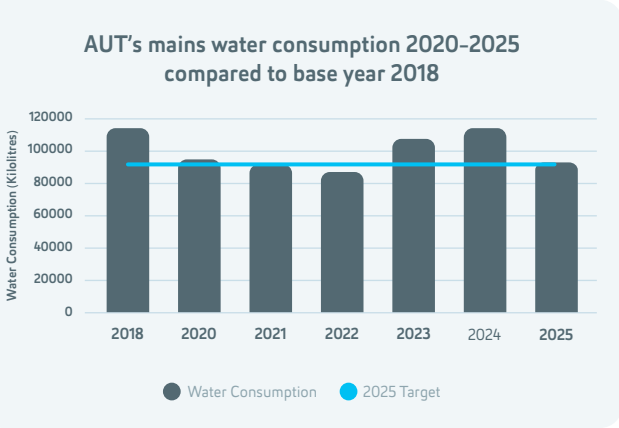


Figure 7: AUT’s mains water consumption 2020-2025 compared to base year 2018

THEME 5 - SUSTAINABLE ICT TARGETS TO 2026

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Carbon footprint of our ICT usage reduced STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED	By 2022, owing to pandemic-related disruptions, most of the University’s operational emissions sources dropped below 2018 baseline levels. Emissions from data centres increased from 24 tonnes in 2018, to 123 tonnes in 2025 and the majority of this increase was due to adding Microsoft 365’s data storage into our emissions calculations. ICT is progressing two projects around reducing Microsoft 365 data storage.	 Hihiri-ora, Whanaungatanga 
Improve the utilisation of computer hardware STATUS: ACHIEVED	The Phillips monitors used throughout AUT include integrated energy-saving technologies like PowerSensor (automatically dims screen brightness when not by screen, cutting energy costs and consumption by up to 70%) and LightSensor (adjusts screen brightness based on room ambient lighting, ensuring optimal viewing while using less power). This hardware is engineered with up to 85% post-consumer recycled plastics and shipped in 100% recyclable packaging, eliminating toxic substances like PVC and BFR. In terms of the materials used to make the laptops that are mainly used at AUT, they include: • Keycaps made with at least 50% recycled plastic • Keyboard membrane made with at least 70% oceanbound plastic • Display made with at least 20% recycled glass • Cover made from at least 90% recycled magnesium	 Hihiri-ora, Ki-tua  

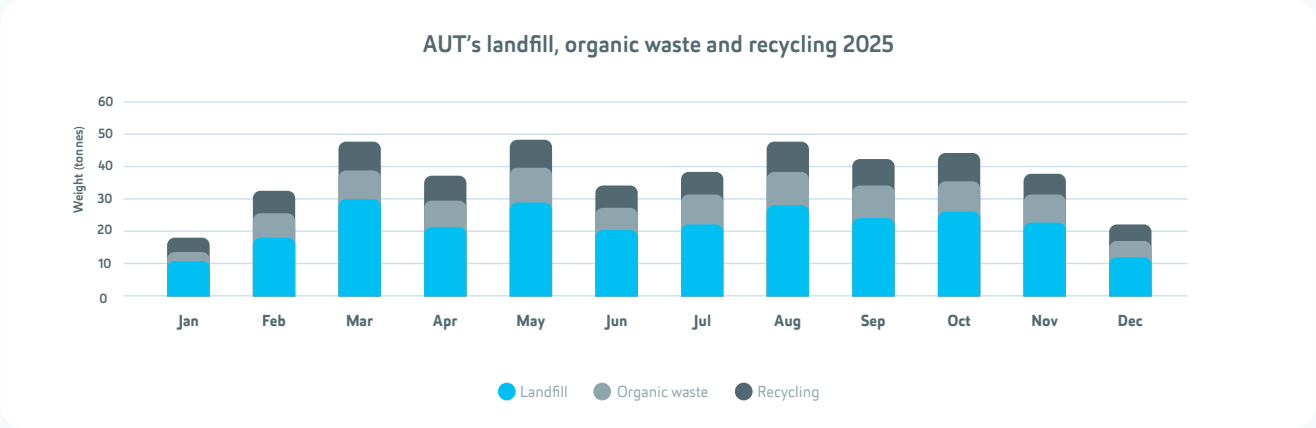


Figure 8: AUT’s waste to landfill, organic waste and recycling by weight (in tonnes) for 2025

SUMMARY

The first three years of the 2020 to 2025 period were an extraordinary time. The New Zealand Government’s response to the pandemic, affected the trajectory of AUT’s operational emissions, with several of the University’s targets being met ahead of time. These pandemic-related effects punctuated AUT’s own successful efforts to improve its operational efficiency.

Actions to reduce air travel and energy-related emissions, improve efficiency of water use and divert waste from landfill played a significant role in reducing AUT’s emissions beyond the influence of ongoing pandemic-related restrictions. It is now a matter of sustaining and improving upon these reductions in future years.

While the long tail of the pandemic meant that business-as-usual did not appear to resume for the University until 2023/2024, an enduring norm from the 2020–2022 pandemic-era is the mix of hybrid (in-office and remote) work; 90% of AUT staff now work from home (WFH) at least one day per week, reducing AUT’s staff commuter travel emissions.

Additionally, the work done by the Tertiary Education Sector Climate Futures Group (TESCFG) to develop climate scenarios out to 2040 and 2090 can help the University better prepare for commonplace disruption in an increasingly climate change stressed world. An advantageous side-effect of a workforce accustomed to remote working is an increase in the University’s resilience to withstand future shocks, like extreme weather events, which may make travelling to work unsafe, as climate change worsens.

WHERE TO FROM HERE? FUTURE FOCUS AREAS

In 2026, AUT will publish its Regenerative Action and Sustainability Plan, which shows a transition from sustainability to regeneration across our education, research, engagement and operations. The plan outlines objectives, KPIs and sets targets until 2030. It allocates significant funding for the design and development of end-of-trip cycling facilities at the North, South and City Campuses. These projects are intended to support reductions in AUT’s commuter travel emissions.

Additional priorities over the coming year include making scenarios, developed by the Tertiary Education Sector Climate Futures Group (TESCFG) in 2023, relevant to AUT; considering how to meet the University’s potential regulatory obligations under the proposed Modern Slavery Bill; and trialling a carbon budget pilot for staff air travel emissions within the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies.

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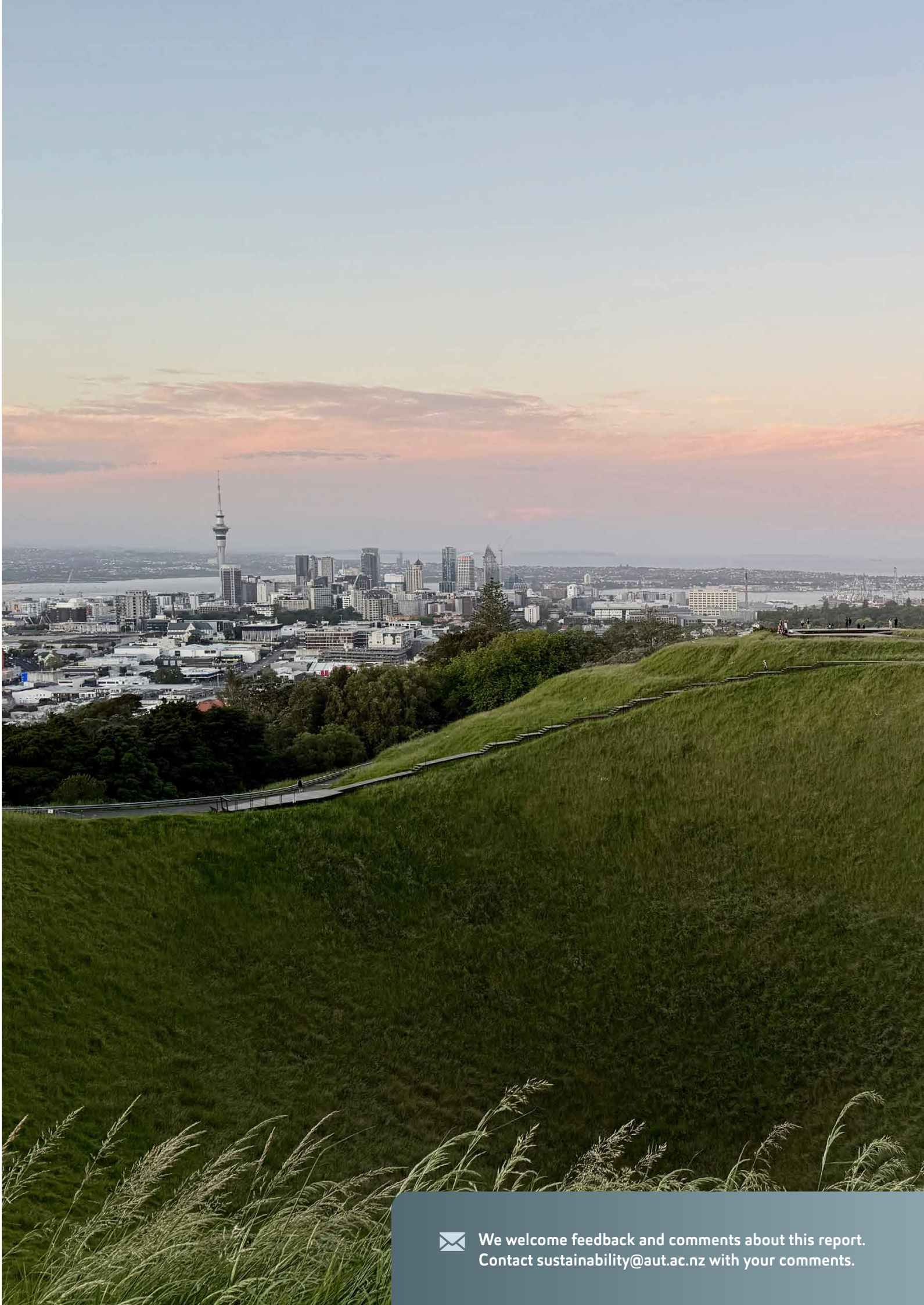
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We welcome feedback and comments about this report.
Contact sustainability@aut.ac.nz with your comments.



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