



AUT

# AUT SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2023

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The information in this report was accurate at the time of publication, July 2024.

## FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



### Tēnā koutou katoa

In 2023, Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau began developing Te Kete – AUT’s Strategy – which outlines our strategic intent until 2030. There are bold statements in Te Kete that highlight our aspiration to be a net zero carbon university, making sustainability central to our decision making and developing regenerative approaches to sustainability.

Once again, AUT is one of the top 100 universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) impact rankings, placed 64th equal. The ranking assesses universities based on their contribution to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which collectively address the most serious and critical global challenges of our time, including poverty, inequality, and climate change. AUT is 12th equal for SDG8 decent work and economic growth, 66th equal for SDG12 responsible consumption and production and 79th in the world for SDG 10 – reduced inequalities – which measures universities’ research on social inequalities, their policies on discrimination and their commitment to recruiting staff and students from underrepresented groups.

For the QS Sustainability Rankings, AUT moved from a ranking range of 261–280 to an improved position of 201. This achievement is more remarkable considering that the number of ranked universities has doubled to 1,403. The QS Sustainability ranking assesses universities’ social impact, environmental impact and governance. Again, AUT is excelling around equality across international universities, placing 62nd for equality and 75th for governance.

AUT participated in a tertiary education sector collaboration designed to identify potential impacts on the tertiary education sector as a result of climate change. Over 100 sector stakeholders, including academic and professional staff from all eight universities, the former Te Pūkenga, and wānanga, participated in two workshops, along with industry iwi representatives and students. The group developed four plausible climate scenarios considering both the physical and societal responses to climate change. AUT is using these scenarios to identify our climate-related risks and opportunities and better understand the resilience of our business model and strategy.

Addressing climate change and social responsibility were key themes that emerged during the Te Kete consultation process. We have made good improvements in these areas, but we now have more challenging initiatives to progress. We must lean into these, and we must encourage our people to advance forward together.

**Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata.  
Haere whakamua!**

Care for the land, care for the people.  
Go forward!

**Professor Damon Salesa**  
Vice-Chancellor



# CHAIR OF THE SUSTAINABILITY STEERING GROUP INTRODUCTION

Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Mākau Rau has made more progress with advancing sustainability across our teaching and learning, research and showcasing sustainability on our campuses. We have more bold work ahead.



## LEARNING AND TEACHING

Across our sustainability-focused courses, 3,825 students were enrolled in one or more (15%) courses. Since 2020, the number of students enrolled in one or more sustainability-focused courses has increased by 5%, or about 1,000 students. Seven sustainability majors or minors were offered within undergraduate programmes. There has been no increase in this number since 2020.

Students in the Design for Sustainability minor (School of Art and Design), investigated approaches to reducing food insecurity in South Auckland. Using design thinking methods and a system change approach, they developed projects in collaboration with community organisations. Some of their solutions included Lemons to Lemonade, a strategy for community-wide sharing of excess homegrown produce and culturally diverse food practices; The Veggie Truck, a strategy to support the community-led distribution of healthy, affordable food; and Mātauranga Kai, a re-imagining of food-based secondary school education so that modules are holistic, student-led, and responsive to the food and nutrition needs identified by the local community.

## RESEARCH

After a significant increase in the value of research contracts in 2022, AUT saw a notable decrease in externally funded research projects secured, down to \$15.3 million. This is in part due to a \$6.7 million contract being awarded in December 2023, which will be signed, and assigned to 2024. This impacted the financial value associated with SDG-related research projects, which was \$2.5 million. The research contracts for 2024 are looking more positive. AUT produced 393 SDG research publications that contributed to one or more SDGs in 2023 (or 30% of all outputs). While a significant jump from the 17% reported in 2020, the proportion remained the same from 2022.

Marsden-funded research combined Mātauranga Māori with Western science to develop a best practice urupā tautaiiao (natural burial site), including ecological restoration, pest and weed control, and the potential of using technology and mapping. Professor Hinematau McNeill has been progressing the research and identified that “our relationship with Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) is severely compromised when we are buried embalmed with chemicals and wrapped in coffins made using synthetic materials, contaminating ground water and the soil.” The main research site involved the refurbishment of graves at Kenana urupā (graveyard) in Te Puke. Concrete headstones and grave covers were removed and replaced with native plants that were planted according to maramataka (a traditional lunar schedule). In addition, three wooden pou (carved posts) were installed representing deities. Professor McNeill said “the ātua [gods] are deliberate symbols of a Māori worldview that demands kaitiakitanga, a duty of care for the environment.”

## OPERATIONS ON CAMPUS

2023 represented our first year since the pandemic when all the campuses were operating as normal, so it has provided a better view of what pandemic-related gains we have locked in.

AUT’s CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2023 were 8,885 CO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes, a 35% decrease compared to our 2018 baseline year. Between 2020 and 2022, our emissions were affected by COVID-19; for example, campuses closed due to lockdowns and limited air travel, which meant lower CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. In 2023, emissions from air travel remained low and contributed to maintaining the reduction. When compared to our 2018 baseline, emissions across the majority of sources decreased, with the biggest reduction in electricity, natural gas, air travel and commuter travel.

Our overall energy consumption generated 2,059 CO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes of emissions in 2023, and a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of 31% when compared to 2018. This is largely due to a 31% decrease in our emissions from natural gas, which translates to a decrease of 800,000 kWh since 2018. Importantly, whilst gas consumption (and emissions) has decreased, our investment in efficient new equipment has meant no commensurate increase in electricity consumption; instead, our electricity usage decreased by 1.1 million kWh. Finally, the national grid provided electricity with a lower carbon footprint during 2023, which also contributed to a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions associated with AUT’s energy.

AUT’s Estates team introduced a pilot project – on-site sorting of all the contents of the waste, recycling and organic waste bins – at the City (except student accommodation) and South Campuses. Only a handful of organisations in New Zealand have taken this approach to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. On-site sorting has two advantages: we get actual weights for each category, which is relatively new to the industry; and we maximise composting and recycling options, which also helps reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. We continue to encourage staff and students to use the correct bins. The next steps for 2024 involve expanding this approach to North Campus and to our student accommodation sites.

We continued to progress across a range of our sustainability targets and also identified where more work is needed. During 2024 we will build on these achievements to advance bold sustainability actions and with AUT’s strategy – Te Kete – completed, we will develop further sustainability priorities and progress forward the Sustainability Steering Group.

### Professor Mark Orams

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research  
Chair of the Sustainability Steering Group



# 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



-6

compulsory sustainability courses offered compared to 2020

MORE STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABILITY MAJORS, MINORS OR COURSES



+26

sustainability-focused courses and +1,004 students enrolled since 2020

0

No additional degrees with a sustainability major or minor compared with 2020

## RESEARCH – MOHIO-ORA

INTERNAL FUNDING THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROJECTS



1 faculty includes sustainability in internal research grant criteria

INCREASING PEER REVIEWED SDG RESEARCH OUTPUTS



30% of research outputs contributed to a UNSDG

+13%

since 2020  
(Source: Dimensions)

EXTERNALLY FUNDED SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH PROJECTS



38 externally funded SDG-related research projects generated \$2.5 million

-38 from 2020

## PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY – HAPORI-ORA

AUT BECOMING A FAIRTRADE REGISTERED ORGANISATION



Only Fairtrade coffee is sold at AUT cafes. 3.2 tonnes of Fairtrade coffee consumed

-3 tonnes from 2020

## LOW CARBON – HIRIRI-ORA

CO<sub>2</sub>e REDUCED BY 50% BY 2025

-35%

decrease since 2018\*



CO<sub>2</sub>e FROM ENERGY REDUCED BY 50% BY 2025

-31%

decrease since 2018\*



CARBON FOOTPRINT OF OUR ICT USAGE

+3

tonnes increase since 2018



## WATER – WAI-ORA

MAINS WATER REDUCED BY 20% BY 2025

-5%

decrease since 2018



\*AUT's CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions inventory is independently verified against ISO 14064-1 Greenhouse Gases



# AUT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN 2023

The AUT Sustainability Plan was introduced in 2018 and a mid-cycle review in 2023 identified several opportunities for improvement. These include establishing more targeted metrics and developing targets that are more focused on impact. Te Kete, AUT’s new strategy, was launched in 2024 and includes some bold statements that are detailed below:

- AUT “aspires to become a net zero carbon university, taking bold climate action”;
- A university that “develop[s] the regenerative approaches to sustainability so crucial to our place in the world.”; and
- Recognition that “sustainability is central to our decision-making, and we expect our partners, supporters and suppliers to shift with us”.

With these clear statements the current Sustainability Plan will be revised and developed as an Enabling Plan to achieve strategic outcomes and measures of success. The revised plan will align with Te Kete and assume a consistent form and structure so all our plans are more coherent. The establishment of the Transformation Management Office for AUT also provides a new opportunity for AUT to enhance the impact of, and accelerate the progress towards, our climate goals.

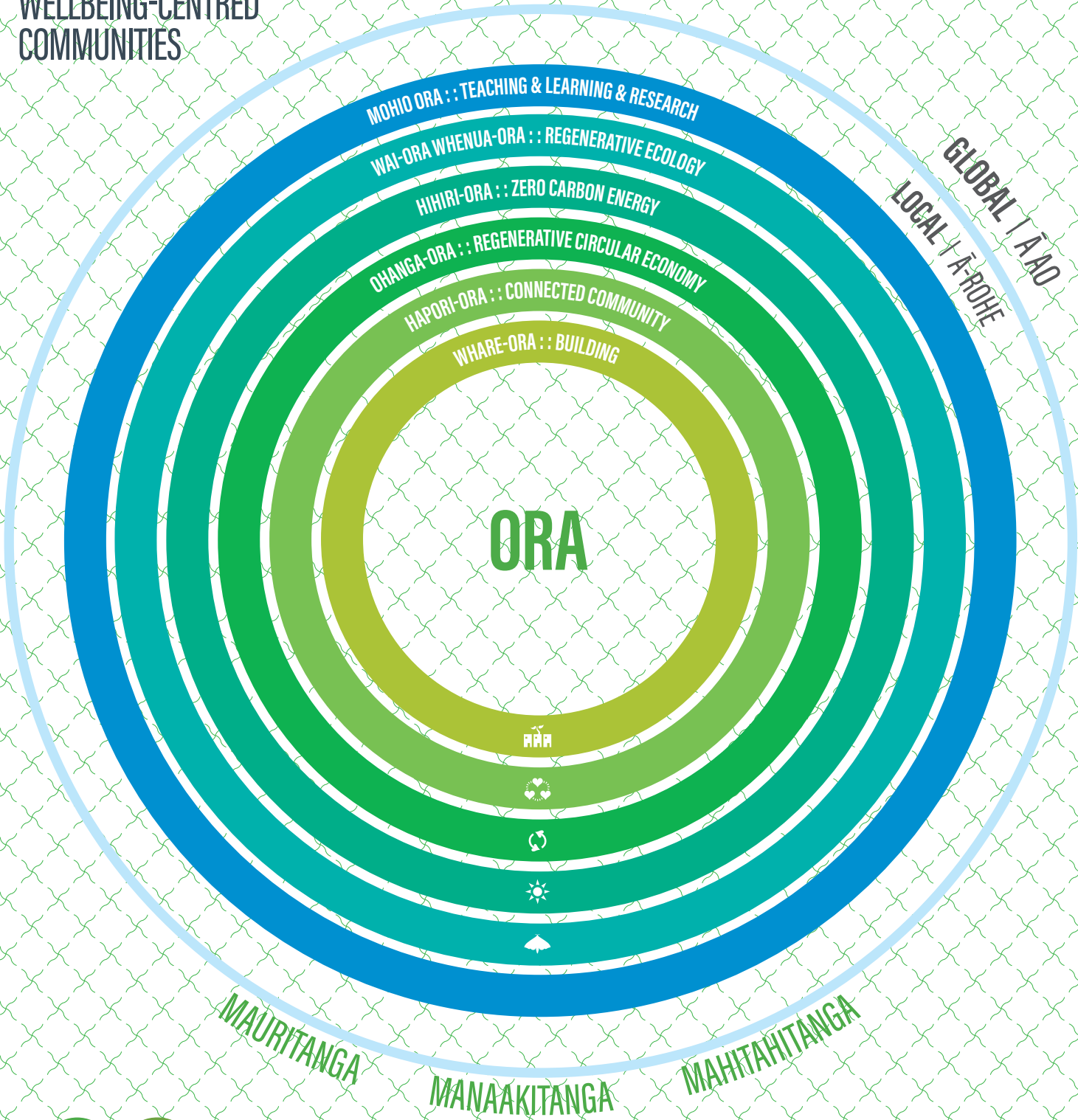
The Mauri Ora Regenerative Action Compass first featured in AUT’s Sustainability Report in 2021 and again in 2022. It was developed by AUT’s Associate Professor Amanda Yates and is being used within organisations as a tool to support transformative regeneration that is indigenous-led. It is grounded in te ao Māori and will influence our thinking as we revise AUT’s Sustainability Plan. As we transition from AUT’s first Sustainability Plan to the next, we will complete a final abridged report showing our progress in 2024 against key targets in AUT’s first Sustainability Plan. In this report we will show the targets we have and have not achieved.

## SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

AUT has already implemented a range of projects and initiatives that enable sustainability gains, such as replacing natural gas boilers with more efficient, electric alternatives, and piloting on-site waste sorting to minimise the amount sent to landfill. We are approaching the stage where, alongside continued organisational improvements, we will rely more on behaviour changes from our staff, students and suppliers. For example, once the on-site waste sorting project is fully embedded, all remaining waste will result from what AUT procures from suppliers, and what our staff or students dispose of on campus. We recognise the scale of the challenge ahead, across our many stakeholders. Another challenge relates to our net carbon zero ambition, which is going to require some really difficult decisions and trade-offs for our entire university community to wrestle with.

# NGĀ TOHU MAURI ORA REGENERATIVE ACTION COMPASS

A TRANSITION TOOL  
FOR RESILIENT, ECOLOGICAL,  
WELLBEING-CENTRED  
COMMUNITIES



# THEME 1: CREATING EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES – LEARNING AND TEACHING

We’ve seen an overall steady increase in the number of, and enrolments in, sustainability-focused courses at AUT, and in the development of courses specifically addressing climate change. The revised Sustainability Plan will look at new ways to identify the impact of our sustainability teaching and learning.

THEME 1 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Ensure all undergraduate programmes develop sustainability literacy, values and practices, consistent with the AUT Graduate Profile <b>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</b>	There were 28 compulsory sustainability-focused <sup>1</sup> courses offered in AUT programmes, majors or minors. This is a decrease of six when compared with the 2020 baseline year.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
Increasing number of students will have access to majors, minors or courses with a sustainability orientation <b>STATUS: ACHIEVED</b>	In 2023, 3,825 students were enrolled in one or more sustainability-focused courses (15%). Since 2020, the number of students enrolled in one or more sustainability-focused courses has increased by 5% or about 1,000 students.  Seven sustainability majors or minors were offered within undergraduate programmes. There has been no increase in this number since 2020.  The number of sustainability-focused courses increased from 67 to 93 over the same time. <sup>2</sup>	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
All students will have the opportunity to work on an interdisciplinary project that encompasses the concepts of wellbeing, futures-thinking and connectivity <b>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</b>	AUT offers co-operative placements, applied projects and group work, which often have an interdisciplinary aspect to them. For example, AUT Integrated Health is a healthcare centre where students work alongside a range of qualified professions to best meet the health needs of the public.  However, all students do not complete an interdisciplinary project that encompasses the three core concepts of our Sustainability Plan.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 4 QUALITY EDUCATION
Develop climate emergency and zero-carbon system change curriculum materials for academics <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	Although not specifically targeted at academics, AUT received funding from the Whakatupu Aotearoa Foundation (WAF) to extend its successful Living Laboratories research programme into a learning experience for students. Living Laboratories is a partnership between AUT and Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei, focused on restoration of native forests. The WAF funding supports the Learning from Nature programme, which will allow rangatahi, school students and community groups to learn about repairing nature, enhancing resilience, and engaging with mātauranga Māori, as well as engaging with citizen science projects.	 Mohio-ora, Ki Tua 4 QUALITY EDUCATION 13 CLIMATE ACTION

1. Sustainability-focused courses – these include courses where the primary explicit focus is on sustainability, the application of sustainability within a field and/or understanding or solving one or more major sustainability challenge(s) (Source – AASHE – Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System)

2. Some natural flux in numbers is expected as not all courses are offered every year.

## AUT DESIGN STUDENTS TACKLE FOOD INSECURITY

Students in the Design for Sustainability minor (School of Art and Design) investigated approaches to reducing food insecurity in South Auckland. Using design thinking methods and a system change approach, they developed projects in collaboration with community organisations. Some of their solutions included Lemons to Lemonade, a strategy for community-wide sharing of excess homegrown produce and culturally diverse food practices; The Veggie Truck, a strategy to support the community-led distribution of healthy, affordable food; and Mātauranga Kai, a re-imagining of food-based secondary school education so that modules are holistic, student-led, and responsive to the food and nutrition needs identified by the local community.



## RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

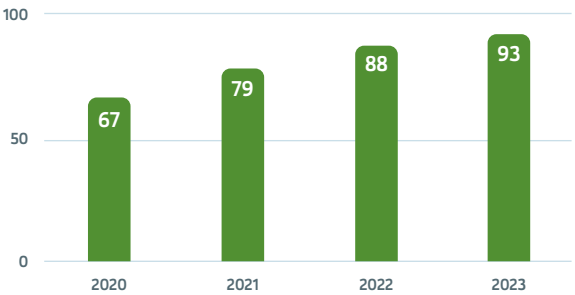
Two gastronomy students visited New Caledonia to learn about how the country is reducing its reliance on imported, non-traditional foods. They were hosted by the Pacific Food Lab – New Caledonia, an organisation that is working to increase the share of local products in New Caledonia to generate more economic, social and environmental value. Professor Tracy Berno founded the Pacific Food Lab – Aotearoa chapter, which enables student internships and collaboration with PFL New Caledonia. AUT student Dianne Ma said “whilst walking in Port Moselle Harbour... Tracy showed us the tiniest bit of land that at first glance appears to be cool landscaping – but is actually a self-sustaining, fully edible garden. It opened my eyes to the rich regenerative agriculture system in New Caledonia.”



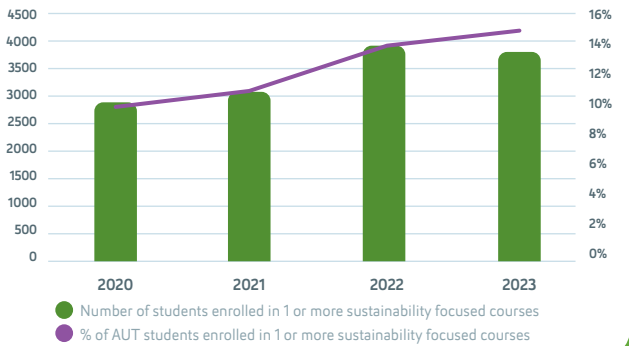
DIANNE MA, PROFESSOR TRACY BERNO AND DOLBY NG IN NOUMÉA.



Sustainability focused courses available 2020-2023



Number and % of students enrolled in one or more sustainability courses 2020-2023









THEME 2:  
DISCOVERY AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE  
FOR WELLBEING AND PROSPERITY – RESEARCH

AUT is continuing to develop our research impact and research outputs. Whilst our progress is encouraging, we still have a way to go particularly with developing more large scale research projects that generate impact around the climate emergency.

THEME 2 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<p>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</p> <p>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</p>	<p>AUT and Victoria University received Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Grant funding to establish the initiative, Nature-based Urban design for Wellbeing and Adaptation in Oceania (NUWAO). Associate Professor Maibritt Pedersen Zari is the Project Lead within AUT. They work with communities to co-design urban environments that are centred in indigenous ecological knowledge and nature-based solutions as a means to adapt to climate change impacts. During 2023 they held a symposium, a design competition, generated publications, and released podcasts where many AUT academics shared their knowledge around climate issues and called listeners to action.</p>	<div><p>Wai-ora, Whenua-ora, Ki Tua</p><div><div>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</div><div>15 LIFE ON LAND</div><div>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</div></div></div>
<p>Providing internal funding mechanisms which support research projects that advance knowledge and its application to sustainability</p> <p>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</p>	<p>For DCT’s 2023 contestable fund, all the awarded projects had to address the three core concepts within AUT’s Sustainability Plan. Two significant research projects awarded funding in DCT were projects about smart mobility as a sustainability enabler and facilitating the transition from synthetic fibres, to sustainable, natural fibres, which are the base material for smart textiles, and sustainable building materials. The research will be used to develop a MBIE research programme bid and could revolutionise the fibre processing and manufacturing industry.</p>	<div><p>Hapori-ora, Mauri-ora</p><div><div>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</div></div></div>
<p>Host annual research events addressing climate emergency responses and system change (mitigation, adaptation, transformation)</p> <p>STATUS: ACHIEVED</p>	<p>AUT hosted the sixth Open Science Conference in February with a specific focus on the biosphere. 150 delegates joined online and in person to exchange the latest research on how climate change is affecting ecosystems from the microbial to the planetary scale. The Department of Environmental Science hosted the annual Coastal Restoration Trust conference that involved iwi, research scientists, council, students and the Department of Conservation. The successful ecological restoration of coastal ecosystems is of major importance to Aotearoa, given our vulnerability to climate change impacts.</p>	<div><p>Whenua-ora, Wai-ora, Whanaungatanga</p><div><div>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</div><div>15 LIFE ON LAND</div><div>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</div></div></div>
<p>Increasing numbers of peer reviewed research outputs that contribute to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</p>	<p>AUT had 393 publications that contributed to one or more SDGs in 2023 (30% of all outputs). While a significant jump from the 17% reported in 2020, the proportion remained the same from 2022. Source – Dimensions</p>	<div><p>Mohio-ora, Ki Tua</p><p>All SDGs</p></div>

Note: Only key research targets are being reported on in the 2023 report.

DECOLONISING MĀORI DEATH PRACTICES

Marsden-funded research combined Mātauranga Māori with western science to develop a best practice urupā tautaiāo (natural burial site) including ecological restoration, pest and weed control, and the potential of using technology and mapping. Professor Hinematau McNeill has been progressing the research and identified that “our relationship with Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) is severely compromised when we are buried embalmed with chemicals and wrapped in coffins made using synthetic materials, contaminating ground water and the soil.”

The main research site involved the refurbishment of graves at Kenana urupā (graveyard) in Te Puke. Concrete headstones and grave covers were removed and replaced with native plants that were planted according to maramataka (a traditional schedule guided by the moon). In addition, three wooden pou (carved posts) were installed representing the deities. Professor McNeill said “the ātua [gods] are deliberate symbols of a Māori world view that demands kaitiakitanga, a duty of care for the environment.”










THEME 3:  
RESPONDING TO OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD –  
PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

Partnerships are one of the essential ingredients to achieving significant sustainability initiatives. We can achieve so much more through partnerships, and it is especially essential when considering systems-led approaches. There is great potential to develop more and deeper partnerships with industry and community to further sustainability, both within and outside AUT.

THEME 3 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	PROGRESS TOWARDS THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
Establishing partnerships with external organisations based on working together towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals and/or becoming low carbon <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	A1 building was under construction at North Campus during 2023. The contract with Naylor Love included a requirement to divert 90% of the construction and demolition waste away from landfill. To date, Naylor Love has met this target diverting a total of 182 tonnes of waste away from landfill. Some initiatives included returning offcuts to be remade into new PVC pipes, collecting framing timber for reuse on other projects, purchasing reusable cable ties, and recycling all cardboard and soft plastics used on site.	 Mohio-ora, Hapori-ora, Mauri ora, Whanaungatanga   
Working towards AUT becoming a Fairtrade-registered organisation <b>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</b>	Only Fairtrade-certified coffee is sold in the cafés on AUT's three campuses and 3.2 tonnes was consumed in 2023, which is the same as 2022 and just under half of what was consumed in 2020. Significant initial work would be required for AUT to become a Fairtrade university. Instead, in 2023 we considered how to address modern slavery within our supply chain, which includes developing an approach across key suppliers in consultation with our procurement team.	 Whenua-ora, Wai-ora, Hapori-ora, Whanaungatanga 



ADVANCED GENDERTICK ACCREDITATION

AUT gained Advanced GenderTick accreditation for the first time in 2023 from the nationally recognised GenderTick organisation. In doing so, AUT has become one of only two New Zealand tertiary institutions to have gained this accreditation and one of only 29 organisations across Aotearoa to have achieved the GenderTick. Six key criteria were fulfilled by AUT in order to gain accreditation and they include:

- Equal pay
- Leadership representation
- Flexible work and leave
- Gender safe workplace
- Gender inclusive culture
- Supporting the menopausal transition

One aspect that GenderTick considered was AUT's Pay Gaps Report, which included a report on the ethnicity pay gap – the first university in New Zealand to do so.



VOLUNTEERING WITH SUSTAINABILITY-RELATED ORGANISATIONS

AUT Edge Award students organised a number of sustainability related volunteering opportunities for students in 2023. Students could volunteer to plant trees with Conservation Volunteers NZ, join LegaSea to gather rubbish on seashores and help Fair Food, a food rescue charity. About 10 students spent several hours sorting through surplus food, nearing its use by date or wrongly labelled. The food was sorted into food boxes that go to 50 charity groups and food banks daily around West Auckland. Fair Food has 150 volunteers help each month so they were grateful for the support of AUT students, who experienced the positive impact of both providing nutritious food to people in need and reducing waste to landfill.








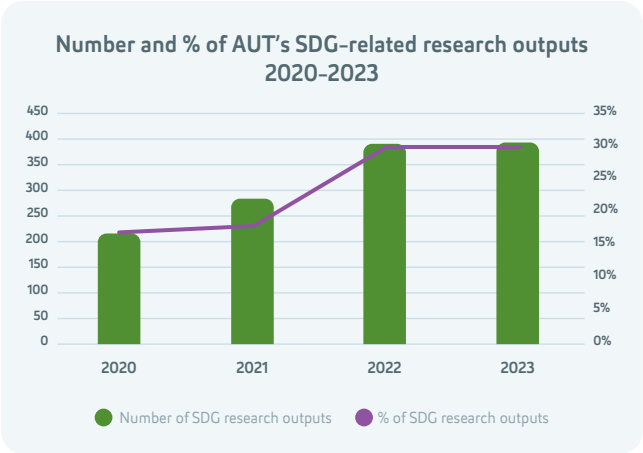


THEME 4:  
BUILDING OUR POSITION AS NEW ZEALAND’S  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY – LEADERSHIP

According to THE Impact Rankings, AUT is placed 64th equal in the world reflecting our commitment to the United Nation’s SDGs. AUT is ranked 201st in the QS Sustainability rankings, including 62nd globally for equality and 75th for governance.

THEME 4 – TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<p>Generating sustainability research projects across AUT that attracts external financial support</p> <p>STATUS: ACHIEVED</p>	<p>After a significant increase in the value of research contracts in 2022, AUT saw a notable decrease in externally funded research contracts secured, down to \$15.3 million. This is in part due to a \$6.7 million contract being awarded in December 2023, which will be signed, and assigned to 2024. This impacted the financial value associated with SDG-related research projects, which was \$2.5 million, and the number of projects, down from 84 in 2022 to 38 in 2024. The value of research contracts for 2024 is looking more positive.</p> <p>External funding for research projects came from a range of sources, including funding for two projects from the Ministry of Primary Industries about the role of the soil microbiome in regenerative agriculture and investigating the potential for kina to control an invasive seaweed. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment also funded a project that uses novel chemistry to valorize residual plant materials, turning waste to treasure.</p>	 <p>Mohio-ora, Whanaungatanga All SDGs</p>
<p>Demonstrating innovation in sustainability professional practice within the curriculum and our research</p> <p>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</p>	<p>Professor Erica Hinckson (School of Sport and Recreation) is part of an international research team using mobile digital technology to study the links between walking environments and people’s experiences. They are filling gaps in our understanding of how specific features of the built environment influence people’s perceptions and behaviours, specifically around walking. This information is essential to enable the transition to a low carbon transport system.</p>	 <p>Mohio-ora, Whanaungatanga</p> <div></div>



TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR CLIMATE  
SCENARIOS REPORT

AUT participated in a tertiary education sector collaboration designed to identify potential impacts on the tertiary education sector as a result of climate change. Over 100 sector stakeholders, including academic and professional staff from all eight universities, the former Te Pūkenga, and the wānanga participated in the two workshops, along with industry iwi representatives and students. The group developed four plausible climate scenarios considering both the physical and societal responses to climate change. AUT is using these scenarios to identify our climate-related risks and opportunities and better understand the resilience of our business model and strategy.





THEME 5:  
BEING A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO WORK  
AND LEARN – SUSTAINABILITY ON CAMPUS

Implementing sustainability initiatives through our operations continues to be a focus for AUT. Behaviour change amongst our staff and students and completing tangible projects are the two key ways in which we make sustainable changes in our operations. Some examples include Green Impact, a sustainability behaviour change programme, along with establishing herb and vegetable gardens on campus, and replacing natural gas boilers with more efficient alternatives.

THEME 5 – BIODIVERSITY TARGET TO 2025





TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<p>Preferring indigenous planting, where appropriate</p> <p>STATUS: ACHIEVED</p>	<p>The Estates team planted 255 native trees across the North and South Campuses. Some of the native trees planted include rewarewa, taraire, puriri and miro. Native shrubs and ground cover plants were also planted across the three campuses. Just under 40 fruit trees and banana palms were planted by sport and recreation students on the North Campus, as well as a number of taro.</p>	 <p>Whenua-ora, Mauri-ora</p> 

COMMUNITY GARDEN  
INITIATIVE GROWS

Students who enrol in the School of Sport and Recreation’s Lifestyle Nutrition course learn about growing fresh and sustainable fruit and vegetables. From a small beginning at North Campus five years ago, the initiative has grown to include herb and vegetable gardens on all three main campuses, benefiting students’ learning as well as sharing the produce. We have active gardening clubs for staff and students at City and South Campuses, and reinvigorated 16 garden beds at South Campus during the year. The City Campus rooftop garden is used for teaching the School of Hospitality and Tourism students about a range of culinary herbs, as well as providing a relaxing lunch space.



THEME 5 – TRANSPORT TARGETS TO 2025

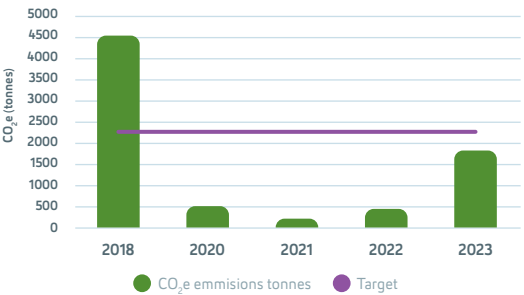
TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<p>85% of staff and students take sustainable transport to/from the University</p> <p>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</p>	<p>Around 68% of students used sustainable transport to and from AUT in 2023, a similar percentage to that in the previous 2021 survey. However, looking just at City Campus, we can see that use of sustainable transport amongst our students decreased by 7% over the same period, with issues with the bus and train services affecting patronage, along with the pandemic. For staff, 71% chose sustainable modes of travel to/from work, up 8% from 2021. Much of this increase was in active modes (walking and cycling), along with a 3% decrease in staff driving alone to work.</p>	 <p>Waka-ora, Whanaungatanga</p> 
<p>50% reduction in emissions from air travel</p> <p>STATUS: ACHIEVED</p>	<p>CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions associated with air travel have decreased by 60% since 2018, from 4,546 tonnes down to 1,834. The initial savings achieved due to pandemic-related restrictions, and the AUT Travel Policy have maintained low emissions, whilst enabling travel where it is of demonstrable benefit to the University.</p>	 <p>Waka-ora, Whanaungatanga</p> 

AUT COMMUTER TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE

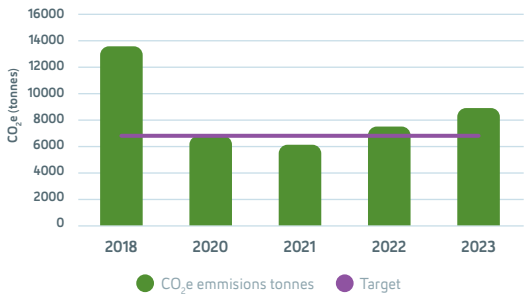
We developed a draft commuter travel plan in 2023. The plan discussed a range of initiatives to increase the uptake of sustainable travel, including the provision of covered and restricted access bike parking on each campus, an employee e-bike purchase scheme, and supporting the use of public transport. The plan remains in draft stage as we work through the barriers to implementation; we anticipate the full plan being completed in 2025.



CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from air travel 2020-2023 compared to base year 2018



AUT’s CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions 2020-2023 compared to base year 2018

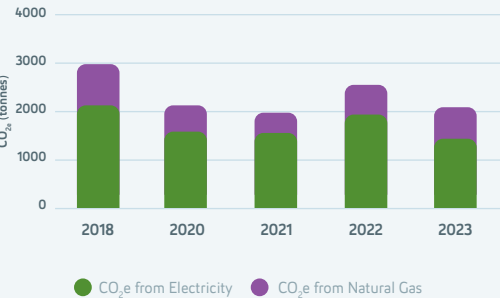




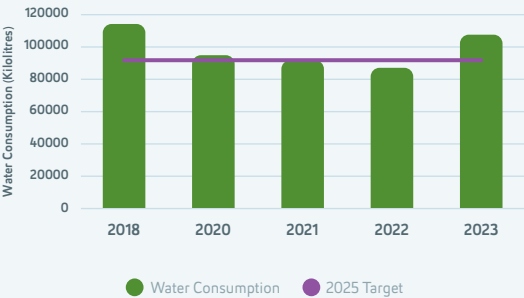
AUT'S CO<sub>2</sub>e EMISSIONS INVENTORY

	EMISSIONS SOURCE	CO <sub>2</sub> e (TONNES)	PERCENTAGES
SCOPE 1	Fuel	48	0.5%
	Refrigerants	100	1.1%
	Natural gas	638	7.2%
	LPG	2	0.0%
SCOPE 2	Electricity (location based)	1,421	16.0%
SCOPE 3	Freight (Road)	0	0.0%
	Air travel	1,834	20.6%
	Taxis	4	0.1%
	Mileage	59	0.7%
	Rental cars	7	0.1%
	Hotels	84	0.9%
	Staff commuter travel	504	5.7%
	Student commuter travel	3,605	40.6%
	WFH	46	0.5%
	Shuttle bus	138	1.6%
	Waste	98	1.1%
	Transmission & distribution losses	188	2.1%
	Paper consumption	21	0.2%
	Water & wastewater	59	0.7%
	Data centres	27	0.3%
	Grand total	8,885	100%
	% change compared to 2018 baseline year		-35%

CO<sub>2</sub>e from Electricity and Natural Gas 2020-2023 compared to base year 2018



AUT's Mains Water consumption 2020-2023 compared to base year 2018



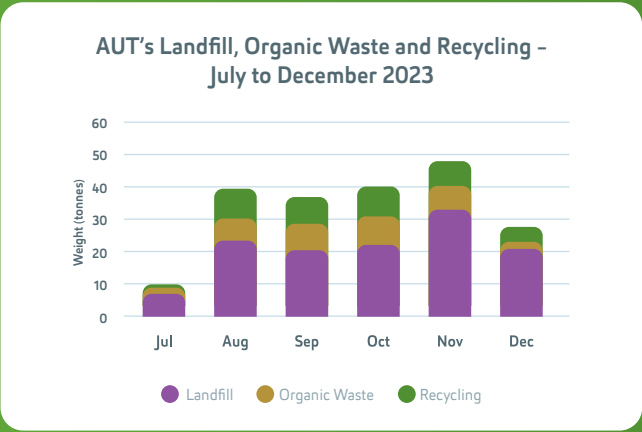
THEME 5 – CO<sub>2</sub>e EMISSIONS, WATER AND WASTE TARGETS

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<b>Carbon emissions halved by 2025</b> <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	<p>AUT's CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2023 were 8,885 CO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes, a 35% decrease compared to our 2018 baseline year. 2023 represented our first year since the pandemic when all the campuses were operating as normal, and therefore provides CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions data that is relatively clear of the impacts of the pandemic. Between 2020 and 2022, our emissions were affected by COVID-19; for example, campuses closed due to lockdowns and limited air travel, which meant lower CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.</p> <p>In 2023, emissions from air travel remained low and a decrease in the electricity CO<sub>2</sub>e factor contributed to maintaining the reduction by several percentage points. When compared to our 2018 baseline, emissions across the majority of sources decreased, with the biggest reduction in electricity, natural gas, air travel and commuter travel.</p>	 Hihiri-ora, Ki-tua 13 CLIMATE ACTION
<b>Emissions from energy reduced by 50% by 2025</b> <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	<p>Since the pandemic, 2023 provides a clearer view of the effectiveness of our energy reduction measures. Our overall energy consumption generated 2,059 CO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes of emissions in 2023, and a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of 31% when compared to 2018. This is largely due to a 31% decrease in our emissions from natural gas, which translates to a decrease of 1.5 million kWh since 2018. Importantly, whilst gas consumption (and emissions) has decreased, our investment in efficient new equipment has not led to a commensurate increase in electricity consumption; instead, our electricity usage decreased by 1.1 million kWh. Finally, the national grid provided electricity with a lower carbon footprint during 2023, which also contributed to a decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions associated with AUT's energy. By the end of 2024, approximately half of the gas boilers across AUT will be removed or replaced with an efficient electric alternative. A whole of building energy efficiency approach is being taken to reducing energy; work on WH building is progressing well.</p>	 Hihiri-ora, Ki-tua 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 13 CLIMATE ACTION
<b>Mains water reduced by 20% by 2025</b> <b>STATUS: NOT ACHIEVED</b>	<p>We consumed 107,790kL, which is 5% less than our baseline year. Currently, there are no water efficiency projects in progress; to achieve this goal we would need a significant investment in monitoring, efficiency projects and staff.</p>	 Wai-ora, Ki-tua 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
<b>Waste reduced by 50% by 2025</b> <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	<p>In July 2023 we trialled on-site waste sorting for South and parts of City Campus – more information is in the case study. We aim to increase recycling and composting, while decreasing landfill waste generated on our campuses. We have learned that from July to December 2023, half (55.5 tonnes) of waste from South and most of City Campuses went to landfill, whilst the other half (52.5 tonnes) was recycled or composted. In 2018, by comparison, 80% of waste went to landfill, while just 20% was recycled or composted. In 2024, the pilot will be extended to student accommodation at City Campus and all of North Campus.</p>	 Ōhanga-ora, Whanaungatanga 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 13 CLIMATE ACTION



ON-SITE SORTING OF WASTE

AUT’s Estates team introduced a pilot project – on-site sorting of all the contents of the waste, recycling and organic waste bins – at the City (except student accommodation) and South Campuses. Only a handful of organisations in New Zealand have taken this approach to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. On-site sorting has two advantages: we get actual weights for each category, which is relatively new to the industry; and we maximise the use of composting and recycling options, which also helps reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. We continue to encourage staff and students to use the correct bins. Next steps for 2024 involve expanding this approach to North Campus and to our student accommodation sites.



KEY SUPPLIERS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our procurement approach now includes a sustainability lens, with more key suppliers contractually required to provide their CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions and waste data associated with the service(s) or product(s) they provide to AUT. We’re also working directly with our suppliers to share our sustainability targets and discuss how we can work together to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions. In 2023 we also embarked on the challenge of addressing modern slavery in our supply chain; we are in the process of developing a due diligence framework to assess and address risks in our domestic and international supply chains, with a focus on our key supplier.



THEME 5 - SUSTAINABLE ICT TARGETS TO 2025

TARGET	INFORMATION RELATED TO THE TARGETS	MAURI ORA COMPASS/SDGS
<b>Carbon footprint of our ICT usage reduced</b> <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	AUT has two data centre providers. Our CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions from ICT usage reflects a proportion of CO <sub>2</sub> e from these providers <sup>3</sup> . Emissions from ICT increased year-on-year between 2018 and 2022, with 2023 being the first year to record a decrease. However, the 27 tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e associated with our data centre suppliers in 2023 was still an increase of 3 tonnes from that recorded in 2018. AUT continues to work with our data centre suppliers to encourage CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions reductions, with one supplier changing to 100% renewable electricity.	 13 CLIMATE ACTION
<b>Improve the utilisation of computer hardware</b> <b>STATUS: IN PROGRESS</b>	Operational efficiencies allowed AUT to reduce the number of ICT devices up for replacement to 2,654 – a reduction of 427 (-16%). Throughout 2023 we replaced our older computer monitors with energy efficient versions and are now installing, where practical, monitors that have built-in docking and connectivity capabilities removing the need for separate docking stations for laptop users. We continue to investigate options for centralised computer platforms that require less hardware (for example, monitors, keyboards) around campus and in the student labs, as well as reducing the electricity required by campus-based ICT equipment.	 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 13 CLIMATE ACTION

3. CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from electricity consumed by ICT equipment is captured through the target relating to AUT’s CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from energy consumption on the campuses.





# MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

AUT’s Sustainability team last conducted stakeholder engagement with AUT faculty staff in December 2020, and separately with students in April/ May 2021. Through this, AUT’s Sustainability team was able to conduct a materiality assessment where we identified on a matrix the confluence of sustainability aspects that are most important to staff and students along with sustainability aspects that are most important to AUT. It was the confluence of these two areas where we aimed to provide additional information in our report.

With the development of AUT’s new strategy – Te Kete – a significant amount of engagement occurred across AUT, particularly in 2023. Addressing climate change was one of the themes throughout the consultation. Both staff and students are wanting AUT to be bolder. Social responsibility also occurred as a theme, in particular equipping AUT students to contribute positively to society, as well as a general commitment to sustainability. How this feedback was translated into Te Kete was outlined in section three.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Academics and senior leaders at AUT who provided guidance and feedback during 2023.

AUT’s Strategy and Planning team who provided data and analysis of the information as well as constructive feedback about the draft report.

Lastly, the wide and growing university community (students, staff and stakeholders) and their commitment to sustainability across our university.



 We welcome feedback and comments about this report. Contact [sustainability@aut.ac.nz](mailto:sustainability@aut.ac.nz) with your comments.





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