

# AUT's Sustainability Goals 2012-2022

## Our commitment

AUT's commitment to sustainability involves being environmentally, socially, culturally, as well as economically sustainable in our operations, and the lifelong learning and research opportunities we offer our students and staff.

## Vision/principle

The overarching principle guiding AUT's sustainability goals is the World Commission on Environment and Development's definition of sustainable development as *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*<sup>1</sup>. Sustainability is recognised as a goal we are working towards, enabling life to thrive on earth.

Other principles underpinning our goals include:

- enhancing understanding of sustainability through learning, teaching and research;
- consulting appropriately and encouraging debate on sustainability-related issues;
- encouraging responsible use of resources within the University and within the wider community; and
- recognising that we all have responsibility for sustainability while acknowledging and working with Māori in their role as kaitiaki (guardians) of our natural environment.

## Targets

**Five year target:** to have the architecture is in place, having created a culture for sustainability and a roadmap for sustainability activities which is well understood throughout AUT and being implemented.

**Ten year target:** AUT demonstrates innovative leadership in sustainability which enables our graduates and staff to flourish as sustainability practitioners and create a sustainable future.

## Approach

The Vice Chancellor's Sustainability Taskforce will develop an action plan that encapsulates and reflects these Sustainability Goals. The action plan will outline organisational activities and associated targets against which AUT's success over the coming years and decades will be gauged.

## Goals by area

### 01: Learning and teaching

AUT has an important role to play in ensuring its graduates are equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience that will enable them to make a positive impact on the environment, society, culture, and the economy. AUT's qualifications will also stimulate a commitment to lifelong learning, intellectual independence, innovation and creativity.

Over the next ten years, AUT will continue to embed sustainability within curriculum and learning outcomes so that our students understand its relevance and have the skills and knowledge to inspire change in their communities.

## Objectives

- Sustainability principles are embedded within the learning and teaching framework.
- Expose students to learning experiences that maximise their opportunities to graduate as sustainability literate citizens.
- Ensure curricula addresses sustainability.

## Activities

- Review the presence of sustainability within programmes, papers and academic services to provide a baseline of activities.
- Increase the number of programmes and papers with a sustainability orientation and perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

- Include sustainability competencies as a key graduate quality in relevant graduate profiles.
- Facilitate collaboration and interdisciplinarity to encourage curriculum innovation and the sharing of good practice across AUT.
- Develop staff and student awards recognising excellence in sustainability practices and in raising consciousness about environmental concerns.
- Involve industry advisory boards and communities in the review and development of sustainability within the curriculum as appropriate.

## **02: Research and scholarship**

AUT seeks to advance knowledge on sustainability-related issues and promote debate, discovery and positive change. Research and consultancy will be conducted with due consideration of the ethics involved, and both outputs and outcomes of the research our staff and students conduct will reflect sustainability principles where appropriate.

Over the next ten years, AUT's research and scholarship will make a noticeable, positive contribution to the environmental, social, cultural and economic development and wellbeing of Auckland and New Zealand, as well as internationally.

### **Objectives**

- Encourage research, scholarship, and consultancy activities that contribute to or develop knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues.
- Ensure knowledge transfer and the exchange of expertise developed through research and teaching with AUT's stakeholders, including communities, iwi, industry, business and the professions.
- Ensure that research and consultancy projects and processes are undertaken in such a way that they minimise adverse impacts.

### **Activities**

- Encourage innovative research, scholarship, and consultancy projects that investigate sustainability-related issues, advance sustainability-related knowledge or professional practice, and/or contribute to enabling society, both locally and internationally, to meet the goals of sustainability.
- Encourage discourse on sustainability-related issues that affect the communities we serve.
- Facilitate collaboration and interdisciplinary research and scholarship on sustainability culture.
- Increase the number of research projects that actively employ methodologies that minimise negative impacts.

## **03: Governance, leadership and staff**

AUT strives to create an environment that invites involvement and enhances achievement and success.

Over the next ten years, AUT will build sustainability into university-wide processes and management systems, ensuring they remain strategically important and embedded into everyday institutional practices for long-term benefit. Staff will be encouraged and rewarded for their efforts in relation to sustainability and AUT will actively build sustainability-related capabilities in its staff.

### **Objectives**

- Ensure sustainability is championed at a governance and senior leadership level, and actively encouraged by staff at all levels.
- Promote staff development and appropriately reward effective staff behaviours within the university that advance sustainability.
- Support staff in their engagement with sustainability-related issues and processes of change through training programmes.
- Embed an ethos of ethical leadership and responsibility across AUT and harness staff expertise in sustainability through consultation.

### **Activities**

- Audit current policies and practices to ensure they support the principles outlined in AUT's sustainability goals.
- Develop an AUT sustainability policy.
- Monitor progress and performance against the objectives of our goals through the Learning in Future Environments (LIFE) Index<sup>2</sup>.
- Introduce a sustainability recognition award for individuals or groups of staff innovators and change agents.
- Incorporate a sustainability module into staff induction and training programmes.
- Incorporate sustainability principles and responsibilities within position descriptions.

### **04: Partnership and engagement with communities**

Engagement with business, professions, industry and communities is embedded in all aspects of the University's work and supports our educational mission. Basing these relationships upon sustainability principles (as outlined above) will facilitate collaboration and the culture of innovation needed for positive change to occur.

Over the next ten years, AUT will be sought out for the work that staff do and for our engagement with the wider community, from local to international, to effect change towards sustainability.

### **Objectives**

- Engage with business, professions, industry and the community to promote the sharing of ideas, expertise, and best practice on sustainability for mutual benefit in ways that are environmentally, socially, culturally and economically responsible.
- Demonstrate AUT's environmental, social, cultural and economic responsibility through partnerships, initiatives and activities.

### **Activities**

- Proactively share space or equipment to encourage collaborative research projects and provide real world learning opportunities.
- Facilitate opportunities for students within programmes and/or with industry to undertake entrepreneurial activity which is aligned with the sustainability principles outlined above.
- Develop and implement an AUT-wide staff and student volunteering programme.
- Develop guidelines for staff donations and giving to external stakeholders.
- Review procurement policies and procedures to ensure they support sustainable businesses and products.
- Continue with AUT's outreach programmes and activities and widen participation and promote inclusion within Auckland.
- Support the ideals of Fair Trade.

### **05: Facilities and operations**

Sustainability is also achieved through effective management of our campuses and built environment. AUT seeks to create synergies between the quality of the campus and the overall student experience.

Over the next ten years, AUT will continue to reduce its negative effects on the environment and move towards environmentally restorative practices.

### **Objectives**

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<sup>2</sup> The LIFE Index is a comprehensive online software system designed to support universities and polytechnics to demonstrate, recognise, and reward their response to environmental and social sustainability. The Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) created the LIFE Index for the Australasian sector in 2011/12 based on the UK model. <http://www.thelifeindex.com.au/>

- Embrace sustainability principles in all of AUT's strategies and operations, ensuring the built environment reflects best practice trends for tertiary institutions and international construction practices for owner operators.
- Build on current efforts to reduce consumption, particularly of non-renewable resources, and increase reuse and recycling.
- Implement sustainable travel planning for students and staff travelling to and from AUT and for staff travelling for AUT business.
- Manage facilities and services efficiently, lifecycle cost effectively and in a customer-centric manner.
- Ensure healthy, safe and culturally inclusive environments for all AUT stakeholders and provide security of assets.
- Employ effective utility management practices which reduce water, gas and electricity consumption and realise future cost savings.
- Encourage the use of our campuses as living laboratories for student engagement in campus improvement projects.

### **Activities**

- Implement an effective waste management plan, including public place recycling on the main AUT campuses.
- Implement an energy management strategy, including the delivery of end use efficiency projects.
- Undertake total cost of ownership analysis for all buildings and building services projects.
- Enhance green spaces on AUT campuses.
- Implement a sustainable ICT policy.
- Monitor and report on key indicators within the Universities' Travel Plan.
- Create incentives for staff to use technological solutions as an alternative to physical travel when on AUT business.
- Offer students opportunities to participate in campus improvement projects, in conjunction with staff as part of assessment and other class activities.