



WORKING TOWARDS A **SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

Our University community rightfully expects us to be environmentally and socially responsible. We are committed to continual improvement, and to achieving a sector-leading position in this space.

While our researchers make breakthroughs in fields such as renewable energy and water conservation, as an organisation with more than 37,000 students and 2,700 staff across 14 campuses and affiliated centres, we also need to take responsibility for the way we impact on our environment.

In 2018, we refined our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2019-2025 (ESP). The ESP is a roadmap for sustainable operations, and sets bold targets in areas including:

- Energy and carbon
- Water
- Waste and recycling
- Biodiversity and landscaping
- Sustainable design
- Sustainable transport
- Investments
- Procurement

The ESP will also ensure that environmental sustainability is woven into our core functions – from exposing our students to sustainability principals through their degrees, to delivering research innovation projects in sustainability, to engaging our staff in our environmental initiatives. A framework for governance, compliance and reporting is also addressed.



500

our solar panel project produces enough energy to power 500 households



4168

energy efficient LEDs installed across the Auchmuty Library and Student Accommodation Towers



SUSTAINABLE SOLAR

Renewable energy is a key priority for our staff, students and community. Solar power is a sustainable solution that helps to ensure we meet this priority.

In 2018, we commenced planning for our largest ever solar panel project – a 1.8 megawatt system comprising more than 7000 panels across our Central Coast, Newcastle City and Callaghan campuses. Our planning work included asset replacement to existing buildings, and detailed design for three rooftop installs; doubling the system size on the IRC Building (Ourimbah), and introducing new systems to the Science and GP Buildings (Callaghan). Work will continue until the end of 2020.

We also installed a 312 kilowatt photovoltaic (PV) system on the roof of the Auchmuty Library at Callaghan. This system generates enough electricity to power around 60 average households.



278

solar panels installed on the
Central Coast campus library

ENERGY AND CARBON

Reducing fossil fuel consumption and supporting clean energy sources is a key part of our Environmental Sustainability Plan, and we made significant headway in 2018 including.

- The development and endorsement of an Energy and Carbon Management Strategy that includes further investigation of energy self-generation opportunities such as additional PV solar, energy efficiency opportunities and building strategic long-term relationships with energy retailers to deliver 100% renewable electricity.
- Lighting upgrade of the Auchmuty Library with 1,892 light fittings being replaced with energy efficient LEDs and the installation of movement sensors in the amenities and office areas.
- Lighting upgrade of the Student Accommodation Towers with 2,277 light fittings being replaced with energy efficient LEDs and the installation of movement sensors in the common areas.



WATER

Water efficiency is a priority for us, and we have been working to reduce our water consumption.

- In 2018, we used around 280,000 kilolitres of water, a reduction of around 20,000 kilolitres compared with 2017.
- Extensive meters and monitoring allowing for pipe leak detection and fast response, with additional water monitoring resulting in the repair of some significant water leaks.
- An ongoing commitment to natural irrigation of the extensive native bushland campus reducing the demand for potable water.
- Limiting irrigation only to sporting fields and some lawn areas.

BAGS TO BENCHES

In 2018 we partnered with an external organisation called Plastic Police to deliver a soft plastics recycling program. Soft plastics, such as plastic bags and snack wrappers, have very low rates of recycling and are a significant contributor to landfill volumes. These items can also degrade into smaller plastic pieces that can enter the food chain and cause wider environmental pollution.

We have collected and recycled more than 115,000 pieces of soft plastic to date. We are turning these bags into benches to provide added outdoor seating across campus. Our first bench was unveiled outside the Auchmuty Library in December 2018.



115,000

plastic bags recycled in our soft plastics program



WASTE AND RECYCLING

We are continually improving waste management, with a focus on diverting waste from landfill.

- In 2018, we rolled out our updated internal Office Waste Design Waste Standards to guide waste station planning, design, cost, and education. This is applicable to all internal spaces and includes the red (landfill), yellow (commingled recycling) and blue (paper/cardboard) bins, as well as additional battery, printer and toner recycling opportunities. It also includes guidance on where to recycle soft plastics, electronic waste and metal, and the location of our composting facilities.
- As part of our head cleaning contract, we introduced 152 new internal waste bin stations across our campuses, significantly increasing the opportunities for staff and students to recycle correctly.



7%

reduction in
water usage,
year-on-year



**OVER
25HA**

of bushland zones
and wetland areas
were regenerated



2,485

native seedlings
planted



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

We are committed to promoting sustainable travel options, promoting long-term behaviour change in our staff and students.

- In 2018 we unveiled our Honeysuckle City Campus Development Concept Master Plan, with limited parking provisions, to encourage active travel choices and public transport especially within the Newcastle CBD.
- Throughout 2018, an average of 1,000 passengers used the Newcastle intercampus shuttle bus daily.
- Our Bike Hubs continue to operate at near capacity, with students and staff able to loan a reconditioned bike for the year for a refundable \$50 deposit.



1,000

on average, the number of passengers using the daily campus shuttle bus

INVESTMENTS

Responsibly investing our funds is important to us, and we place importance on environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

In 2018, we updated our investment policy to strengthen our approach to responsible investment, including the consideration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in our portfolios.

We take a balanced approach to ESG, recognising that we must meet core investment requirements such as risk and return, whilst ensuring our investments are aligned with our commitments to sustainability and ethical conduct.



1ST IN RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

joint first place out of 11 local peers reviewed in 2018

In August 2018, we approved a new strategy for responsible investing, centered around a three year ESG plan with four key focus areas, each with defined targets and metrics. In particular, we're joining leading responsible investors using the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to explore how our investments currently contribute to solving sustainability challenges, and how we can increase that alignment.

Our four key focus areas are to:

1. improve our ESG score
2. reduce the carbon footprint of our portfolio
3. divest from fossil fuel companies that aren't demonstrating a transition to a low carbon economy
4. increase investments aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We are performing better than benchmark, improving our position from fourth out of five local peers reviewed in 2017, to joint first place out of 11 local peers reviewed in 2018.