Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū

Sustainability Strategy

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland

UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau

Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū Strategy at a Glance
Priorities for Transitioning to a Sustainable University by 2030

Our Commitment
to embedding sustainability

We will:

1. Establish an effective governance structure to prioritise and integrate sustainability into all agendas

2. Integrate sustainability principles into the University's decision-making and management to make sustainable action intuitive

3. Empower staff and students to take action to achieve our sustainability aspiration

4. Measure and track our sustainability progress

5. Communicate our progress towards a Sustainable University in a transparent, coherent and effective way

Our Contribution
to sustainability knowledge

We will:

1. Increase sustainability literacy across the curriculum

2. Undertake sustainability-directed research and innovation

3. Lead in applying Mātauranga Māori approaches to sustainability

4. Extend our local, Pacific, and global partnerships to lead and leverage sustainability knowledge, practice and application

5. Extend opportunities for teaching, research, and operations to intersect through campus-based Living Laboratories

6. As critic and conscience of society, actively engage with and contribute to sustainability debate and policy

7. Engage our diverse communities to share in our sustainability aspiration

Our Responsibility
to work sustainably

We will:

1. Be a net-zero carbon University

2. Be 'climate conscious' travellers and commuters

3. Deliver sustainable university facilities and services, including energy and water conservation and waste prevention

4. Fully engage digital capability to enhance our sustainability efforts

5. Value biodiversity, making it a priority to our estate, and reduce the biodiversity impact of research, teaching and operations

6. Operate under financial systems that facilitate sustainability outcomes

7. Embed sustainable procurement practices into all aspects of University services and processes

8. Pursue investments that demonstrate responsible practices with respect to social, cultural and environmental outcomes

Foreword

We are very pleased to present Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū | Sustainability Strategy for Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland.

This strategy articulates a commitment to sustainability that is set out in Taumata Teitei. Over many years, the University has been forging its way towards becoming a Sustainable University, notably achieving the number one ranking in the inaugural Times Higher Education Impact rankings (2019). This represents our commitment to the Sustainability Development Goals, through our contribution to research, teaching and our operations.

We have been on our sustainability journey for many years, yet we know we have a responsibility to act now with more urgency and do more. We must still make a cultural and systemic shift in how we work, think, and interact to build on, and coordinate our effectiveness. Sustainability must be a priority and factor in the planning and execution of everything we do.

Globally, prevalent economies and social systems are no longer sustainable. These systems have brought us to dangerous climate change, social and economic inequities, degraded and failing ecosystems, and extreme biodiversity loss. This affects the well-being of all citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand, and those in the Pacific region and has compounding effects on impoverished/ marginalised communities.

The staff and students of Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland have expressed a strong commitment to lead in achieving sustainable outcomes and doing their part to address local and global crises. Our students, staff, alumni, businesses and communities expect commitment and action from us.

Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland can and must lead by example from our geographical location and the cultural identity that uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and recognise our special relationship to the Pacific. Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū | University of Auckland Sustainability Strategy reflects this by drawing on the wisdom of Waipapa Toitū in charting our way forward.

We have a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable planet for all. This is a strategy about our commitment and informed action. It will be challenging – and we step up to accept this challenge.

Professor Dawn Freshwater
Ihorangi | Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

The purpose of Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū | Sustainability Strategy is to enact Taumata Teitei's vision of driving a sustainable future and to be "internationally recognised for our unique contribution to fair, ethical and sustainable societies" by "leading transition to sustainable and abundant ecosystems". We must find a safe and just space for humanity that enhances our social foundation while remaining within our ecological boundaries.

It will be a complex challenge to achieve our aspiration of sustainability. It requires that we work across the portfolios of Taumata Teitei rather than within the limits of discipline and current operating responsibility. We recognise that there will be tensions, and sometimes contradictions, between sustainability, the University and societal drivers. How we acknowledge and balance these complexities and tensions will be vital to our University achieving our sustainability aspirations.

Throughout this strategy, we talk to achieving sustainability. This strategy uses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as our guide to understand our aspirations. We will also reference our actions and contributions against these.

Our Aspiration:
A Sustainable University

Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland aspires to be a Sustainable University by 2030, where:

- Our contribution, through our education, research, operations and partnerships, creates a fair, ethical and sustainable future.

- Sustainability principles and practices are woven into all aspects of our endeavour so that we leave the University in a better place for future generations.

For Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland to be a Sustainable University by 2030, we must:

- Operate in a sustainable manner and ensure that sustainability is central to our decision-making and actions.

- Challenge current thinking and demonstrate positive examples of sustainable practices through our research, teaching, operations and engagement.

- Demonstrate leadership in social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

- Educate our graduates, as leaders of tomorrow, to exhibit the values and knowledge of sustainability in its most expansive sense.

- Generate and leverage research and partnerships to accelerate social, cultural and environmental sustainability at a local, national, Pacific region and global scale.

- Integrate the principles of Te Ao Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and social equity as key components of our sustainability aspiration.

The year 2030 has been identified by the New Zealand government, the UN through the SDGs and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a key milestone for needed change. It is also the timeline set for Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū | Sustainability Strategy.

As such this strategy is positioned within, draws on and will be assessed against these overarching guides. Now is the time to ensure that the entire University prioritises and incorporates this sustainability agenda to create a systemic approach that raises the bar and magnifies our contribution to sustainable development outcomes.

Priorities:
Transitioning to a Sustainable University by 2030

Being a Sustainable University requires that we commit to developing and embedding structures, processes and mechanisms that underpin success. This strategy is organised into three integrated and connected pou | pillars of 'Our Commitment', 'Our Contribution' and 'Our Responsibility'.

Our Commitment *to embedding sustainability across all University activities.*

Our **Commitment pou** addresses governance, leadership, capability building, transparent communication, systems, structures and resources to embed sustainability principles and practices across all University of Auckland activities.

Our Contribution *to sustainability knowledge and practice.*

Our **Contribution pou** addresses how our University can enhance our contribution to sustainability knowledge and practice through teaching, research, operations, policy and collaborations with sustainability values-driven partners.

Our Responsibility *to work sustainably and to enhance our ecosystems and planet.*

Our **Responsibility pou** focuses on our planetary resilience by incorporating sustainable practices into how we research, teach and learn, and through our engagements, partnerships and University estate and operations.

Te Ao Māori and Te Tiriti

We are committed to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and implement Te Ao Māori values and Mātauranga knowledge of sustainability into research, teaching and the operations of the University. This foundation acknowledges the inter-connectedness of all living and non-living things, the continuum and interdependence of past, present and future, and our location in Te Moana Nui a Kiwa | the Pacific.

Our Commitment
to embedding sustainability across all University activities

Strategic Priority

Establish an effective governance structure to prioritise and integrate sustainability into all agendas

Effective governance, with visible and active engagement at the highest level, is critical to the success of sustainability, as by its nature, sustainability is integral to all the University's activities.

We will embed effective and enduring governance across the University from the highest level, that upholds Te Tiriti, to prioritise and provide direction and resources to our sustainability ambition.

We will recognise Te Ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori approaches to sustainability.

We will embrace the inter-relatedness of responsibilities to achieve sustainability. The University will commit to providing leadership and resources to empower action at an institutional, faculty, unit, school, department and individual level.

We will create a University-wide sustainability hub linking teaching, research, engagement and operational activities.

Integrate sustainability principles into the University's decision-making and management to make sustainable action intuitive

Operations and systems allow everyone to understand the sustainability implications of decisions in areas such as forward planning, ordering materials and services, research and teaching design, and in working with external groups, communities and partners.

We will address sustainability from a systems perspective to ensure that sustainable principles and action are seamlessly embedded into our planning processes, and into the daily decisions of teams and individuals.

We will establish formal sustainability reporting responsibility across faculties, large-scale research institutes (LSRIs) and operating units.

We will provide guidance and appropriate data to allow for sustainable decision-making.

Empower staff and students to take action to achieve our sustainability aspiration

Engaging and supporting our community is fundamental to transitioning towards a Sustainable University.

We will enhance our sustainability knowledge and capability across the University. Leaders and individuals will understand its meaning, relevance, and implications for their portfolio of work.

We will advance equity goals and actions for sustainability.

Grass-roots networks will continue to be active, and we will offer more opportunities to participate in sustainability-related activities.

We will enhance the development of student sustainability programmes, activities and leadership.

Measure and track our sustainability progress

Through collecting data, we will understand the progress we are making, areas where we are doing well and areas that we need to improve on.

We will identify and collect relevant and fit-for-purpose data to measure and progress our sustainability priorities.

We will develop an integrated sustainability reporting standard for our University.

We will manage the tracking and reporting on sustainability progress, initiatives and targets.

Communicate our progress towards a Sustainable University in a transparent, coherent and effective way

We want our local and global communities to see the commitment that the University is making to becoming truly sustainable.

We will coordinate our sustainability efforts across the strategic portfolios.

We will ensure that the manifestation of our sustainable practices is visible throughout the campus and shared meaningfully with our communities.

We will promote our sustainability values and priorities in our key messages.

Our Contribution

to sustainability knowledge and practice

Strategic Priority

Increase sustainability literacy across the curriculum

Sustainability literacy is the knowledge, skills and mindsets that allow individuals to become deeply committed to building a sustainable future and assisting in making informed and effective decisions to this end.

All students will be exposed to sustainability values, skills and practices, and experience transdisciplinary problem-solving in response to the grand challenges we face. There will be widespread availability of sustainability specialisations.

We will support and develop our educational expertise in sustainability values and application. We will commit resources in teaching time and opportunities to make learning available.

Undertake sustainability-directed research and innovation

The University will continue, and increase support, to research that gives short- and long-term benefit to social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

We will continue to seek connections across disciplines and communities, and through transdisciplinary research, to leverage our research capability for sustainability outcomes.

Lead in applying Mātauranga Māori approaches to sustainability

The University will commit resources to describing, applying, demonstrating and sharing Mātauranga Māori approaches to sustainability through the campus, research and teaching, Living Labs, partnerships, and more broadly.

Extend our local, national, Pacific and global partnerships to lead and leverage sustainability knowledge, practice and application

We will continue to identify and develop local, Pacific and global strategic partnerships and engagements focused on sustainability challenges and the SDGs.

We will specifically recognise the unearned burden of climate change and social disruption on Pacific realm nations and will realise our commitments to Pacific peoples and environments here and in the Pacific.

We will continue to support our staff and students to build strong links with iwi, communities, industry, NGOs, other universities and governments to develop and accelerate leading sustainability research into real-world application and practice.

We will partner with local and central government, including Auckland Council, on urgent sustainability challenges.

Extend opportunities for teaching, research and operations to intersect through campus-based Living Laboratories

Campus-based or Living Laboratories for sustainability provide researchers, staff, and students with the opportunity to use the University estate to research real-world sustainability challenges.

We will make the University campus and estate available for Living Labs to support the integration of our teaching and research to build the capabilities of our graduates.

The Living Labs will provide a means to engage with industry in sustainability research, encourage transdisciplinarity and entrepreneurship around sustainability, and to communicate sustainability knowledge and research excellence to the broader community.

As critic and conscience of society, actively engage with and contribute to sustainability debate and policy

We will continue to initiate engagement and discussion in areas where more information and informed opinion is needed.

We will support staff and students who take on the critic and conscience role, accepting that decisions about sustainability policy and the SDGs are often difficult and contested.

We will provide advice to our communities to help them develop impactful sustainability-related policies.

Engage our diverse communities to share in our sustainability aspiration

We will act by offering public educational programmes and lifelong learning opportunities in sustainability-related topics and the SDGs.

We will co-create experiences and activities with our communities.

We will encourage our communities, suppliers and networks to be part of our journey.

Our Responsibility
to work sustainably

Strategic Priority

Be a net-zero carbon University

Evidence-based evaluation, reduction and balancing of the overall carbon emissions of our University activities.

We will understand and report on the sources of our carbon emissions and sinks, and related activities, and how these lead to net-zero carbon across all units of the University.

We will apply prevention principles that encourage early action and planning, while being cognisant of our diverse communities.

We will implement a net-zero carbon strategy to include net-zero carbon action plans for the University, faculties, LSRIs and operating units.

Be 'climate conscious' travellers and commuters

Estimates of the University greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 suggest that 81% (70,000 t CO2) of University-based emissions come from staff travel and international-student travel.

We will actively encourage a reduction and mode shift in our approach to travel and commuting.

With the University community, we will develop 'climate-conscious' commuting, local and international travel policies and options. We will apply a considered and equitable approach to travel, being cognisant of our diverse communities.

Deliver sustainable University facilities and services, including energy and water conservation, and waste prevention

We will uphold the principles of circularity around our consumption of goods and services.

We will apply sustainability targets across all University infrastructure, built and non-built environments.

We will set targets and monitor, measure and report on energy, including digital, water and waste, in a manner that allows sustainable action with tangible outcomes across the University community.

We will invest in sustainable, climate-driven building design, energy from renewable sources, and retirement of fossil-fuel-driven building plant. We will transition to renewable energy sources.

Fully engage digital capability to enhance our sustainability efforts

We will enhance digital dexterity in our research and teaching, so researchers and students have equity of access.

We will digitally seek to remove barriers for research collaboration and interaction imposed by our location and time zone.

We will co-design digital delivery of a world-class virtual conference experience

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Value biodiversity, making it a priority to our estate, and reduce the biodiversity impact of research, teaching and operations

We recognise biodiversity as essential to the sustainable functioning of the University.

We will continue to actively care for and enhance the biodiversity of our urban and non-urban spaces, including reserves and extensive botanic collection.

We will engage research and teaching to understand and enhance our biodiversity.

We will fully understand the broader biodiversity impacts from the resources used by our research, teaching and operations.

We will develop and implement a biodiversity and green-space enhancement plan.

Operate under financial systems that facilitate sustainability outcomes

We will evaluate and implement a sound financial system that aligns with our sustainability aspirations.

We will identify and provide resource for priority areas in social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

We will strive to become a co-benefit financial enterprise.

Embed sustainable procurement practices into all aspects of University services and processes

Sustainable procurement involves the University being responsible for purchasing goods and services in a sustainability-conscious, responsible, and ethical way.

This includes the total life cycle of products, from the cost to purchase, as well as maintenance, and end-of-life disposal.

Based on the principles of circularity, we will develop and implement a framework for sustainable and ethical procurement that recognises the impact of supply chains, reuse, recycling and disposal on biodiversity, carbon cost and ecosystem limits.

Through sustainable purchasing, we will make effective and economical long-term decisions that benefit the University, our students, communities, society and the environment.

Pursue investments that demonstrate responsible investment practices with respect to social and environmental outcomes

We will review our investments and evaluate donations to ensure alignment with our sustainability values and goals.
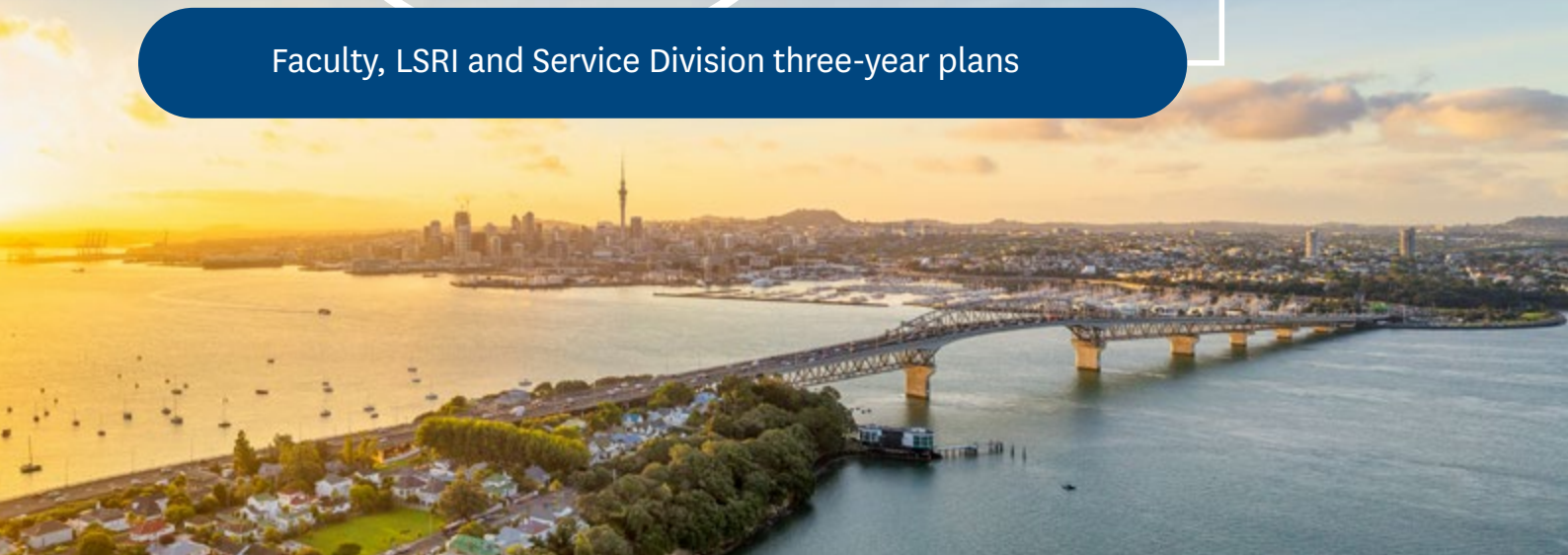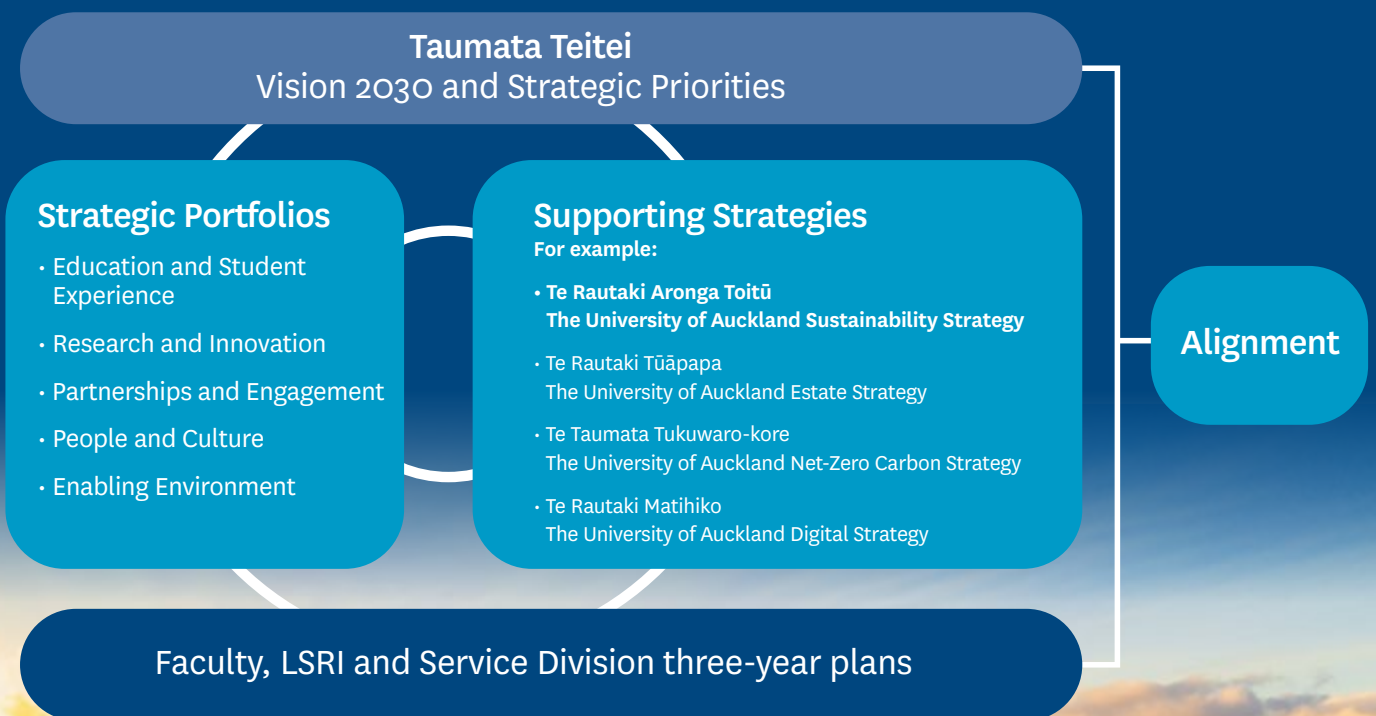
Strategic Alignment and Delivering Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū

Sustainability Strategy

This commitment to sustainability is reflected across the University strategic portfolios and supporting strategies, especially Te Taumata Tukuwaro-kore | Net Zero Carbon Strategy, the Curriculum Framework Transformation Programme including the graduate profile, and implementation of Te Rautaki Tūāpapa | Estate Strategy 2021 – 2030 and Te Rautaki Matihiko | Digital Strategy 2025 (see Figure 1).

Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū carries a strong message of integration and collaboration for the University community, where alignment of all strategies, policies and operational plans are central to the success of our sustainability aspirations.

Figure 1. Strategic alignment of Taumata Teitei portfolios and strategies

Taumata Teitei
Vision 2030 and Strategic Priorities

Strategic Portfolios
- Education and Student Experience
- Research and Innovation
- Partnerships and Engagement
- People and Culture
- Enabling Environment

Supporting Strategies
For example:

- **Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū**
  The University of Auckland Sustainability Strategy
- Te Rautaki Tūāpapa
  The University of Auckland Estate Strategy
- Te Taumata Tukuwaro-kore
  The University of Auckland Net-Zero Carbon Strategy
- Te Rautaki Matihiko
  The University of Auckland Digital Strategy

Alignment

Faculty, LSRI and Service Division three-year plans

Targets, Measures, and Metrics

The implementation of Te Rautaki Aronga Toitū | The University of Auckland Sustainability Strategy is guided by Taumata Teitei Key Performance Indicators. The following table outlines suggested targets, measures, and metrics to indicate how we will track and measure success.

Targets, measures and metrics	
Governance and Management	• Sustainability is embedded across the University high-level strategies, policies and guidelines • Key sustainability requirements are integrated into faculty and service division operating plans • Annual reporting on the University's sustainability impacts and goals using best-practice standards

Education and Student Experience	• Evidence that all students are exposed to sustainability values, skills, and practices, and experience transdisciplinary problem-solving in response to the grand challenges we face.
	• Percentage of University courses that address SDG-related topics
	• EFTS enrolled in programmes that have been re/developed for strategic alignment as a proportion of total EFTS
	• Capture benchmark data and monitor for evidence of:
	  - increased student engagement with organisations contributing to sustainability-related work through work-integrated learning and projects
	  - Increased student satisfaction with sustainability-related programmes
	  - Increased student engagement on sustainability co-curricular activities
	  - Increased student satisfaction with University's sustainability commitment

Research and Innovation	• Measure and monitor evidence of increase of communications of University sustainability research and knowledge to wider communities • Measure and monitor research postgraduate qualifications related to the SDGs • Increase in proportion of high-impact publications in SDG-related research • Increase in proportion of citations in SDG-related research
Partnerships and Engagement	To be developed
People and Culture	To be developed

Enabling Environment (and Operations)	• Develop and implement a Sustainable Estate and Operations plan, in operation by 2023. It will include targets for:
	  - Net zero-carbon
	  - Water
	  - Waste and recycling
	  - Travel and transport
	  - Biodiversity
	  - Sustainable buildings and communities
	  - Goods and services

University Reputation and Relevance	Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings performance: • Increased research, teaching and sustainable practices across the SDGs • Increased number of top-ranked subjects in areas closely associated with sustainability and the SDGs Capture benchmark data and monitor for evidence of: - Percentage of staff and students who identify sustainability reputation in their choice of the University of Auckland

Glossary

Sustainability	'Sustainability' is defined in the University of Auckland Sustainability Policy as being derived from the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It recognises the need to integrate social, economic, cultural and environmental imperatives, and to ensure that human activities respect, conserve, maintain and enhance the integrity of the Earth's life-supporting systems. (World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)).
Climate-conscious Travel	Climate-conscious travel can be defined as: · Being aware of the environmental impacts of travel and choosing a method of travel that reduces these. · Ensuring unnecessary travel is not undertaken (e.g., sending the minimum number of individuals required to fulfil the purpose of travel). · Choosing not to travel when virtual collaboration tools will adequately fulfil the purpose of travel (e.g., for meetings where a video link would suffice).
Mātauranga Māori (working definition)	Mātauranga Māori is "the unique Māori way of viewing themselves and the world, which encompasses (among other things) Māori traditional knowledge and culture" (WAI 262 claim p. 6). Mātauranga Māori encompasses ancient knowledge of the human, natural and spirit worlds as well as modern and creative knowledge of these realms. It is knowledge developed collectively by Māori in the past, present and future. It refers not simply to knowledge but to ways of knowing.
Sustainability Hub	A Sustainability Hub undertakes key cross-cutting functions such as connector, curator and facilitator of a wide breadth of sustainability programmes and activities across the University.
Principles of circularity	There are three principles of circularity: · Design out waste and pollution · Keep products and materials in use · Regenerate natural systems