

# Sustaining our future

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY: 2015–2019

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# We adhere firmly to our commitment to the principles of sustainability in all we do

OUR UNIVERSITY: A FRAMING OF FUTURES (2013)

The strategic document Framing of Futures articulates the direction for Macquarie University, setting the scene for the type of place we want to be for our students, staff and broader community. Importantly, many elements of Framing of Futures align with the direction we need to pursue in order to become a sustainable university; most notably these are:

- The stated values of:
  - Scholarship: learning, enquiry and discovery improving lives
  - Integrity: conducting ourselves ethically, equitably and for mutual benefit
  - Empowerment: making our community a source of strength and creativity;



Changing the lives of our staff and students through a culture of transformative learning;



Partnering, engaging and working collaboratively with industry, business, government, foundations and NGOs; and



Developing an aspiring and engaging campus that represents all that is good about Macquarie

In a world facing constantly changing environmental and social landscapes, our ability to appropriately position our students, our staff, and our campus infrastructure as pursuing sustainability<sup>1</sup> is critical if we are to remain relevant, innovative and distinctive. The vision for sustainability embodies the thoughts and ideas of staff and students:

“Macquarie University adheres firmly to our commitment to the principles of sustainability in all we do.”

This commitment includes:

- Undertaking world-changing, impactful research that contributes to solving and addressing global challenges
- Ensuring students leave the University prepared to contribute as active citizens to an environmentally healthy and equitable society;
- Actively seeking to meet changing social, environmental and economic conditions and reduce the negative impact of our actions upon our environment and society;

- The responsible consumption of energy, water, food, products and transport;
- Actively supporting sustainability in our local community and region; and
- Having a reputation for being the place to learn, to work and to connect with the local and global community.

The principles of sustainability are defined as:

- Global, social and community awareness;
- Staff, student and community participation;
- An inclusive campus community;
- Shared responsibility;
- Best practice and leadership;
- Open and transparent processes;
- The precautionary principle;
- Innovation and creativity; and
- A whole systems approach to change.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for Macquarie University’s definition of sustainability

# The approach

The approach used to embed sustainability across the institution is based on the Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) Index (Figure 1), a performance management framework developed by colleagues across the higher education sector from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom as the best way to address holistic campus sustainability. Without addressing and actioning each of these areas in detail, our university will never become truly sustainable.

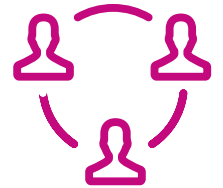
**Figure 1: The LiFE Index Priority Areas and Sub-themes**



No butts  
about it...  
put it in  
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# 1. Leadership and Governance



## LEADING SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE

Leadership and Governance addresses not only the ambitious strategic intent to be forward thinking leaders in society, but the way in which this will be achieved through our approach to the well-being of our staff and students, and by building capacity in human capital and development.

### OBJECTIVE

Encompass sustainability principles into leadership as well as established and developing processes and systems to ensure long-term benefit for students, staff and the broader community. In doing so, we will become an institutional leader for sustainability in practice.

### GOALS

1. Build sustainability principles into decision making processes
2. Strengthen the strategic imperative for sustainability in core business functions
3. Support the well-being of staff and students
4. Build staff and student capacity to think sustainably through development opportunities

### REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

The active support and engagement of senior management to provide the leadership and governance required; a strong partnership with Human Resources; utilising opportunities that arise through process review.

### KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Action	Measure
Develop and roll out a sustainability PR pitch story to management	Pitch developed
	Number of communications disseminated
	Number of responses
Investigate feasibility and usefulness of including sustainability as part of executive KPIs (sub action of sponsorship)	Feasibility study completed
	Decision made as to how to proceed
Co launch a well-being program with HR	Successful launch of program
	Participation in program
	Number of communications
Work with OD team in HR and LTC to make implicit connections to sustainability learning explicit	All courses evaluated
Provide internship opportunities with Macquarie Sustainability	Number of projects
	Number of students involved

# 2. Learning, Teaching and Research



## TRANSFORMING OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF FOR LIFE

Addressing the societal shifts required for sustainability as part of the University’s learning, teaching and research is a critical element in our journey and a responsibility we enthusiastically embrace. Through formal and informal curricula, skills training and development, knowledge transfer and research, we can have a significant, long-term positive impact on society. While embedding sustainability into learning and teaching is achievable, it will require changes to existing practice and processes to be successful. Therefore it is essential to work with academia in a supporting capacity. The focus and direction of the research undertaken will also need to be transformative if it is to have a positive impact towards sustainability. Significantly, the Future-shaping Research Priorities defined within the Strategic Research Framework 2015–2024: World-Leading Research, World-Changing Impact align well with this requirement<sup>3</sup>.

### OBJECTIVE

Transform our students and staff for life by ensuring opportunities to become active citizens are maximised through learning and teaching and through research knowledge and practice.

### GOALS

1. Provide and take advantage of opportunities to ensure sustainability is suitably embedded across the curriculum
2. Ensure long-term planning for tools/facilities/technology to enhance the overall learning and teaching experience
3. Build sustainability into learning and teaching practices (e.g. delivery of course work, the management of assessment and feedback, etc.)
4. Build sustainability into research practices (e.g. grant applications, lab work, etc.)
5. Provide informal learning opportunities to staff, students and community
6. Engage with students through various existing channels to build awareness
7. Provide students with opportunities for the application of knowledge to gain practical experience
8. Highlight research that contributes to sustainability
9. Further develop the campus as a living laboratory

<sup>3</sup> See the website at [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/how\\_mq\\_works/executive/deputy\\_vice-chancellor\\_research/world-leadingresearch/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/how_mq_works/executive/deputy_vice-chancellor_research/world-leadingresearch/) for more details





**REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS**

Active engagement and participation of academic colleagues, and support from overseeing bodies including Academic Senate; utilising opportunities that arise through review processes; embedded in the learning and teaching plan being developed in 2015.

<b>Develop student projects that contribute to campus sustainability and can be delivered through coursework</b>	Number of projects developed for students
	Number of students involved
	As necessary
<b>Database to detail living laboratory opportunities</b>	As necessary

**KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Action	Measure
<b>Map and enhance connections to sustainability literacy in units and programs</b>	Number of programs mapped
	Number of programs with sustainability embedded (%)
<b>Map sustainability research experts to create synergy with Learning and Teaching for Sustainability</b>	Toolkit developed
<b>Co launch a well-being program with HR</b>	Toolkit developed
<b>Work with OD team in HR and LTC to make implicit connections to sustainability learning explicit</b>	Database of curriculum linkages
	Number of academics engaged
	Number of students engaged
<b>Provide internship opportunities with Macquarie Sustainability</b>	Number of projects
	Number of students involved





# 3. Partnerships and Engagement



## M-POWERING CONNECTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Sustainability is only possible when there is collaboration and engagement. The challenges posed by the complexity of delivering sustainable development mean that progress is achieved through the sharing of ideas and approaches that can lead us to more sustainable practices. Collaboration builds community, through which a cultural shift towards sustainability can occur. Building partnerships and strengthening engagement is a priority focus for Macquarie.

### OBJECTIVE

Empower staff, students and community to build on internal and external partnerships and engagement opportunities, with a view for sharing knowledge and expertise for balanced, positive, and active social, environmental and economic outcomes.

### GOALS

1. Provide opportunity for the internal and broader community to engage with sustainability practice and thinking
2. Foster collaborative alliances with educational institutions, governments, non-profits and businesses
3. Actively pursue continual improvement in sustainable procurement, particularly through supply chain relationships and partnerships
4. Support and enhance internal staff structures that improve connectivity and community (such as the Sustainability Representative Network)

### REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Coordination and effective management of existing and new partnerships to leverage opportunity, whilst providing partners with a consistent message; good partnership with Corporate Advancement.

### KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Action	Measure
Develop a strategy for a coordinated approach to building community across campus	Strategy developed
	Strategy implemented
Deliver the M-Power program to staff, students and partners	Themes per year
	Resources developed
	Communications disseminated
	Number of participants
Utilise existing and develop new opportunities to leverage sustainability focus of companies on campus	Feedback and evaluation
	Involvement in joint projects
Utilise existing and develop new opportunities to leverage sustainability focus of Macquarie Park businesses	Learnings shared
	Outcomes of relationships
Review tendering processes to ensure sustainability criteria is included from the outset	Involvement in joint projects
	Learnings shared
Provide support and assistance to Faculty and department based admin staff with responsibility for purchasing	Tenders include sustainability criteria
	Number of tenders using criteria
Coordinate regular group gatherings of the SRN	Number of staff supported
	4 x meetings per year
	Number of participants
Build the volunteering profile of the institution	Focus and outcomes of meetings
	Communications disseminated
	Number of queries from staff
	Number of staff accessing volunteer leave

# 4. Facilities and Operations



## ACHIEVING A VIBRANT, PARKLAND CAMPUS

Sustainable building design, energy efficiency, waste reduction and diversion, water conservation, biodiversity management, green IT and sustainable travel planning all provide evidence of an institution's commitment to environmental management and social responsibility. Addressing the way our buildings and grounds operate provides an opportunity to show students, staff and the broader community how we are planning, managing and implementing measures to meet sustainability best practice, whilst providing a living laboratory space to educate and demonstrate.

### OBJECTIVE

Become a model collaborative community demonstrating global leadership and innovation in the sustainable development of the built environment within a vibrant, parkland campus.

### GOALS

1. Achieve 5 Star Green Star ratings and 4.5 NABERS energy and water ratings for commercial buildings on the campus
2. Operational energy savings across building portfolio
3. 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions intensity per square metre of gross floor area (from 2009 baseline)

4. Reduce potable water consumption per EFTP by 40% of 2007 figures in new commercial buildings
5. 90% waste diversion from landfill by 2020
6. A “One Planet” or better ecological campus footprint by 2030
7. Renewal of the “Campus in the Park” concept, with a net increase in quality and connectivity of on-campus biodiversity assets (bushland and waterways)
8. Provide opportunity to maximize the uptake of alternative travel to single occupant vehicles, as well as vehicles that are a sustainable alternative to petrol
9. Invest in sustainable Information and Communication Technology infrastructure and solutions

### REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Active participation and implementation from Property and Informatics to incorporate sustainability practice through everyday procedures; effective awareness/engagement campaigns to campus users.

<sup>4</sup> Property related sustainability targets are outlined in the 2014 Masterplan, which has a delivery date of 2030. Therefore the goals in this section are longer term than other sections.

**KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Action	Measure
Support delivery of 5 Star Green Star ratings and 4.5 NABERS energy and water ratings for new commercial buildings on the campus at key project stages	Oversight included for compliant green building attributes during business case, detailed design and pre-tender stages
Align efficiency targets with deliverables in the 2-3 year capex program schedule	Proportion of relevant projects under capex program reviewed against Energy Strategy's modelled opportunities
Embed performance targets into new builds and refurbishments	GFA of projects adopting targets to outperform the base case (business as usual) energy specification
Install consumption meters in long-term buildings	Number of meters installed/ upgraded per year (until completion)
Monitor diversion-from-landfill targets in all major waste contracts	Annual snapshot of compliance obtained
Sustainable design guidelines created and implemented for all new build and refurbishment projects	Guidelines created; number of new builds utilising guidelines; number of refurbishments utilising guidelines
Complete strategic green space planning to maximise amenity	Landscape plan completed
Explore strategies to encourage mode shift to sustainable transport	TMA initiatives are promoted/ supported within University
Work closely with Informatics to develop an appropriate strategy for sustainable ICT	Strategy developed; implementation underway



# Governance and implementation



The responsibility to become a more sustainable university lies with all staff and students. To this end Macquarie Sustainability provides an enabling and capacity building function, creating linkages to the strategic imperatives of Faculties, Offices and Departments to incorporate the principles of sustainability into the fabric of the University – ideally making implicit connections explicit and building a culture that brings our values to life.

The Sustainability Representative Network (SRN) also plays an important supporting role through two-way communication and championing of actions at the local level. Involvement in the SRN is a formally recognised role for University staff.

Wherever possible we leverage off existing and developing plans to ensure our approach remains holistic and connected. This linked in approach is one of our greatest strengths and a distinguishing feature to ensure the operationalization and delivery of our goals and objectives. More detailed information pertaining to KPIs, measurements and target dates is available in the Action Plan for each area.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



Supporting this document are action plans detailing how goals and objectives will be reached in each priority area. These action plans will be revisited annually to ensure progress is on track.

Reporting against this Strategy will be undertaken on an annual basis. The Sustainability Annual Report will be provided to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team by the end of April each year. The annual report will assess performance against targets and implementation capacity.

# Appendix 1

## DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a concept, a goal, and a strategy. The concept addresses the need for balance between society, environment and economy, both now and into the future. The goal is to achieve an ecologically and socially just world within the means of nature. The process or strategy involves understanding how we move towards this sustainable future, and as an educational institution, what our specific role is in this process.

Through consultation with stakeholders, the University has concluded that sustainability aims for a balance between:

### **INCLUSION**

Inclusion is a state of being valued, respected and supported. It is about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential. Inclusion should be reflected in an organisation's culture, practices and relationships that are in place to support a diverse workforce<sup>5</sup>.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELL BEING**

Includes meeting basic human needs and concern for the rights, dignity, and welfare of all people. It includes respect for the traditions and religions of other societies and cultures, and it fosters empathy for the life conditions of other peoples. Ecological sustainability and resource conservation are considered part of social justice<sup>6</sup>.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The practice of protecting the natural environment for the benefit of humans and the natural environment itself. To this end and to the best of our abilities, we will negate the impact of our activities upon our environment to maintain or enhance the integrity, quality and quantity of existing biodiversity. This includes ensuring we equip our students with the knowledge and skills to actively contribute to environmental protection, as well as the efficient use of resources.

### **ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

Economic well-being “is a crucial element of human well-being because most aspects of well-being in modern human society have to be purchased, including food, water, shelter, health care and many forms of recreation”<sup>7</sup>. This includes two primary considerations: well-being of the University and well-being of the individual. As such, we seek to maintain and/or improve the economic position to the benefit of staff, students and the community, though not at the expense of other principles or individual economic well-being.

### **DIVERSITY**

Most commonly refers to differences between individuals or groups of people in age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family responsibilities, gender, language, marital status, religious belief and sexual orientation; diversity





may also include other ways in which people are different, such as education, life experience, work experience and socio-economic background. Acknowledging diversity enables differences to be recognised and valued in the educational setting and in the workplace.

The University aligns itself with this definition, recognising that:

- Sustainability is both a journey and an end point, aiming for a balance between the aforementioned principles;
- Sustainability requires challenges to people's thinking and practices on a continual basis in order to build sustainable mindsets and better relationships between people, and between people and their environment;
- Education plays a key role in change towards sustainability and the University is in a position to provide this through broad engagement of internal and external community, research

direction, operational examples of best practice, and informal and formal educational activities;

- Issues associated with internationalisation, ethical practice, equality, health, climate change, planning and development, resource use, diversity and biodiversity are all intertwined and linked to sustainability; and
- The active engagement and participation of students and staff is considered integral to the successful implementation of initiatives for change, and particularly at the Executive level as the Executive provide the rest of the University with examples of best practice and behaviour.

<sup>5</sup> Definition of 'Diversity and Inclusion' provided by Macquarie University's Equity and Diversity Unit.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO ESD Toolkit

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2002





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