

**WESTERN SYDNEY  
UNIVERSITY**



# CHALLENGING TIMES

**SUSTAINABILITY REPORT  
2020**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Western Sydney University acknowledges the peoples of the Darug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations. We acknowledge that the teaching, learning and research undertaken across our campuses continues the teaching, learning and research that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years.*

*The University extends its thoughts and sympathies to all those who have lost loved ones and been impacted by the events of 2020. We acknowledge our dedicated staff and students who continued their work and learning through these challenging times.*

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### GRAPHICS

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# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020 FOREWORD

## A YEAR OF CASCADING GLOBAL CRISES

There have been many words to describe the year of 2020: unprecedented; extraordinary and challenging were the ones most often used. It has been a year of many difficulties but it has also been a year of determination and achievements made possible by a University committed to its communities of Western Sydney.

By the end of 2020 Australia had been through its worst bushfire in history followed by localised flooding, 10% of the planet's population were living in an area declared a climate emergency and no part of the world was untouched by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has fueled further 'slow' crises of inequality such as increased poverty and homelessness.

The complex interdependencies of people and their environments were tragically revealed in 2020. Our sustainability commitments are more relevant and urgent than ever. We need to prepare for a post COVID-19 world that is one of disruption and indeterminacy as well as adapt to the predicaments of global environmental change.

We have learnt much about resilience and our capacity to adapt and to think regeneratively. Resilient thinking, acknowledging the fundamental integration of our economies and societies with nature and developing new ways of bridging this disconnect is implicit in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). We recommit ourselves to the global SDG agenda.

Our sixth annual sustainability report "*Challenging Times*" highlights how we have and will continue to move forward with meaningful impact for this vital work across our C.O.R.E (Curriculum, Operations, Research and Engagement) framework. For this annual report and in recognition that our sustainability and SDG commitments are more crucial than ever we have included sections on Australia's bushfires and COVID-19.



**Professor Barney Glover AO**  
**Vice-Chancellor and President**  
**WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY**

## OUR SDG IMPACT AT A GLANCE



# 17<sup>th</sup>

worldwide for THE  
University Impact  
Rankings



# 47%

of senior academic  
staff are women



# 7,268

students are first-  
in-family starting  
a degree



# 88%

of waste generate  
was diverted from  
landfill



# 37%

of our total energy  
used was from low-  
carbon sources



# 25

regional partners  
in our RCE-GWS  
network

\* data from THE 2020-21 submission

# AUSTRALIA'S BUSHFIRES

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Climate scientists and ecologists have demonstrated that climate change can amplify the weather conditions that can stoke bushfires. During the 2019–2020 bushfires in southern–Australia an estimated one billion animals were killed and at its peak air quality dropped to hazardous levels across many Australian cities.

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## **GLOBAL ANALYSIS SHOWS UNPRECEDENTED SCALE OF AUSTRALIAN SUMMER OF FIRE: HAWKESBURY INSTITUTE OF THE ENVIRONMENT (HIE)**

*“This is a globally unprecedented scale of burning, not observed in any other forest biome over the last 20 years.”* – Associate Professor Matthias Boer, Ecosystem Function and Integration, Fire Research Group

An analysis of historic data on the extent of Australia’s extraordinary forest fires found that the area burned in Australia during the 2019–2020 forest fires far exceeded historic records worldwide - burning an estimated 10 million hectares according to the CSIRO. Even in previous major fire years, only around 2% of Australia’s temperate forests have burned. Yet in the summer of 2019/2020, an astounding 21% of these forests been burned.

HIE’s Fire Research Group is a partner in the NSW Bushfire Risk Management Research Hub, a \$4M consortium of four universities funded by the NSW Government’s Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The hub is working closely with the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## **SUPPORTING A BUSHFIRE AFFLICTED COMMUNITY**

With our campuses embedded across Western Sydney we introduced a range of bushfire emergency measures. By February 2020 we had:

- Provided emergency accommodation for the NSW Rural Fire Service and those affected by the bushfires
- Provided support through accommodation grants for students directly affected by the fires
- Made paid leave provisions of up to 4 weeks for staff who were RFS volunteers helping to fight the bushfires
- Created a dedicated information line to assist any students and staff impacted by the crisis
- Made animal facilities at Hawkesbury campus available for the care of injured wildlife.

## **YOUNG CHILDREN’S BUSHFIRE LEARNING: PLANETARY WELLBEING AND HUMAN LEARNING (PWWL), SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

*“How can young children learn and express their understanding of death and loss through wildfires, including the death of extensive areas of ancient forest and complex intertwined ecosystems consisting of multiple species of plants and animals? And how do they regain a sense of hope through understanding the processes of recovery, regeneration and care?”* – Professor Margaret Somerville, Co-Leader PWWL program

The PWWL program in School of Education was established in response to the catastrophic bushfires of 2019–2020 and COVID-19. It responded to the need for community regeneration where community is understood to include climate, weather, fires, plants, animals, and humans as part of an integrated system. The program has international reach and comprises academics, research students and community partners.

Over 2020 Professor Margaret Somerville and WSU Early Learning Director Tessa McGavock partnered in a creative arts based project researching young children’s learning about bushfires, bushfire recovery and planetary wellbeing. The Bushfire project explored young children’s art responses to gain an understanding of their learning and their role in supporting planetary wellbeing. Children generated arts based artefacts such as paintings, drawings, and created nature installations and planted forests in their sandpit.



**Target 13.1:** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

# A SUMMER OF FIRE

*“Our research on bushfire and fire risk is diverse and not only driven by impact but also an aspiration for creating conditions for positive social change, and working with affected communities in preparing for and responding to future crises.” – Professor Juan Salazar, Environmental Sustainability Theme Champion*

## **COOL APPROACH TO LAND MANAGEMENT CULTURAL PRACTICES: INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

*“For tens of thousands of years Aboriginal people have used ‘cool burns’ to mitigate their impact, as well as to assist plant growth, hunting, protecting species, and accessing areas.” – Dr Jessica Weir, Senior Research Fellow*

Dr Jessica Weir collaboratively researched and documented the cultural practices and intimate knowledge that Australian Aboriginal people have with fire in order to gain a better understanding of how to manage bushfires. Many Aboriginal people involved in land management engage with fire differently - fire is understood to be central to living with and respecting Country.

# SDGs: MORE VITAL THAN EVER

We must look for transformative ways forward that genuinely reshape institutional, regional, national and global systems that recognise the interdependence of all life.

## EPIDEMIOLOGICAL BRIDGES – BATS ARE OUR FRIENDS: HAWKESBURY INSTITUTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

### AN OPINION PIECE FROM THE CONVERSATION

*“Humans rely on bats more than we think. Many bats are voracious predators of insects and their service to the global agricultural industry is worth billions of dollars each year. The fundamental issue is not the viruses in bats. SARS-CoV-2 is now a human virus, and we are responsible, knowingly or not, for its global spread. The “epidemiological bridges” that we’ve inadvertently created – which increase with our contact with wildlife through encroachment into natural areas, habitat destruction, and unregulated wildlife trade – are what’s really to blame.”* – Associate Professor Justin Welbergen, Plants, Animals and Interactions.





# COVID-19 AND SUSTAINABILITY

COVID-19 has deeply challenged countries across the world in responding to the pandemic itself and to cascading health, social and economic crises. The link between pandemics, natural disasters, increasing inequalities, climate change, biodiversity extinction, racism and social justice has been made explicitly clear and the SDGs are more important than ever.

## INCREASING GLOBAL VULNERABILITIES: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (HADRI)

*“...early adaptors generally fared better, with some states more proficient in locking down, mobilising healthcare, and utilising technology. Many vulnerable people world-wide have been left exposed.”* – Associate Professor Nichole Georgeou, Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (HADRI) Director

HADRI produced a global snapshot of government responses across 43 states and territories to the COVID-19 pandemic as it spread across the globe. The ‘State Responses to COVID-19: A global snapshot at 1 June 2020’ report provided valuable insights into the health, social, political and economic responses to the pandemic, as well as the impacts on vulnerable groups. The work outlined how governments across the world chose to address and prepare for the crisis – from testing and isolation, through to economic stimulus and education there are many lessons to be learnt. The report featured a compilation of analyses and case studies from 70 regional experts.

## ELDERLY ISOLATION: SCHOOL OF HEALTH (THERAPEUTIC RECREATION) AND UNITING

When the country went into lock-down, elderly people were suddenly cut-off from family, social networks and support services. Day trips and outings were cancelled, visits from family and friends were no longer possible and in-home services were put on hold. To find a solution to this problem Dr Nicole Peel, Academic Course Advisor Health Sciences worked in partnership with UNITING NSW.ACT to arrange for virtual work placements for 25 Bachelor of Health Science (Therapeutic Recreation) students. The placement involved connecting with elderly clients virtually over Zoom and after a situational analysis developing a custom recreational program. Individual responses varied - one student created ‘Wellness Boxes’ for her clients which – depending on their individual interests – contained an iPad, candle making, painting or cooking kits, reading resources, or even books to help them learn a new language.

*“One of my clients was a woman in her nineties – she was feeling very separated from her family, and missing contact with people, so we worked together on a legacy journal. Having social connections and a sense of purpose is really important for anyone’s wellbeing. I am proud to have had the opportunity to help people re-engage with society, and get them through this difficult time.”* – Western student

## SUPPORTING HEALTH SYSTEMS – THE ASSISTANT IN MEDICINE PROGRAM: SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

*“This program provided our final year medical students a different experience to that of a clinical placement, providing excellent clinical care by (supervised) medical students working as AiMs... It also provided paid employment at a time when many had lost their part-time jobs in non-healthcare settings as a result of the pandemic.”* – Professor Stephen Tobin, Associate Dean, Clinical Education

Medical schools and hospitals moved swiftly in the face of the pandemic to stage the transition from medical students to interns quickly and effectively. In six weeks – with the cooperation of medical schools, government health services, hospital leaders, students and medical boards – new Assistant in Medicine (AiM) roles were devised to meet the requirements of individual health services. The intention of the AiM program was to equip medical students with the skills to assist in treating the acute and chronic care needs of people on the hospital wards, thereby freeing up medical and nursing staff to work in COVID-19 wards.

The program was awarded a VC Citation for Meritorious Service (Team), recognising the exceptional work carried out by various staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Target 3.8:** Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

 **70%** of the final year medical students (86 students) became AiMs to assist with COVID-19 support.

# COVID-19 AND WESTERN

During 2020 Western adapted to different ways of working and connecting through very trying circumstances. We were committed to supporting the University student community made vulnerable through financial hardship by the loss of casual and part time work.

## WORKING FROM HOME

By the end of March nearly all Western staff, except for frontline support staff, were working from home. The Work Health Safety and Wellbeing (WHS&W) Unit in 2020 was dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The team worked to support and assist staff to meet the challenges that COVID-19 presented from a WHS&W perspective.

## WELLBEING WEBINARS: WHS&W

COVID-19 isolation had a significant global impact on mental health and wellbeing. Our WHS&W team developed a series of wellbeing webinars and programs to support working from home. More than 2,000 staff members have taken part in the following online programs:

- Managing Virtual Teams
- Avoiding Burnout
- Leading with Stories
- Leading at a Distance
- Leading Change

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS: WESTERN SUCCESS

*“Thank you once again for everything. You have truly been a lifeline.”* – Western student

Western Success provided support and assistance to 6,000 international students during the COVID-19 crisis, employing students to provide peer support. Western Success had over 100,000 engagement attempts with our international students, providing a vital sense of connection and support, in many cases enabling the pursuit of higher education in a challenging environment.

The services provided by Western Success included access to, and help with eligibility for financial hardship payments, emergency accommodation, food packages and vouchers, as well as access to counselling, welfare and disability support services, learning and teaching support, advice on placements, and IT assistance.

## STUDENT HARDSHIP FUND

Supporting our students one of our highest priorities. The Student Assistance Fund was established in April 2020 by the University to support domestic and international students experiencing significant financial hardship. Many students lost their jobs placing a heavy burden on them. The University matched donations, and supported thousands of students with over \$2.6 million deployed in vital support via this fund.

## VIRTUAL STUDENT SOUP KITCHENS AND COMMUNITY DINNERS: THE CHAPLAINCY

*“My week revolves around Wednesday evening soup kitchen. I am surviving isolation on this.”* – Western student

Led by the Chaplaincy, 52 virtual soup kitchen events were devised and delivered to assist students in isolation. The soup kitchen and community dinners have from the beginning been an acknowledgment that many students are away from home for the first time and are often either financially struggling or lacking the skills to cook and eat well. These virtual events and food supplies were supported by 13 community organisations who came on-board to partner with the Chaplaincy to provide for our students. By the end of 2020 2,483 soup kitchen grocery bags had been distributed.

## ALTERNATE WAYS OF CONNECTING



**264,000**

Zoom meetings held by our staff



**11,700**

yammer posts on our internal platform



**15**

all-staff webinars held by the Senior Executive Group



# SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

*"I am a first year student from Nepal and arrived in Australia just before the lockdown officially started. Things were getting hard but Western provided me gift vouchers and the chaplaincy delivered me food. A big thank you to Western Sydney University and the team members who are constantly reaching out to us and being there to listen. This helped me a lot."* –Western student

## ALTERNATE WAYS OF HELPING



**\$2,658,648**

in vital funding support was raised with more than a third (34%) donated by Western staff



**397**

CLV Care Packages and Chaplaincy Support Boxes were given to students living on and off campus

## ALTERNATE WAYS OF TEACHING



**260**

professional development workshops were held to support the transition online, with **2,791** staff participating from March–November 2020



**13,857**

student contact hours supported student learning through Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS)



**Target 1.5:** By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters



**Target 4.3:** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

# SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION LEARNING IN A COMPLEX WORLD

Sustainability education puts emphasis on the necessary interrelationships between theory and practice; local and global scales and present and future and thus has a global citizenship component that requires a critical evaluation of environment and social justice issues.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED BOOTCAMP: SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

Our 21C Curiosity Pod 'Sustainability Bootcamp' was awarded a Highly Commended award in the sectors' national Green Gown Awards for Learning, Teaching and Skills. The Bootcamp introduces the core concepts of sustainable development and the SDGs through worldviews, systems awareness and future thinking. In May the first cohort of professional staff from the DVC Academic portfolio undertook the Bootcamp as a pilot to assess its relevance as a professional development opportunity, with 65 staff receiving a digital badge. A cohort of co-curricular students explored urban heat impacts and alternative design elements for cooler campuses.

*"Having the chance to develop an idea to reduce heat on campus was very interesting... combining ideas to create a design. This increased my overall confidence in my knowledge of sustainability and creativity."* –Western student.



## LEARNING WITH INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES – PEOPLE, PLACE AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCE: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

*"Drawing upon my background in postcolonial research, theory and approaches to decolonise my own discipline – geography I hope to inspire educators on how they can begin to decolonise their own curriculum and include Indigenous voices and content in valuable and engaging ways."* – Dr Alanna Kamp, Unit Coordinator

Embracing Indigenous and First Nations knowledges is a vital component of education for sustainability thinking. People, Place and Social Difference is a first year unit in the School of Social Sciences with multi-disciplinary cohort of over 1,000 students. The unit examines the connections between society, economy, culture and place with an emphasis on diversity and social justice. A primary revision in 2020 was the introduction of Indigenous issues, experiences and voices to the curriculum including lecture content/material, readings, workshop activities and assessments. Alanna was the inaugural recipient of the School of Social Science 'Indigenous Learning and Teaching Award' 2020 for her work in this unit.

## ACTION TOWARDS THE GOALS: THE ACADEMY

*"Continuous innovation is essential to ensure applicability into the future. The structure of the unit leverages actions on sustainability by focusing on feasible strategies to find new ways of approaching problems."* – Dr Robert Salama, Unit Coordinator

The Innovation Lab unit empowers students to design and develop innovative processes that provide solutions for real-world challenges for actions towards achieving the SDGs. Students competitively pitch their proposals on an SDG of their choice, before working in small teams to develop and present a feasible strategy to achieve or address the issues.

Early in 2020 The Academy students also tackled one of the region's most critical issues: 'how to embrace renewables and resilient energy to move towards net-zero emissions by 2050' as part of the City Challenge, a 21C Curiosity Pod.

# BUILDING BETTER FUTURES

## PROPERTY, INVESTMENT AND GREEN BUILDING: SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*“Sustainability has become one of the most important issues being debated at all levels within the property industry. The focus has been on issues related to sustainable practices in the built environment, such as in the design, construction and use of building materials in property development projects.”*  
– Dr Za Manaf, Academic Course Advisor, Property

Property development companies are taking steps to ensure that their projects are sustainable, and they are keen to keep up with current sustainable trends and practices. Sustainable Property Development and Feasibility Modelling, offered within the Masters of Property Investment and Development program, prepares students with the knowledge and skills to assist them to lead these practices.



### 48

students undertook the Sustainable Property Development unit in 2020



### 43

students undertook the Feasibility Modelling unit in 2020 working on real case study of a sustainable development with industry partner Landcom



# STUDY SUSTAINABILITY

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

At Western students from all disciplines, both undergraduate and postgraduate, can undertake a degree specialisations (minors or majors) or key units that support transformative teaching for sustainability literacies and the SDGs.



**Target 4.7:** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development

## SUSTAINABILITY STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Global Sustainability** (All programs)
- **Social Ecology** (All programs)
- **Geography and Urban Studies** (Bachelor of Social Science/Arts/Tourism Management)
- **Climate Change** (Bachelor of Science/Medical Science)
- **Environmental Engineering** (Bachelor of Engineering/Master of Engineering)
- **Environmental Health** (Bachelor of Science)
- **Global Climate Change** (Bachelor of Business)
- **Heritage and Tourism** (Bachelor of Tourism Management/Community Welfare/Social Science)
- **Human Rights, Protection and Development** (Bachelor of Social Sciences)
- **Peace and Development** (Bachelor of Social Sciences/Arts/Tourism Management)
- **Responsible Design and Sustainability** (Bachelor of Design and Technology/Industrial Design)
- **Sustainable Business** (Masters of Business Administration)
- **Sustainable Development** (Bachelor of Business)
- **Sustainable Futures** (Bachelor of Design and Technology)
- **Sustainable Environmental Futures** (Bachelor of Science)
- **Sustainable Property Development** (Master of Property Investment and Development)
- **Water and the Environment** (Bachelor of Engineering)

# SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCIES

# LEARNING FOR

# THE FUTURE

*“Learning about sustainability is a growing concern for the younger generation as it relates to us in our everyday lives as well as our careers. I want to work in sustainable design so having this to add to my resume was a win.” – Western student*

## NEW LEARNING, NEW CAREERS – UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: THE COLLEGE

In 2020, Western was the first institution to commence the online delivery of short courses in response to the Australian Government’s Higher Education Relief Package. Demand for courses indicates that COVID-19 has sparked a surge in demand for careers in mental health, counselling and the care sector. One of the new offerings was an Undergraduate Certificate in Environmental Sustainability a short course that was developed to examine the processes and relationships that underpin environmental sustainability across different landscapes.

*“Solving the world’s environmental problems will require workers on various levels who are trained in these issues and who understand the wider contexts of the challenges faced.” – Dr Nicolene Murdoch, Chief Executive Officer*

## COMMUNICATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY: SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND COMMUNICATION ARTS

*“This has been such a rewarding project for the students and we have developed great relationships with clients and projects. We are thrilled at the way the students have worked in teams to respond to the client’s needs and in this way they have contributed to really important sustainability projects in Greater Western Sydney.” – Dr Tanya Notley, Unit Coordinator*

Communicating for Sustainability is a new 21C unit focused on supporting students across all schools to develop their strategy, storytelling and project design skills. Almost 50 undergraduate students worked with four local projects to give them real-world sustainability project experience. Student projects included: the Painted River Project, Planetary Health Project, Sustainable Tiny House and the Bower Project with external partner Bower Reuse and Repair Centre.

*“It was a very positive experience in the sense that it gave us a different perspective on how we can get our message out to a younger generation.” – Guido Verbist, General Manager, Bower Reuse and Repair Centres*

## NET ZERO EMISSIONS CITY CHALLENGE: 21C AND THE ACADEMY

Early in 2020 The Academy students tackled one of the region’s most critical issues: ‘how to embrace renewables and resilient energy to move towards net-zero emissions by 2050’.

The City Challenge, a 21C Curiosity Pod, was developed in partnership with Common Purpose, Greater Sydney Commission and The Academy. Over two days students from a variety of disciplines engaged with the formal challenge brief, visited industry partners and took part in an expert-led masterclasses. The best solutions were pitched to a Western City District Commissioner, industry partners and University leaders.

*“In developing innovative solutions, our students had the opportunity to contribute and apply analytical and leadership skills in a pressurised environment to a challenge that’s very relevant to their lives. Curiosity Pods are a key element of the University’s 21C Curriculum transformation tailored to prepare our students for a rapidly evolving workforce and as Western Sydney’s next generation of leaders.” – Professor Simon Barrie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)*



**Target 4.4:** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

# CAMPUS PERFORMANCE

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

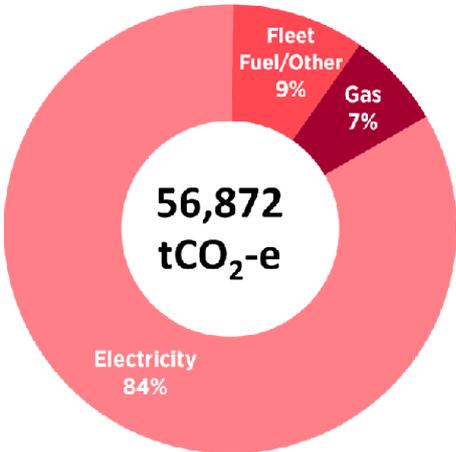
### REDUCING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

In 2020 our first solar carpark pilot was delivered. Our annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions reported to the national Clean Energy Regulator decreased due to campus lockdowns and subsequent reduction in staff and student numbers. Western’s baseline energy and carbon footprint was estimated as a basis for modelling future opportunities for actions. A Sustainable Energy Strategy was developed to support reducing our carbon footprint into the future, with a commitment to 100% renewable energy supply by 2025.

Our Hawkesbury Water Recycling Scheme, incorporating the supply and use of recycled water from Sydney Water, along with stormwater harvesting from the local catchment for re-use continues to support our water savings strategy. Our sports fields and larger landscape areas utilise, as much as possible, reclaimed/recycled water or collected rainwater.

The impact of COVID-19 caused an overall reduction in waste generation due to temporary campus closures, however we continue to achieve high diversion rates, including co-mingled recycling (bottles, plastics and food containers), through waste compaction at the Materials Recycling Facilities. A total of 88% of our waste generated on campus was diverted from landfill.

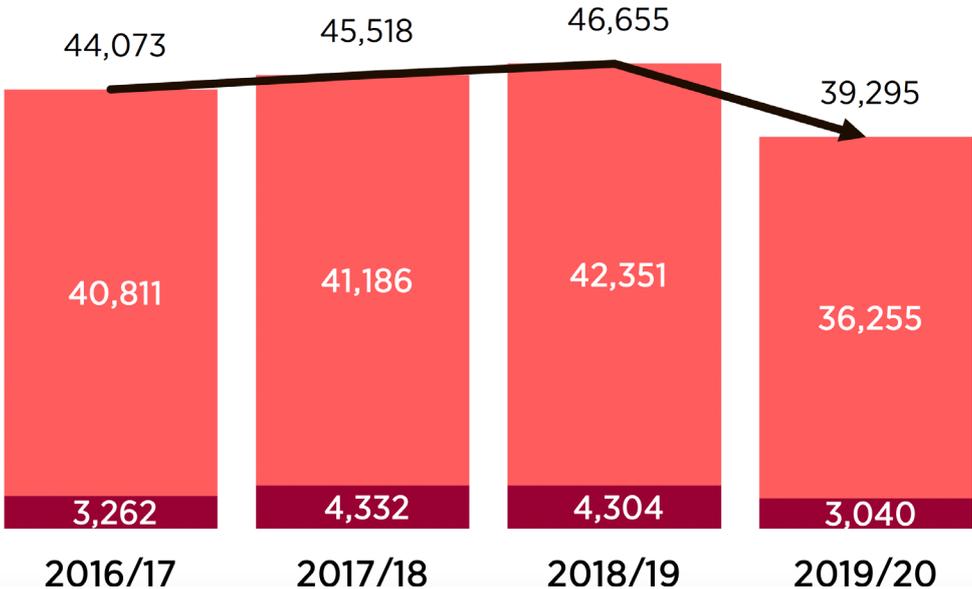
### CARBON FOOTPRINT ESTIMATE



### HIGHLIGHTS

- 7,610 GJ** of solar energy produced on campus
- 500 ML** of recycled water is re-used on campus
- 250 ML** of stormwater harvested and re-used on campus
- 88%** of waste diverted from landfill

### ENERGY EMISSIONS (TONNES CARBON DIOXIDE EQUIVALENT) REPORTED TO CLEAN ENERGY REGULATOR



Scope 1 direct emissions released into the atmosphere  
 Scope 2 indirect emissions from consumption of purchased electricity, heat or steam

# URBAN HEAT LIVING LABS

**SOLAR CARPARK: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

*“Bitumen carparks are a critical source of urban heat in Western Sydney. Complementing the solar carpark pilot at Kingswood campus, this structure has potential to address a range of symptoms and issues associated with urban heat and increasing risks associated with climate change risks for Western Sydney.” – Associate Professor Sebastian Pfautsch, School of Social Science*

The new solar carpark structure at Kingswood campus is a pilot project that is providing 100kW of renewable solar energy to the School of Engineering (in Building Z). The structure also provides other benefits of cooling, amenity for staff and students, and safety through design in protections from storms. The initiative is a component of the Sustainable Energy Strategy and is also used as a research and teaching resource.

 **100kW**  
of solar energy produced from  
Kingswood’s solar carpark

**OUTDOOR HEATLABS DEMONSTRATION HUB: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

*“Next to the solar carpark is our new Outdoor Heatlab. In this dedicated space, students and academics study the effects of heat and UV on surface and building materials and quantify the cooling capacity of different shade interventions.” – Associate Professor Sebastian Pfautsch, School of Social Science*

There are a number of other demonstration hubs set up on Kingswood campus which are used for teaching and research, namely Foodlift, Purple Roof and the Sustainable House Project.



# SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE LIVING LAB

## THE HAWKESBURY FARM: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Holistic and regenerative grazing practices are at the core of the Hawkesbury Farm which runs a commercial cattle and sheep operation. The cattle breeding program has a focus on stud Angus and Limousin. The grazing operation demonstrates mainstream sustainability principles, including irrigation with recycled water, minimum tillage and application of composted poultry manure to enhance soil health, supporting a seasonal mixed pasture ecology of high performance grasses and legumes, and associated fodder conservation. The farm is utilised by Animal Science and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security students, as well as HIE researchers and external educational institutions, such as TAFE.



### 700ha

in size, the farm is used as a teaching resource for students, as well as for research and outreach



**Target 2.4:** By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

# ON-CAMPUS INITIATIVES LIVING LABS

*“Living Labs are collaborative partnerships for utilising campus assets as a focus of teaching, research, demonstration and engagement. Multidisciplinary initiatives developed to date include applications to broad societal issues of urban development, natural and cultural heritage, renewable energy, urban heat, water recycling, and peri-urban food systems.” – Dr Roger Attwater, Senior Manager*

## AWARD-WINNING CLEVER CAMPUSES: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Western was awarded the TEFMA Clever Campus – Institution of the Year for initiatives on the Hawkesbury campus including the adaptive reuse of historical buildings, integration of teaching, research and living labs, and developing precinct collaboration with the Department of Education and TAFE.

The team also won a Highly Commended award in the sector’s Green Gown Awards Australasia student engagement category for Western’s “Campus-based living labs for teaching, research and engagement”.



## WETLAND MONITORING: SCHOOL AND SCIENCE AND SYDNEY WATER

Collaborative research between School of Science and Sydney Water Corporation is developing a long-term monitoring program to understand more about the nutrient removal performance of mature operational stormwater wetlands, such as that established on Hawkesbury campus. This will potentially inform the manner in which ‘nutrient offsets’ can be operationalised as part of a broader Nutrient Offset Program by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Ports developed for monitoring urban rain gardens have been installed in the stormwater treatment wetlands by the School of Science researchers, along with research design around the surveyed wetland cells, plans for initiating sampling protocols, and a macrophyte survey by Sydney Water staff. It is expected that this will provide a substantive platform for student research projects.



## THE SUSTAINABLE HOUSE PROJECT: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Sustainable House Project (SHP) is a multidisciplinary student-led sustainability initiative led by the School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment. The project showcases cutting-edge innovation and demonstrates the potential of construction design, renewable energy technologies, smart technologies, and passive design to reduce household carbon emissions and waste while contributing to the social inclusion and wellbeing of the owner. The SHP is an annual project - each year the team will learn from the experiences of the previous cohort and add to the innovation. The students have installed a mobile house in 2020 on the Kingswood campus to be used for research.



**Target 6.3:** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

# GRAND CHALLENGES RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

*“Our nation is facing more and more challenges. Collaborative research partnerships are crucial for responding to these challenges. It is vital we need to work together for the sustainable development of economic, social, and environmental dimensions to achieve a safer and higher quality of life for all people.”* – Associate Professor Sarah Zhang, Environment and Sustainability Research Theme Champion

## OUR RESEARCH THEMES

Research at Western spans four interdisciplinary themes that work towards addressing the SDGs:

- Education and Aspirational Change
- Environment and Sustainability
- Health and Wellbeing
- Urban Futures and Society

### **‘FEEDING MY CHILD’ AND ‘FOOD AND ME’: UNICEF AUSTRALIA AND YOUNG AND RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE**

*“Our findings show that it will require a concerted, whole-of-community effort to address the dietary challenges that face adolescents around the world.”* – Professor Amanda Third, Young and Resilience Research Centre (YRR)

This is the first ever qualitative, user-centred and comparative study of adolescent and maternal diet and nutrition at an international scale. The YRR team consulted with 573 mothers and 660 adolescents in 18 countries, including Australia, about their experiences of diet and nutrition and has this impacted their lives. This deep dive into their experiences of diet and nutrition aims to channel their insights into policy and practice internationally.

## AUSTRALIA-INDIA WATER CENTRE: SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

*“Australia and India face many common issues around water security and sustainability in often hot and dry climates. The Australia India Water Centre (AIWC) will make significant progress in addressing the challenges of providing safe, clean water to millions of people in Australia, India, and neighbouring region.”*  
– Professor Basant Maheshwari, School of Science

The AIWC was established in 2020 with Western the lead University. The Centre has a total of 23 partner organisations with the purpose to develop collaboration in water research, education, training and capacity building. One key and on-going initiative is MARVI - Managing Aquifer Recharge and Sustaining Groundwater Use through Village-level Intervention. About 60% of irrigation water for crop production and 80% drinking water in India is sourced from groundwater supplies. The future of agriculture and food security is very much linked to groundwater sustainability, and the challenges in India are not only technical but have important social, cultural, economic, institutional and policy elements. The MARVI model has been implemented across 20,000 villages across seven Indian states.

## CITATIONS FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY – EXCEPTIONAL RESEARCH RESPONSE TO CRISES AND RECOVERY OUTSTANDING CITATION

Dr Kate Fagan, Director, Writing and Society Research Centre, School of Humanities and Communication Arts. Online research initiatives were devised under Western’s COVID-19 response earning Kate an individual citation. The international Zoom research seminar series ‘Room to Listen’ was dedicated to literary scholarship and practice and strengthened international research collaborations and networks, while supporting diverse HDR students. The second program ‘The Writing Zone’ was a grant funded mentoring program for emerging writers and arts workers from Western Sydney that delivered job opportunities for young regional writers and new industry partnerships including a collaboration with SBS Voices. Author outcomes included essays published in the Sydney Review of Books, virtual writing residencies with the Bankstown Arts Centre, and a suite of commissions by Diversity Arts Australia’s I Am Not a Virus project.



# AUSTRALIA AND THE SDGs

*“The SDGs are not just a tool for diplomatic engagement. They are an international hook on which to champion socially, environmentally and economically coherent domestic policy solutions for our shared future both at home and abroad.”* – Dr Claire Brolan, University of Queensland and Leanne Smith, Whitlam Institute

## NO ONE LEFT BEHIND – IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AUSTRALIA: WHITLAM INSTITUTE

*Why has Australia been so slow to take the SDGs seriously, and how do we compare to other nations? Who can Australia learn from for better SDG implementation?*

Throughout 2020 the Whitlam Institute research investigated international best practice in adopting the SDGs through governance structures, policy and planning. Lessons from case studies in Germany, Mexico and Indonesia – each fellow G20 members – are analysed in the report, with 12 recommendations to advance SDG policy in Australia.



## GENDER MATTERS: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Gender-related issues are significant in the lives of young people. In many Australian secondary schools, however, there may be no safe space to explore them. This three-year research study Gender Matters: Changing Gender Equity Policies and Practices in Australian Secondary Schooling is being delivered by Associate Professor Susanne Gannon, Professor Kerry Robinson and doctoral researcher Prue Adams. The team aims to address the current gap that exists in education policy and practice around gender and gender-based issues. Capturing the voices and perspectives of young people in relation to their experience of gender-related issues, through creative, arts-based methods, is a critical component of the research.



## WESTERN'S SDG RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS



**1,611**

publications by Western academics that relate to SDG 3



**12.18**

field-weighted citation impact (FWCI) for SDG 16



**Top 10**

universities worldwide for 4 out of the 17 SDGs used for 2015-19 reporting



# ART AND SCIENCE IN ACTION

## THE PAINTED RIVER IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND COMMUNICATION ARTS AND SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

*“This expedition brings together art and science to increase awareness for the ecological significance of the wetland, which is home to several endangered species, such as the Giant Dragonfly and the Blue Mountains Water Skink.” – Dr Leo Robba, Lecturer*

A group of well-known Australian artists – including Reg Mombassa, Adrienne Richards, Euan Macleod and Leo Robba – have completed an artistic expedition to a rare upland swamp in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, as part of Western’s acclaimed ‘Painted River Project’ to record and conserve the unique environment. In addition to highlighting the wetlands mid recovery from last summer’s bushfire crisis, Dr Robba said artworks created over two days on location between Leura and Mount Hay, will be featured on social media to mark the beginning of another bushfire season.

*“Human development in the Blue Mountains has major detrimental impacts on the area’s fragile swampland ecosystems, but luckily this swampland is protected to a degree by surrounding National Park – this expedition is one step towards raising awareness for conservation.” – Dr Ian Wright, Senior Lecturer*

## PLATYPUS IN THE SYDNEY BASIN: SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND CATTAI HILLS ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

*“It is relatively unknown that we have platypus in the Sydney Basin – so it was good to see that they are here, and they may be able to withstand the pressures of a growing city.” – Dr Michelle Ryan, Lecturer*

A pilot study of one of Australia’s most elusive creatures, the platypus, has revealed they are living in unlikely, urban locations in Sydney.

Funded under the local government Communities Environment Program, a research team from Western Sydney University academics and students, along with citizen scientists from Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN) collected 41 water samples from catchment areas stretching from Cattai to Castle Hill. Almost a quarter of the samples taken found proof that platypus Environmental DNA (eDNA) was present in the waterways. The sampling sites were chosen based on reports from members of the community, who had previously sighted platypus in the area.

*“We received accounts from long-term locals that platypus seemed plentiful in local waterways in the past. It is fantastic to be able to confirm that they still occur in the area, but the study does raise more questions than it does answers.” – Sue Martin, Chair of CHEN*



**Target 14.2:** By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

# AMPLIFYING IMPACT

# RESEARCH

# COLLABORATIONS

## MICROCLIMATES IN WESTERN SYDNEY SCHOOLS: CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

*“Good physical health is important for both students’ wellbeing and cognitive outcomes in school. By providing school environments that are conducive to physical activity, and by controlling excess heat, students will be more likely to be physically active during the school day.”*

– Professor Kathryn Holmes, Centre for Educational Research

Through a research collaboration between Western and Macquarie University, this project explored the impacts of outdoor heat on school children and has made practical design recommendations to better cool our schools. The research assessed a public school in Western Sydney in the first comprehensive assessment of outdoor heat on school grounds.

During summer researchers collected more than 100,000 heat data points within the school. They also compared the temperatures of sunlit and shaded ground coverings and quantified the canopy cover of trees within its grounds. The work has been adopted by the NSW Government as resource to mitigate impacts of climate change (available on Adapt NSW).

## BETTER AND EQUITABLE HOUSING FOR NSW: INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY

*“Overseas cases have demonstrated success in fostering housing stability, affordability, and diversity through innovative, place-based design responses.”*

– Associate Professor Louise Crabtree, Institute for Culture and Society

The NSW Housing Strategy will set a 20-year vision for housing in NSW, and outline the key priorities and actions the NSW Government will take to achieve this vision, alongside its delivery partners. A team of housing experts from Western, Griffith and Swinburne led by Associate Professor Louise Crabtree has detailed the benefits of housing cooperatives and community land trusts as alternatives to current models.

Associate Professor Louise Crabtree, Dr Emma Power and Dr Neil Perry are investigate the benefits of housing cooperatives and provide an evidence base of what works in cooperative housing, providing a rationale for growth of, and policy support for, socially beneficial housing.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT, LAUNCH PAD AND MAXTON

*“Western Sydney is home to a growing Advanced Manufacturing industry driven by the significant infrastructure and transport development within the region. There is a unique opportunity to support manufacturers to be more innovative and sustainable to achieve the best outcomes not only for businesses, but importantly, for the environment and wider economy.”*

– Professor Richard Yang, Discipline Leader, Mechanical, Mechatronics and Robotics Engineering

Western Sydney University’s School of Engineering and Launch Pad Technology Business Incubator collaborated with Maxton Fox to transform their approach to commercial furniture design and manufacture through a focus on Industry 4.0 and circular economy to drive sustainable development for their business.

*“Partnering with Launch Pad and having the opportunity to work closely with Professor Yang and his team at the School of Engineering, Built Environment and Design from Western Sydney University is going to bring so much value and knowledge to our business and reinforce our sustainable manufacturing capabilities.”* – Maxton Fox representative





# SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

# A UNAI WORLD HUB

The COVID-19 crisis had a profound impact on sustainability learning as teachers and learners adjusted quickly to a virtual learning environment.

## WESTERN'S BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

Western has committed to stand in solidarity with Indigenous Australians and people of colour through supporting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, the University's Library, and the Office of Equity and Diversity have worked together to create opportunities for students and staff to demonstrate their support and better understand the issues driving the BLM movement in Australia. One way was by signing the Western Sydney University Black Lives Matter Pledge. To date, more than 1,300 students and staff have signed the pledge committed to taking a stand against racism and actively remedy social injustices.

The Centre for Educational Research at WSU also held a 'Black Lives Matter and Education: Pathways to Action' symposium to discuss the implications of the movement on all sectors of education in late June 2020. The School of Social Sciences held the '#indigenoulivesmatter: Speaking back with Social Sciences' symposium in July. The Library delivered a new suite of BLM digital resources available for all Western staff and students.

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL SERVICES

The Assistive Technologies team exemplify one way Western is working to reduce or remove barriers for people with disabilities to access education. They help create an inclusive learning and working environment and support our staff and students by providing specialist support, software and training.

*"The Assistive Technology team have been invaluable, in my first year of University by assisting me with online software that supports my learning and studying style. They worked with me directly, to find out my specific needs and challenges then provided the appropriate links and information to help me. They are friendly and informative; I am more confident with managing my workload and online learning after meeting with them. I am grateful for the assistance as it has changed my University experience."* – Western student

## INDIGENOUS EDUCATION: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School of Social Sciences aims to provide students with the skills to consciously and ethically pursue social justice and social change within their chosen fields in Western Sydney, the wider community and globally. Our Bachelor of Social Science provides a wide base for understanding issues in the complex, culturally diverse and ever-changing social environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Notably, the School has achieved 3% parity of total Indigenous students enrolled. In response to the new University-wide Indigenous Strategy, the School has also made significant contributions across the seven objectives detailed in the strategy.

*"I am pleased with the progress we are making in regard to Indigenous employment and education. Our recent appointments will ensure that as a School, and as a University, we can continue to build an environment that encourages Indigenous success."* – Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean of Indigenous Education



**Target 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

# A MORE EQUITABLE WORLD

## MUSIC CELEBRATES CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUITY – ART OF SOUND PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND STUDENT WORKSHOP

*“There are significantly more male musicians and male singer-songwriters than women. Against this backdrop, we need to change the status quo and celebrate the diversity of upcoming songwriters in the region, especially given the array of cultural and musical traditions present. In our experience, these diverse groups often possess enormous talent and have a huge potential to succeed as creatives in music.”* – Associate Professor Sally Macarthur, Director of Academic Program, Music and Music Therapy

In March the international Turner Brown Band, featuring Western alumni Dom Turner, played to a packed Playhouse Theater at Kingswood. Led by Associate Professor Bruce Crossman, the performance was designed to celebrate and encourage diverse upcoming artists, especially talents in Greater Western Sydney. A panel of distinguished scholars and the band discussed cultural and equity challenges in the music industry but importantly modelled ways forward. After the performance selected student singer-songwriters and their bands received a unique and intimate mentoring session with the band in our state of the art music studios. Dr Kate Fagan and Dr Clare Maclean worked with the students to develop their song writing skills, and our communication film students with Vincent Tay captured the event and produced a video for future learning.

## CHALLENGING RACISM IN WESTERN SYDNEY: SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Challenging Racism Project is the leading national research program on racism and anti-racism in Australia since 2002 and has a commitment to principles of social justice and quality empirical research. Based in Western Sydney, one of the most culturally diverse regions in Australia, the initiative is ideally situated to provide topical, timely and engaged research on issues concerning cultural, religious and ethnic diversity.

*“Our research empowers communities to build resilience and deploy strategies to challenge racism, provides analysis and commentary on issues of national importance, and is used to inform, educate and train individuals and communities on positive interventions for culturally diverse societies.”* – Professor Kevin Dunn, Pro Vice Chancellor, Research

The project has established strong connections with community and research partners, receiving over received over \$2 million in prestigious Australian Research Council grants. The project has also made significant contributions to policy related to racism, multiculturalism and cultural diversity in Australia.



# WASTE NOT.

Making small changes in your life can help create a zero waste Earth.

## STUDENTS WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS

### MAKING A STAND AGAINST WASTE DESIGN COMPETITION: SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND COMMUNICATION ARTS

*“The Design Competition 2020: Waste Not is a result of the productive collaboration between WSROC and Western Sydney University. We achieved a mutual goal of engaging Western Sydney’s next generation in the waste problem. Bold and creative ideas as to how we can avoid waste in the first place were depicted through the range of quality artworks received. The artworks have been shared with nine Western Sydney Councils to promote waste avoidance in the community.”* – Rey Behboudi, Regional Waste Education Officer, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Council

Waste is a big issue for Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Council (WSROC) members. WSROC’S design competition invited young, local Western designers to explore new ways with waste. The ‘Make a stand against waste’ challenged design students in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts to create original designs that vividly illustrated their ideas on waste avoidance and reducing overconsumption. The inaugural event drew strong interest from our Design and Communications programs, awarding one overall winning design and three runners up.



### FARM IT FORWARD: THE ENVIRO COLLECTIVE AND HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN LANDCARE NETWORK

*“Farm it Forward offers the opportunity for young people to manage their own small plot on private land, for people to mentor or offer their land to be farmed for them and for people to volunteer and help out where they can. It’s about growing food together to create socially and environmentally sustainable, local food production.”* – Katherine Clare, Local Landcare Coordinator, Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network

Farm it Forward has teamed up with Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network (HNLC) and North West Disability Services to begin a Hawkesbury Farm it Forward program. In 2020 a volunteer day was held to set up the first plot at the Secret Garden site on Western’s Hawkesbury campus. This plot is co-run by HNLC with Western Sydney University students, the Environment Collective student club, and young people who meet regularly to grow their own produce using permaculture and holistic management practices.



**Target 12.8:** By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

# PLACE BASED LEARNING

# RCE GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY

Coordinated by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) at the global level, the RCE Greater Western Sydney network – auspiced by Western Sydney University – has been building collaborative and innovative place-based Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiatives for 10–years to deliver local impact.

## HAWKESBURY RESILIENCE PROJECT: LEARN, PREVENT, PREPARE

‘Learn, Prevent, Prepare: Community Action for a Resilient Hawkesbury’ is an education, engagement and empowerment program designed to respond to climate impacts at multiple touch points. The program, supported by funding from Adapt NSW, aims to inspire the Hawkesbury community to strengthen community connections and biodiversity resilience in bushfire and flood prone areas, support the health and wellbeing benefits for community participants, and develop stronger networks of public and community institutions.

The first regional forum held in November 2020 explored community resilience with 60 residents from the Hawkesbury (and beyond) in relation to climate events, including fire, drought, heat waves and floods through expert speakers and personal stories of two local residents. During the forum, the majority (92%) of the forum attendees said they were *alarmed about climate change*, with almost all (96%) saying they’ve *directly experiencing changes in the climate* in the Hawkesbury.

## AWARD-WINNING GLOBAL WEBINAR SERIES: COVID-19 AND ESD

In response to COVID-19, RCE Greater Western Sydney, RCE Srinagar and RCE East Kalimantan hosted seven global webinars to reconnect with the RCE community and to learn from each other about how each RCE is responding to the pandemic.

*“RCEs must continue to discuss pandemic-related issues and further cultivate intra- and inter-RCE collaboration. The initiatives and insights shared in all webinars could be taken up in other communities and potentially influence policy-making. Through these webinars the RCE community may well have built a foundation for what might evolve as the RCE Global Learning Space on ESD, accelerating the efforts of achieving the SDGs.”* – Professor Mario Tabucanon, Senior Research Fellow, UNU-IAS

This initiative received an ‘Acknowledged Flagship Project’ Award in 2020 for its role in contributing to SDG3: Good Health and Well-being. This award is given annually to RCEs that have made outstanding contributions to address local sustainable development challenges in their regions.

## RCE SDG YOUTH CHALLENGE

The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual RCE SDG Youth Challenge 2020 “Youth for the Goals: Resilient Communities and Planet”, hosted by RCE Greater Western Sydney, focused on localised action to address SDG 11, SDG 12 and SDG 15, underpinned by SDG 4 and SDG 17. This year’s youth-led sustainability projects engaged almost 6,500 youth directly and over 110,000 people virtually, and included restoration activities, design competitions, virtual workshops and training, e-learning materials, and policy contributions. The initiatives persisted despite the impacts of COVID-19, with many project leaders adapting to worldwide lock down orders and the new ways of online learning, working and engaging in a new and challenging digital world.

*“Young people are powerful agents of change. The RCE SDG Youth Challenge is an exemplar of how youth across continents, using a place-based approach linked to a global platform, can work together to create impact and mobilise their young peers and actions for the SDGs.”* – Brittany Hardiman, Sustainability Coordinator and RCE SDG Youth Challenge Lead

# LOOKING FORWARD

# OUR NEW STRATEGIES

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The University has produced two new strategies. *Sustaining Success 2021–2026* is our strategic roadmap for the next six years and shows our commitment to excellence, sustainability, equity, transformation and connectedness. Our Decadal Strategy, *Sustainability and Resilience 2030*, details the reasons why, as a leading anchor educational institution deeply embedded in Greater Western Sydney, we must envision a more resilient, sustainable and prosperous future.

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## DECADAL STRATEGY

*Sustainability and Resilience 2030* was developed in 2020. It is a call to come together as a community around key aspirations that frame a vision for just transitions to sustainable ways of living that leave no one behind. Our nine interconnected priority statements we have developed for this strategy are both a challenge and an opportunity for the University, and are to focus our actions for the decade to 2030. Together staff and students can connect with each other and with the Greater Western Sydney community to learn, enable, adapt, transition and harness our collective knowledge to deliver meaningful impact.

*Sustainability and Resilience 2030*, was authored by Professor Juan Salazar and Jen Dollin with support from Carol Simpson, Dr Roger Attwater and Leanne Smith. The strategy was sponsored by Professor Simon Barrie Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Peter Pickering Vice-President (Finance and Resources).

## OUR VALUES: SUSTAINING SUCCESS

*Boldness, Fairness, Integrity and Excellence.*

Our values define who we are and what we expect and encourage in each other. They are lived and embedded in the behaviours of everyone within the University community. Our values represent a commitment to our students, people and communities, both local and global.

# PRIORITY STATEMENTS

Our interconnected priority statements are not a group of siloed priorities – progress and action on one of these themes must balance and support progress on the others. To demonstrate our holistic approach these statements are represented as Eucalyptus leaves connected by a living branch.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledges

Embrace Indigenous knowledges for pathways to sustainability and Caring for Country.

## Regenerative Systems

Value biodiversity linking human wellbeing to environmental health.

## Resilient Cities

Enable urban resilience and adaptive capacity in our region.

## Climate Action

Step up efforts to support climate action in our region.

## Justice

Activate environmental justice and social inclusion to tackle inequality in our region.

## Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

Promote agroecological principles for just food systems.

## Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Harness the benefits of AI and automation in planning for sustainability.

## Economic Transitions

Enact new visions for economic transitions through ethical economic and ecological relationships.

## Partnerships

Collaborate with regional, national and international organisations across all sectors to deliver impact across these priority statements.

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