The principles of sustainability have been a core commitment of Griffith University since its foundation over forty years ago.

Griffith’s sustainability commitment is embedded in all areas of the University with sustainability as one of five high level goals in the Griffith Strategic Plan 2018–2019.

To support this goal, our Sustainability Plan 2017–2020, incorporates economic, environmental and corporate social responsibility in the University’s teaching programs, research activities, community engagement and operational practices.

A comprehensive Carbon Management Plan is also in place so that there is a consistent and measurable effort to reduce our carbon footprint over the long term.

The University has also developed a Sustainable Development website to feature closely aligned teaching programs and research activities with each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

A representative Sustainability Sub Committee of the Executive Group, chaired by Professor Martin Betts, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) has oversight of the Sustainability Plan and associated activities.

Professor Martin Betts
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) and Chair, Sustainability Sub Committee of Executive Group
OUR COMMITMENT

Griffith committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN Global Compact

In October 2017, Griffith signed up to the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia/Pacific – Universities Commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This aligns with the University’s ongoing commitment to the UN Global Compact, which is the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative. It aims to align business operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Griffith University joined the UN Global Compact in 2010 and reaffirmed its commitment in October 2018.

New Sustainable Development website

In 2018, Griffith launched its new Sustainable Development website that highlights alignment with teaching programs and research activities for each of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The University undertook a mapping exercise of undergraduate teaching programs and research activities to identify the alignment with each of the Global Goals.
Griffith's Sustainability Plan 2017–2020 details goals, objectives, targets and accountabilities to continue to advance our sustainability commitment. This report provides an overview of our progress.

Executive management

**Goal: Griffith University is recognised as embedding principles of sustainability that support the University’s goals and strategies.**


In 2017, sustainability was also incorporated into a number of key policies: Motor Vehicle Policy, Purchasing Policy and Travel Policy. Further detail is available on pages 9–10.

The objective to recognise staff for positive contributions to the University’s sustainability agenda has also been realized. Griffith’s Sustainability Awards for staff, first introduced in 2014, has been held in 2016 and 2018 to recognise innovative and effective approaches to leading sustainable practice.
Griffith Sustainability Award winners 2018

Group winner
Dr Graham Jenkins, Mr Simon Howell and Assoc Prof Wayne Hall from the School of Engineering and Built Environment for their project, A Creative Approach to embedding Sustainability and Global Engagement in Engineering Education.

Group winner
Mr Stephen Pulley, Ms Suganthi Sivasubramaniam and Mr Fred Fleck from Fleet and Logistics, Business Services for their Sustainable Transportation project.

Group – Highly Commended
Ms Vanessa Taveras Dalmau, Ms Rachel Perkins and Dr Rob Hales from the Griffith Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, Griffith Business School for their War on Coffee Cups project.

Griffith’s Sustainability Award winners (L–R)
Ms Rachel Perkins, Ms Vanessa Taveras Dalmau, Mr Steven Pulley, Mr Simon Howell, Dr Graham Jenkins, Ms Dianne Smith and Mr Fred Fleck with Professor Martin Betts, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) and Ms Kay Ollett, Sustainability Project Officer.
LEARNING AND TEACHING

Goal: Through inclusion of sustainability principles in Learning and Teaching programs we will deepen our students’ understanding of sustainability at local and global levels.

In 2018, a formalised process has been established to incorporate two sustainability items per year on the agenda of the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

We have also sought to identify and promote teaching programs aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Our top five sustainability teaching programs that are closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and also give our graduates successful employment and significant influence are:

- **Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Government and International Relations** combines in-depth knowledge and insight into the workings of government with practical business skill. It gives students opportunities to provide advice to government and business leaders, developing policy and managing programs with domestic and international organisations in areas such as economic, environmental and social policy, diplomacy, and trade relations.

- **Bachelor of Laws/Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice** targets both law and opportunities in policing and security, intelligence, probation and parole, child protection, crime analysis, courts and justice services, crime prevention and regulatory agencies. Students will be prepared for a career in areas such as law enforcement, working directly with offenders in welfare and counselling roles and in criminological research and policy roles.

- **Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics** focuses on knowledge and skills to work as a dietitian and learn how to help improve the health of individuals and the community. Graduates will be prepared for careers in the health industry, including public health and health service management.

- **Bachelor of Environmental Science/Bachelor of Business** give students the opportunity to examine the sustainable use of our natural environment with the study of topics such as climate change, water and land resources management, and graduate with the skills and knowledge needed to find sustainable solutions for business and industry.

- **Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)/Bachelor of Environmental Science** graduates of this degree are prepared for careers as engineers or environmental scientists, equipped to bring engineering together with social and natural sciences to find solutions for complex environmental issues such as water and waste management and climate change.

New teaching programs with a focus on sustainability in 2018 include:

- Griffith’s new **Bachelor of Social Science**, tailored to the world’s current and future needs, offers majors on some of the biggest issues facing the world today: Economics, environmental sustainability, global security threats, media community and social change, politics in Asia and social justice.

- Our **Master of Integrated Water Management, Graduate Diploma of Integrated Water Management and Graduate Certificate in Integrated Water Management** (2018), targets water professionals and is skill-based, interdisciplinary, experiential and relevant to contemporary sustainable development challenges. The programs aim to build the capacity of future leaders in water resource management, with an emphasis on professions working in developing countries.

- The **Bachelor of Marine Science** trains students to address and manage complex issues to ensure that marine industries prosper sustainably in healthy marine ecosystems. Graduates will be equipped to tackle problems that affect our oceans, food production and climate change.

The **Griffith Graduate of Influence** website is live and provides resources to implement learning activities and assessment strategies into courses and programs. The sustainability agenda is linked to **Graduate Attribute 4: Socially responsible and engaged in their communities** teaching-resources.griffith.edu.au/the-griffith-graduate/griffith-attributes/socially-responsible-and-engaged-in-their-communities
RESEARCH

Goal: Maintain a profile of excellence in world-class research relevant to sustainability.

Griffith is a research-intensive University with a rapidly growing national and international profile for innovative and interdisciplinary research. Since 2000 to mid-2018, Griffith has produced at least 813 indexed (Web of Science) outputs including the word ‘sustainable’ or ‘sustainability’ in the title or abstract. Research in the topic of sustainability had a marked increase in 2008-2010 and again in 2015, continuing with similar number of outputs published in 2016–2018. Griffith University is in the top 100 universities in number of research outputs related to sustainability.

The 813 indexed publications by Griffith researchers have been cited 13,494 times (16.6 citations per paper), a higher rate than the Griffith average (12.7). Environmental sustainability is easily the most highly cited, reinforcing Griffith’s 40-year tradition of excellence in this field.

- The Griffith Climate Change Response Program leads Griffith University’s research in climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Environmental Science at Griffith is largely addressed through the activities of the Environmental Futures Research Institute. Our four strategic research platforms: Centre for Clean Environment and Energy, Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution, Planetary Health, and Food Futures.
- Griffith’s Cities Research Institute research portfolio comprises four core themes: intelligent infrastructure; quality places and changing communities; smart cities; and coastal resilience and urban water.
- Sustainable tourism is one of the University’s areas of strategic investment, bringing together two research programs: tourism and climate change and Tourism and corporate responsibility.
- The Griffith Asia Institute is an internationally recognised research centre that embraces the complexity and diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. The Institute’s research focuses on the politics, security, economies and development of the Asia Pacific and their significance for Australia. Its inter-disciplinary advantage lies in Griffith University’s commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) across the region.
- Griffith’s Australian Rivers Institute is home to more than 120 scientists and research students, making it the largest concentration of university-based water researchers in the country. The Institute plays a leading role in managing water resources with a focus on freshwater, estuarine and urban water.
- Griffith’s Institute for Educational Research has one of the largest concentrations of university-based education researchers in the country. The Institute’s members applied research with industry partners, education systems, schools, community and not-for-profit organisations is readily translated into practice.
- The Law Futures Centre aims to conduct research that is responsive to domestic and global change. The Centre has an emphasis on human rights and refugee law. Centre programs: Law and Nature, Law, Governance and Global Change, Law, Risk and Innovation, and Lawyering, Legal Education and Law’s Future.
- Griffith’s Yunus Social Business Centre was formally opened in April 2017, to contribute to alleviating poverty by focusing on education for enhancing business, social entrepreneurship and responsible leadership values.

The Environmental Futures Centre is trans-disciplinary, diverse in research expertise—combining fundamental, applied and social sciences, is solutions oriented, locally active and globally engaged.
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Goal: Contribute to a robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable society by fostering partnerships and engagement opportunities which are focused on sustainability.

Griffith has a longstanding commitment to community engagement and values its partnerships with its local communities, business, industry and government at regional, national and global levels.

Examples of engagement activities and partnerships include:

- The Coastal Community Engagement Program, an initiative of our partnership with the City of Gold Coast, has been developed to maximise community understanding of natural coastal processes and management strategies. The Griffith Centre for Coastal Management runs award winning BeachCare and CoastEd programs. More than 36,000 primary and secondary students have benefitted from the CoastEd program to date.

- Griffith’s EcoCentre on the Nathan campus promotes sustainability through collaborative public awareness education programs in partnership with industry, government and the community. Since 2001, approximately 280,000 visitors have participated in a wide range of activities, of which over 120,000 attended school-based learning at the Toohey Forest Environmental Education Centre, a partnership between the Department of Education and Training and Griffith University.

- The Griffith Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, located within the Griffith Business School aims to inform and assist the development of sustainable enterprise through innovative research, teaching and engagement activities. A highly collaborative entity with strong national and international connections to industry, academia, government and non-government organisations, it takes a global perspective while focusing on the Asia Pacific region.

- Griffith’s Logan campus hosts the Logan Eco Action Festival (LEAF), organised by the Logan City council and held each year in late May. LEAF 2018 was by far the largest and best LEAF Festival with approximately 10,000 people in attendance. The theme for LEAF 2018 was ‘Rethink the future’. The campus lends itself well to this event and the Red Zone in a Box was very popular with attendees.

- Griffith University has hosted the secretariat for the Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS) since 2004. ACTS promotes and supports best sustainable practice in the Australasian higher education sector. The Secretariat is located in Griffith’s EcoCentre.
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The University’s Strategic Plan embraces our commitment that environmental sustainability be reflected in ‘its building design, energy, water, and waste management practices’.

The Sustainability Plan 2017–2020 articulates this further through the development of goals and performance indicators.

Carbon emissions

Griffith University’s goal is to reduce our Greenhouse Gas emissions. Our Carbon Management Plan sets the direction and ensures ongoing monitoring and measurement. The University reports its carbon emissions annually to the Australian federal government.

Categories of carbon emissions

Scope 1
Emissions on our campuses, or associated with the University’s business generated through the combustion of fossil fuels in University owned vehicles, natural gas and LPG use as well as refrigerant gas leakage.

Scope 2
Emissions associated with the use of electricity imported from the grid or from a third party supplier of energy in the form of heat or electricity.

Scope 3
Emissions as a direct consequence of the use of goods or services provided to the University to enable it to conduct its business. Sources include: waste disposal, cleaning services and food and beverage services, IT and other equipment, paper and business flights.
Our progress towards achieving at least a 26% reduction from 2010/11 levels by 2030

- In 2017/2018, our Scope 1 and 2 emissions have increased by 3.03% on an absolute basis, compared with the 2010/11 baseline.
- On a normalised basis, that is taking into consideration Gross Floor Area (GFA), our Scope 1 and 2 emissions have reduced by 22.1% compared with the 2010/11 baseline.
- Total Greenhouse Gas emissions per square metre went from 177.9kg CO₂-e/m² in 2016/2017 to 162.5kg CO₂-e/m² in 2017/2018, a decrease of 8.7%.
- The TEFMA Benchmark data provides the Higher Education sector with information for comparing an institution’s performance against the sector on a range of metrics.

Significant reductions in emissions relate to initiatives such as:

- reduction in transport fuels related to changeover of pool vehicles to hybrids
- reduced refrigerant gas by replacing chillers
- energy reduction relating to motion sensors, LED program and Building Optimisation Program
- Additional renewable energy.

Recycling and waste

**Goal: To reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill.**

Our recycling options and ‘no bin’ initiative focus on waste minimisation strategies. We have introduced strategies to compost food waste for our gardens and to recycle takeaway coffee cups to divert them from landfill.

**Our 2016/17 Progress:** 2,104.4t CO₂-e, -55.6% on the 2010/11 baseline.

Our **Coffee Cup recycling program** is a new initiative implemented in 2018 to increase recycling and divert waste going to landfill. We have partnered with Closed Loop and their Simply Cups initiative—Australia’s first dedicated coffee cup recycling program. We are engaging our university community to help to reduce the millions of takeaway coffee cups being sent to landfill in Australia. As of December 2018, we have diverted over 30,000 coffee cups from landfill.
Transport

Goal: Maximise the use of sustainable transport options.

Griffith’s Sustainable Transport Strategy was approved by the Executive Group in July 2017. The aim is to increase the proportion of travel that is made by sustainable modes of transportation.

The University’s Travel Policy views travel as an enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities. The policy highlights that all travel must only be undertaken after due consideration of the environmental impacts of travel and all other alternatives available to the University such as web meetings and video conferencing.

Other sustainable transport initiatives include encouraging the use of public transport and intercampus buses, providing end-of-trip facilities for cyclists, along with changing over conventional petrol pool cars to hybrids.

Intercampus bus

An intercampus bus provides services between Nathan and Mt Gravatt campuses. Discussions are underway with Brisbane Bus Lines in regard to replacing existing buses with Hybrid or Electric buses under the current term. The current contract expires February 2021 with a view of extension on suitable replacement of the vehicles. This service has moved 280,241 travellers so far this year.

The Student Guild also provides an intercampus service between the Nathan and Gold Coast campuses, with discounts for students. Bookings can be made online by visiting gugcstudentguild.com.au/transport/intercampus-bus

Pool vehicles

Since July 2016, the University has taken delivery of 51 hybrid vehicles as part of a strategy to replace all conventional petrol cars in the pool fleet with more enviro-friendly alternatives by the end of 2018.

• As a result of purchasing 51 hybrid vehicles, fuel consumption has reduced by 51.6%, equating to reduction of 64.4 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum.
• The University fleet has also been reduced from 227 to 211 vehicles in the past 12mths.
• Share a Ride trips has increased from 778 in 2017 to 921 completed YTD.
• The University also installed four electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for electric vehicles and electric bikes at the Nathan and Gold Coast campuses in early 2018.
**PROCUREMENT**

**Goal: Integrate principles of sustainability in the University’s procurement processes**

The University encourages staff to integrate sustainability considerations into the procurement of goods and services. Procurement strategies include:

- incorporating sustainability into the University’s Purchasing Policy
- promoting sustainable procurement strategies on the Sustainability website
- promoting the use of technology to reduce paper usage.

A focus has been placed on reduction of paper usage. This has resulted in an outcome of the number of reams of paper decreasing from 48,846 reams in 2016/2017 to 42,539 reams in 2017/2018, a 13% reduction in paper usage.

Additionally, since the introduction of the new MFD printing devices, which require the user to release their printing jobs directly from the device, the university has saved a total of 9,299,239 sheets of paper from January 2018 to December 2018. This is equivalent to saving approximately 1,116 trees!

**Transforming processes and Digital Scholarly Resources**

In line with the procurement strategies, the Sustainability Plan includes two additional goals:

- to implement digital workflows for key University processes and minimise paper-based records
- to reduce the environmental impacts associated with traditional scholarly print resources.

**Projects include:**

**Implement digital signatures solution**

This project has implemented digital signature capabilities for Software Services (ODS), Student Administration (agreements with High School), Development and Alumni (Donations) and financial statements for research grants. As this activity moves into BAU, business areas which are responsible for high numbers of agreements eligible to use the services will be targeted for implementation.

**Administrative processes automated**

The Business Enablement Team provides support for business elements to enable workflow automation specifically within SharePoint or by streamlining the process by which records are sent to the University’s records management system (RM8) in a low-touch manner.

Examples of completed automation include: Academic Services program approval workflow, Student Administration (staffing approvals, quotes and contracts register, delegated offer of authority, approvals to attend external conferences); Health Clinics complaints and compliments processing, Legal Services Service Request, Temporary Interlibrary Loans Request automation, Prizes and Scholarships approvals, ODS Induction, Data Classification Requests, School of Nursing and Midwifery Sessional Staff Registration, AEL L&T Project EOI Form Approval.

**Promote eResources over print**

There is an ongoing and focused effort to increase the number of online resources and promote online resources over print. In 2017, 98.25% of the library budget was spent on electronic resources.

The Aquatic Centre (below) and multi-storey carpark (bottom right) on the Gold Coast campus.
Griffith University applies environmentally sustainable design to all new buildings and refurbishments. Highlights include:

- **The Sir Samuel Griffith Centre**, a 6-star green star building on the Nathan campus, represents a capstone project in Griffith’s history as a leader in environmental science and design. It provides Griffith with a unique opportunity to integrate business, engineering and environmental science disciplines around a theme of sustainability and provides a building which encourages and promotes active collaboration of key stakeholders. It is powered by solar and hydrogen technologies.

- On the Gold Coast campus:
  - **The Aquatic Centre** features a 90kW solar array and green roof
  - **The multistory carpark** features a 100kW solar array and a 10kW wind turbine.

- To date, we have installed a total of 758 kW of solar power across our campuses.
ADVANCING OUR SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT—TOGETHER

Griffith has had an ongoing commitment to the environment and sustainability. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to advancing our sustainability commitment and our staff and students get involved by pledging to make small changes every day, participating in the Green Labs Program and attending Griffith’s Sustainability Week.

During Sustainability Week, we create opportunities for staff and students and community members to be involved with Griffith’s Sustainability agenda. The week features an exciting array of workshops, activities and stalls at the Sustainability Fair on the Gold Coast campus and Enviro events on Nathan, Logan, Mt Gravatt and South Bank campuses.

Our Green Labs Program aims to encourage best practice related to procurement, energy, water and waste in laboratories. Lab work has a significant impact on the environment, ranging from energy and resource consumption to chemical and equipment use and disposal. We are helping counteract these impacts.

The Battle of the Buildings education campaign runs annually and aims to raise awareness and provide energy saving tips to reduce energy usage across our five campuses.

Our Griffith Mug Club encourages staff and students to use reusable cups. In the period January–October 2018, 40,946 disposable cups were diverted from landfill as a result of this initiative.

The Griffith University Residential Colleges, located in bushland settings at the Mt Gravatt and Nathan campuses, provide on-campus accommodation for 750 students. The colleges provide practical ways for college members to reduce their environmental footprint while living on campus through initiatives such as Earth Hour, Water bottle campaigns and workshops on environmentally sound practices. The Griffith University Village at our Gold Coast campus is also dedicated to minimising our environmental footprint. This includes recycling initiatives and a community garden.

Our Sustainability Awards for Staff recognises and rewards innovative and effective sustainable practice at Griffith University. The awards, launched in 2014, are made once every two years.

We have also received external recognition for our ongoing commitment. In 2018, the Griffith University MBA was a finalist in the Green Gown Awards Australasia Learning, Teaching and Skills category. In 2017, Griffith University was a finalist in the Green Gown Awards Australasia, Continuous Improvement and Institutional Change category.
“Our ongoing commitment to the environment and sustainability is making a difference.”