



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Sustainability Charter

The University of Melbourne

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The Earth is a finite environment, with its physical systems tightly interconnected with all life on the planet. Humanity is in the historic position of changing the global balance of both the physical and biological environments, with unintended consequences.

Sustainability requires “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹. Global values and actions must be ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable, with success in one area not coming at the expense of the others. As a distinguished research and teaching institution, the University of Melbourne has a social responsibility to lead and engage in public debate and action. Through knowledge, imagination, and action the University will help shape a sustainable planet and will be an international exemplar of an ecologically sustainable community.

The University’s sustainability obligations are to:

- Demonstrate leadership, globally, nationally and locally
- Generate disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge to underpin action
- Enable active global citizenship for our University community
- Integrate Indigenous knowledges and working with the University’s sustainability priorities
- Promote and practise equitable and sustainable use of global resources
- Ensure transparency and accountability in all institutional activities.

This Charter frames the values and principles to be embedded throughout the University’s activities, and identifies the commitments required to achieve a sustainable future.

Commitments

Research underpins the University’s contribution to creating a sustainable world. The University will:

- Conduct research that contributes to sustainability knowledge, action and impact, including on the University’s campuses
- Support researchers across different fields to work collectively on sustainability problems and their solutions
- Align research systems, processes and culture with sustainability principles.

The educational programs of the University inspire and support students to be leaders for a sustainable future. The University will:

- Provide sustainability learning experiences which help students build knowledge, skills and relationships to lead change for sustainable societies
- Prepare sustainability specialists through interdisciplinary education.

The University community actively partners with all sectors to drive progress towards sustainability. The University will:

- Be an influential voice in raising public awareness and advancing and influencing policy discussion and debate
- Work strategically with partners to create innovative solutions to sustainability challenges
- Engage in ongoing dialogue and collaboration with the community on the University’s environmental impact and performance.

Sustainable practices are embedded in all of the University’s operations, modelling innovative ways to maximise social and environmental value. The University will:

- Develop and maintain living laboratories that integrate teaching, research and operations to test and apply sustainability solutions in real-world settings across our campuses and communities
- Lead technological, financial and social innovation through applied sustainability projects
- Embed sustainability principles in how procurement decisions are made and how relationships with suppliers are managed
- Implement investment strategies consistent with the University’s commitment to sustainability and its financial and legal responsibilities.

The University integrates sustainability principles into its decision-making and management of the organisation.

The University will:

- Build and maintain the planning, decision-making and governance framework required to enact the commitments of this Charter
- Involve the University community in decision-making and ensure transparent reporting on progress towards delivering these commitments.

In achieving the commitments of this Charter, we will fulfill the aspiration of the University’s motto: *postera crescam laude* – “We shall grow in the esteem of future generations”.

¹ Brundtland, G. (1987) *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, United Nations General Assembly document A/42/427