

Case Study

Sustainability Staff and Student Survey

The biennial [Student and Staff Sustainability Survey \(SSSS\)](#) is voluntarily completed by current staff and students at the University. Its purpose is to gauge student and staff views, awareness and behaviours towards sustainability relative to the University's sustainability targets and objectives. The results are used to evaluate the University's existing sustainability initiatives and the development of future initiatives, ultimately informing the priorities and targets of the University's new Sustainability Plan.

In 2020 the fifth SSSS was promoted and completed online while most students and staff worked and studied remotely due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The full report can be found [here](#).

Key findings include:

1. Awareness of sustainability-related issues has increased both in general and within the University context. Staff are significantly more likely than students to be aware of the University's sustainability initiatives/events, and staff participate in initiatives/events in significantly higher numbers than students.
2. Just over half of respondents believe that sustainability is a 'top priority' for the University. Fewer students than staff believe that the University sees sustainability as a top priority.
3. Reducing the University's carbon footprint and reducing waste outputs remain top priorities for improving sustainability at the University.
4. Although staff and students are motivated to improve campus sustainability, they experience similar key barriers to personal participation:

convenience, expense and a need for more information and/or technical support.

5. 1,078 suggestions were made about how the University can improve engagement and environmental practices across all campuses. Suggestions for improvement centred around improving reach of sustainability-based communications, embedding sustainability across all University activity and providing resources and infrastructure to encourage participation in sustainability activities.

Suggestions

"Embedding the strategy more deeply in division-specific activities, develop local strategies and find innovative ways to engage different disciplines in sustainability issues/initiatives." – Staff member

"The University should keep sustainability at the forefront of their curriculum, research, values, culture, community." – Student

"Improve student understanding through application of cross disciplinary sustainability information integration for all students, and provide incentives and resources for students to partake." – Student

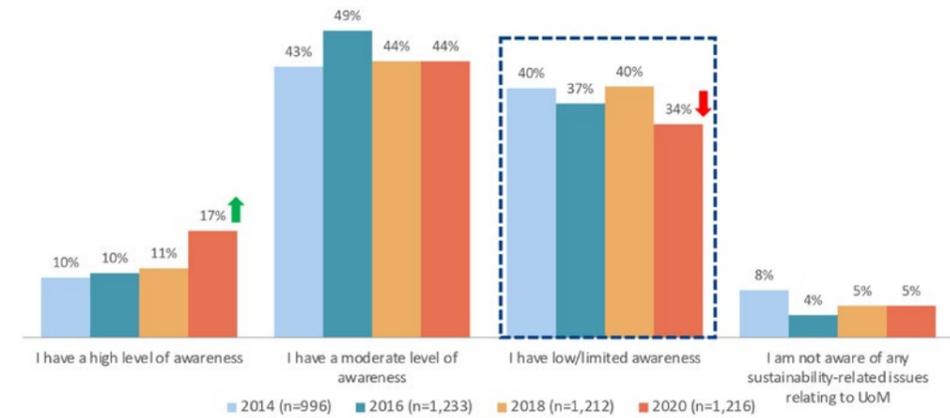
"Clear and consistent messages about what staff and students should be doing. Most communications are to raise general awareness but we receive little and poor communication about what to do." – Staff member

"Create collaborative project between different faculties and departments, encouraging a multidisciplinary action that is visible to as many students and staff as possible." – Staff member

University of Melbourne

Awareness of University sustainability-related issues (Year on year)

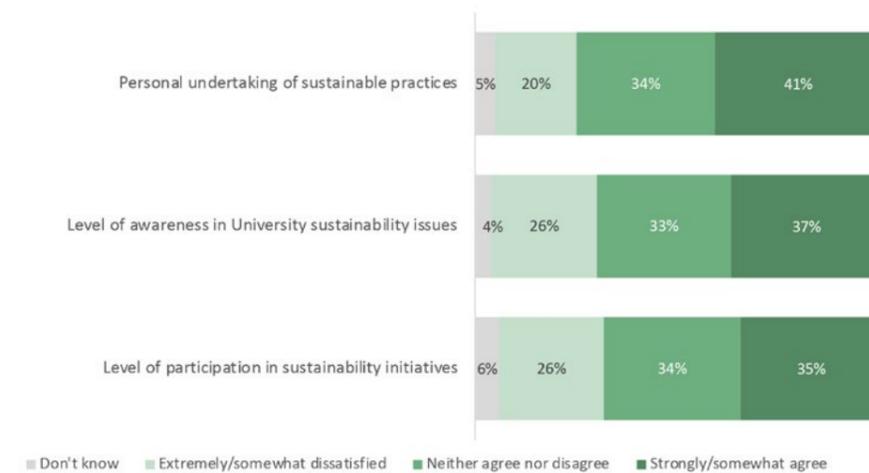
Furthermore, there has been an increase in high level of awareness and a decrease in low level of awareness on sustainability issues at the University.



Q4. How would you rate your level of awareness of sustainability-related issues relating to the University of Melbourne? [SR]
Base: All respondents n=1216

Satisfaction with the University's efforts

Over a third of staff and students are satisfied with engagement efforts by the University to increase awareness, participation and personal undertaking of sustainability issues. However, a portion of them are either unsure or dissatisfied with the University's efforts, indicating this should continue to be a key focus area for the University.



Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the University of Melbourne's efforts to increase staff and students'...
Base: All respondents n=1216