UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Sustainability@UC

Contents

Message from Leadership

Foreword from the Interim Chief Operating Officer

Sustainability is not a separate program of work at the University of Canberra (UC) — it is a way of thinking, planning, and doing that is embedded in everything we do. It reflects the values of our staff, students, and community, and is a priority that continues to shape our teaching, research, operations, and engagement.

In May 2024, Council approved UC's new **Strategic Framework for Sustainability**, a milestone that formalises our commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles. The Framework outlines clear objectives and targets across five pathways to impact, aligned with our four key domains of activity: **Education, Research, Operations, and Community Engagement**. This Framework was shaped under the leadership of Jonathan Pheasant, our previous Chief Operating Officer, whose vision and dedication laid the foundation for the progress we are now achieving.

In 2025, we've seen strong progress. Installation of over **800kW of rooftop solar** across eight buildings at our Bruce campus has been completed — a system that will generate approximately **7% of UC's total electricity consumption**. We've also advanced planning for **University Park**, a future-focused urban space designed to showcase ecological resilience and applied learning.

In March, Council approved UC's revised **Investment Policy**, ensuring our financial decisions reflect our values and are aligned with ESG best practice. This is a significant step in embedding sustainability into our governance and long-term strategy.

Across campus, we continued to deliver impactful initiatives throughout 2025:

- Electrification of heating systems and improved energy analytics to support smarter building use.

- Enhanced transport options, including salary packaging for **e-bikes and electric vehicles**.

- Community-focused programs such as the **UCX Discounted Meals Program** and **weekly Community Garden sessions**.

- Integration of Indigenous knowledge, including upcoming reviews of signage and place naming.

- Grassroots engagement through our **Nurturing Sustainability Leaders working group**, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing.

While we celebrate our progress, we also recognise that sustainability is an ongoing journey — and that the challenges facing our environment and communities demand continued and even stronger action. UC remains committed to exploring regenerative practices and deeper forms of engagement in the years ahead.

These initiatives reflect our belief that sustainability is a shared responsibility. We know there is more to do — and we are committed to doing it together.

Thank you to everyone across the UC community who continues to contribute to this important work.

Geoff Drummond
Interim Chief Operating Officer
University of Canberra

UC's Commitment to Sustainability

UC's commitment to sustainability is grounded in a desire to serve the changing needs and challenges of our regional and globally-connected communities – students, staff, Indigenous peoples and other stakeholders – and a deep connection to our place in the Canberra region, on Ngunnawal country.
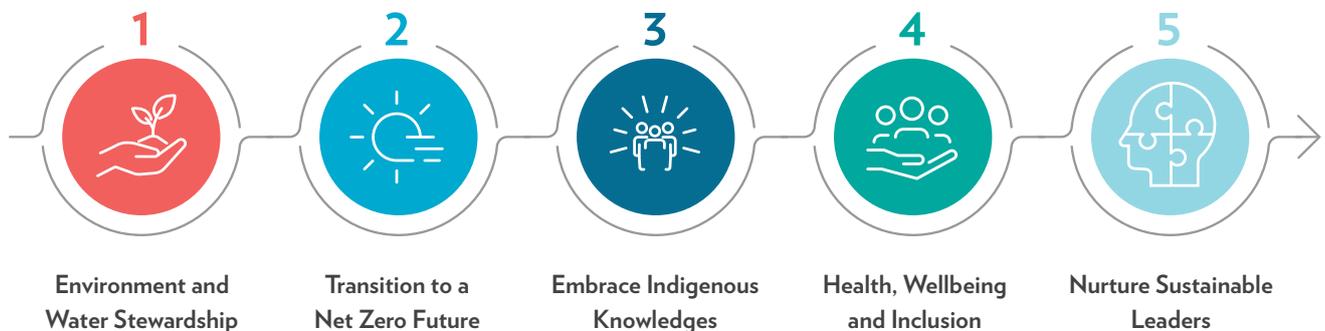
Building on UC's ambition to become a global leader in equality of opportunity, our sustainability vision is to play our part in ensuring the vitality and resilience of all people and ecosystems in the face of uncertain futures impacted by climate change, economic disruption and rising Indigenous inequality. As the university of the nation's capital, with world-class research in health, wellbeing and environmental resilience, we are uniquely positioned to play a leading role in enabling capacity in response to key sustainability challenges through enhanced climate resilience, community resilience and Indigenous empowerment.

The University's Strategic Framework for Sustainability serves as a comprehensive guide to action for the University, in line with "Connected", our broader decadal strategic plan to 2032. The Framework identifies our key pathways to sustainability impact, as well as the critical objectives and targets that provide a platform for action.

The Framework lays out five key Pathways to Impact that unite our efforts across the University, as shown in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: PATHWAYS TO IMPACT – UC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1	2	3	4	5
Environment and Water Stewardship	Transition to a Net Zero Future	Embrace Indigenous Knowledges	Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion	Nurture Sustainable Leaders

Connection to Place

Grounded in connection to the history and unique biodiversity of our campus on Ngunnawal country, and to the local communities and indigenous peoples of the Canberra region.

Our commitment to these pathways is underscored by a set of ambitious yet realistic targets that guide our path to impact, aligned with leading global and local frameworks and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our aspirations, relevant to global efforts, embrace a broad definition of sustainability that considers environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of sustainability, as recognised by the United Nations in the SDGs.

These SDGs, as described in Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

UC is well positioned to respond to the United Nations call to greater leadership through contribution to global dialogue, and to mobilisation of local action, through embedding in academia and civic partnerships.

About Us

Organisational Overview

UC is a dynamic, profession-focused institution located in the heart of Australia's capital. Deeply connected to Canberra's vibrant, multicultural community, UC reflects the city's spirit of innovation, creativity, and opportunity.

With over 18,000 students from more than 100 countries, UC offers immersive learning experiences that prioritise employability and real-world impact. The University is recognised globally for its commitment to reducing inequalities, ranking in the top 7 worldwide in the 2024 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings.

UC's strong industry partnerships and practical teaching approach ensure students gain valuable experience through internships, clinical placements, and applied research. The University is home to leading research institutes such as the Institute for Applied Ecology and offers a wide range of programs across five faculties: Arts and Design; Business, Government and Law; Education; Health; and Science and Technology.

Ranked first in Canberra for full-time employment outcomes, skills development, and student support (Good Universities Guide 2025), UC continues to grow while maintaining its distinctive character. As a progressive institution rooted in public service, UC is committed to building a sustainable and prosperous future — a university in, of, and for Canberra.

Vision, mission, and values

OUR MISSION

As a university anchored in Australia's capital, we work with government, business and industry to serve our communities and nation, and to be the Capital's educational window to the world. From this vantage point, we challenge the status quo in a relentless pursuit of original and better ways to teach, learn, research and add value – locally and internationally.

OUR VISION

Our long-standing excellence in mission-oriented research will be fostered and, together with a renewed emphasis on entrepreneurship, will be woven inextricably into the University's educational experience.

Through a transformative campus development plan, the University will evolve into a distinctive community for lifelong learning, and serve as a beacon of sustainable, smart and connected living.

We will lead the sector nationally in equity, diversity, inclusion and access.

Our commitment to sustainability is deeply rooted in our connection to our place on Ngunnawal country and the local communities and the Indigenous peoples of the Canberra region. Embracing the principle of "Galambany," which translates to 'Together we work to empower, connect, and share knowledge with our people, cultures, and places,' we recognise the significance of our presence on Ngunnawal country, within the heart of the Nation's Capital.

Our sustainability vision is not merely a set of goals but a reflection of our ethos, shaped by the wisdom passed down through generations of Indigenous peoples.

We understand that true sustainability encompasses more than just the physical; it encompasses the head and the heart—the emotional and the spiritual—fostering holistic health and wellbeing within our community.

Guided by UC's purpose and values, we are committed to strengthening our connection to place through tangible actions:

- **On campus:** We embrace place-making experiences that celebrate the unique biodiversity of our campus while promoting health and wellbeing. By honouring the cultural values of our landscapes, waterways, flora, and fauna, we create spaces that showcase our commitment to sustainability, reflected in our Campus Master Plan.

- **In Canberra and its region:** We deepen our understanding of the unique needs of our ecosystems and communities. Through collaborative approaches, we strive to make a positive impact for the collective benefit of our region, recognising that sustainability is a collective endeavour.

In line with our ambition to be the most accessible university in Australia, we are committed to learning from and partnering with all of our communities, both locally and globally, and embracing multiple knowledge systems as we strive to establish a culture of sustainability accessible to all. Through individual and collective action, we aspire to be stewards of our place and of our cultures, fostering a sustainable future for generations to come.

Sustainability Governance Structure

The University of Canberra's Strategic Framework for Sustainability is supported by a robust governance structure that ensures accountability, transparency, and continuous progress. Oversight is provided through several key committees:

- **UC Sustainability Steering Committee** – a management-level committee comprising senior academic and professional staff, subject matter experts, and student representatives. This group actively contributes to the implementation of sustainability initiatives and monitors progress on a quarterly basis.

- **UC Vice-Chancellor's Group** – the University's executive leadership receives reports detailing progress against the Strategic Framework, enabling strategic oversight and alignment with institutional priorities.

- **UC Planning and Development Committee** – as a sub-committee of the University Council, this group is responsible for monitoring UC's overall sustainability performance. It also receives quarterly updates to ensure governance at the highest level.

While these committees provide strategic direction and oversight, embedding sustainability into everyday practice is a shared responsibility. All UC staff are expected to contribute to the University's sustainability goals through their roles, decisions, and actions — helping to create a culture of sustainability across the institution.

Strategic Framework for Sustainability

UC's sustainability strategy is guided by a bold vision: to foster climate resilience, community wellbeing, and Indigenous empowerment through education, research, operations, and community engagement. This strategy is embedded in UC's Strategic Framework for Sustainability, which outlines five key Pathways to Impact:

Pathway 1: Environment and Water Stewardship

UC is committed to regenerative land and water management, circular resource use, and biodiversity protection. Initiatives include habitat connectivity planning, water-sensitive urban design, and campus-wide recycling and composting programs.

Pathway 2: Transition to a Net Zero Future

UC is actively reducing emissions across its built environment and operations, with targets including 100% renewable electricity by 2026, electrification of heating systems, and fossil fuel-free new builds. The campus solar rollout and sustainable travel policy are key milestones.

Pathway 3: Embrace Indigenous Knowledges

UC integrates Indigenous knowledge systems intocampus operations, curriculum, and place-making. Initiatives include dedicated Indigenous learning spaces, cultural design elements, and the "Country as Teacher" program.

Pathway 4: Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion

UC promotes holistic wellbeing through food security programs, mental health support, accessible campus design, and nature-connected learning environments. The UCX Food Pantry and Community Gardens are central to this effort.

Pathway 5: Nurturing Sustainability Leaders

UC empowers students and staff to lead sustainability initiatives. Programs include applied sustainability Work Integrated Learning (WIL) units, seed funding for grassroots projects, and integration of sustainability into graduate attributes.

Stakeholder Engagement

UC's sustainability journey is powered by collaboration. Key stakeholders include:

- Students and staff, who lead grassroots initiatives and participate in sustainability programs

- Indigenous communities, whose knowledge and leadership shape campus design and curriculum

- Government and industry partners, who support UC's transition to net zero and circular economy practices

- Community members, engaged through programs like Connect Up 2617 and the UCX Community Gardens

UC fosters a culture of shared responsibility, where sustainability is embedded in everyday decision-making across the institution.

SDG Mapping Overview

UC's sustainability initiatives align strongly with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Below is a summary table mapping UC's key activities to relevant SDGs, along with the SDGs where UC is making the most significant impact.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG)	UC ALIGNED ACTIVITIES
ESDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	UCX Food Pantry, Discounted Meals Program, Community Gardens, Health Research Institute
SDG 4: Quality Education	Sustainability in graduate attributes, WIL units, Country as Teacher program
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Campus Water Management Plan, WSUD integration in Master Plan
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Rooftop solar rollout, electrification of heating systems, net zero building standards
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Indigenous learning spaces, inclusive campus design, Fairtrade purchasing
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Habitat connectivity, regenerative ecosystems, biophilic design
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Circular resource management, waste separation, building waste recycling policy
SDG 13: Climate Action	Net zero transition plan, electrification of fleet, promotion of low-emissions travel options
SDG 15: Life on Land	Biodiversity enhancement, Indigenous land management, ecological research
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	ACT Government collaboration, Connect Up 2617, industry-aligned sustainability research

Key SDGs with the Most Impact

Based on the breadth and depth of UC's initiatives, the following SDGs represent areas of **highest strategic impact**:

1. **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being**
2. **SDG 4: Quality Education**
3. **SDG 13: Climate Action**
4. **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**
5. **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

These reflect UC's strengths in public health research, inclusive education, climate resilience, and operational sustainability.

Domains of Sustainability Impact at UC

The University's sustainability efforts are classified into four strategic domains of activity, as outlined in the **Strategic Framework for Sustainability**. These domains — **Education, Research, Operations,** and **Community Engagement** — reflect the university's holistic approach to embedding sustainability across all aspects of its work.

Each domain represents an area of activity and outcomes, supported by measurable goals, initiatives, and partnerships. The following sections detail UC's progress, achievements, and future priorities within each domain, showcasing how sustainability is being realised across the institution.

Domain 1: Education

A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- UC has commenced a formal review of its **graduate attributes**, with the aim of embedding sustainability and aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Work Integrated Learning (WIL)** and capstone units with a sustainability focus are being developed across all faculties.

- The **Country as Teacher** program has expanded, offering students immersive learning experiences grounded in Indigenous knowledge.

- UC Life's annual **Sustainability Week** engaged students in practical sustainability activities and peer learning. In 2026, this initiative will be replaced by a concentrated Earth Day event to maximise engagement across a single day.

B. CASE STUDIES

1. Country as Teacher Program

This program, led by the University of Canberra's Faculty of Education, is a place-based initiative that integrates Indigenous knowledge systems into teaching, learning, and research. It invites educators and students to engage directly with Country—through storytelling, observation, and experiential learning—to foster deeper connections with land, culture, and community.

Delivered through professional learning and embedded in teacher education, the program supports educators to co-design curriculum with Aboriginal perspectives at its core. Participants report transformative shifts in their teaching practice, with many adopting more inclusive, relational, and ecologically aware approaches to education.

By honouring Indigenous ways of knowing and promoting sustainable human–nature relationships, Country as Teacher contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). It reflects UC's commitment to reconciliation, sustainability, and culturally responsive education.

2. Mapping Sustainability Across the Curriculum

In 2025, UC undertook an initial scoping exercise to identify how sustainability is embedded in teaching across all faculties. This review focused on unit titles, descriptions, and learning outcomes that explicitly referenced sustainability or environmentally focused content. The analysis identified 20 units across five faculties that directly engage with sustainability themes, with a strong emphasis on environmental and ecological dimensions.

Faculty Highlights

- Arts and Design: 6 units including Global Environmental Futures, Sustainable Development PG, and Urban Landscape Systems and Planning.

- Business, Government and Law: 3 units including Climate Change, Sustainability and the Future of Business and Environmental Justice.

- Education: 2 units including Educating for Sustainable Worlds PG and Education for Sustainability in the Early Years.

- Health: 3 units including Healthy and Sustainable Places and Ecological Public Health PG.

- Science and Technology: 6 units including Meeting Environmental Challenges, Environmental Tools and Technologies, and Applied Ecology.

A new microcredential course, Sustainability in the Workplace, is also being introduced in 2026.

Opportunities for Growth

The review revealed that sustainability is often approached through discipline-specific lenses. There is significant opportunity to develop transdisciplinary approaches that foster broader problem-solving capabilities and deeper understanding of sustainability challenges. Additionally, some degrees do not currently feature sustainability in required units, suggesting a need for further curriculum integration to ensure all graduates are equipped with sustainability literacy.

C. METRICS AND KPIS

- Graduate attributes refresh completed by **2026**

- Sustainability WIL/capstone units in all faculties by **2026**

- Increased participation rates in sustainability-focused student events

- Establish baseline metric for graduates in applied sustainability fields by **2026**

D. FUTURE GOALS

- Launch a **transdisciplinary postgraduate sustainability course** by 2026

- Map and promote sustainability-related units across the curriculum

- Introduce a **sustainability digital badge** to recognise student engagement

Domain 2: Research

A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- UC continues to lead high-impact sustainability research in areas such as public health, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

- Research centres like **Centre for Applied Water Science (CAWS)** and **Health Research Institute (HRI)** have influenced regional and national policy through applied research.

- Projects such as **Connect Up 2617** demonstrated UC's commitment to community-engaged research.

- Sustainability principles are increasingly embedded in interdisciplinary research across faculties.

B. CASE STUDIES

1. Living Longer in the Urban Jungle

UC researchers have demonstrated that living in leafy suburbs contributes to longer and healthier lives, especially for men. Using high-resolution satellite imagery and mortality data, the study found that a 10% increase in tree cover could result in 21 fewer deaths per 100,000 men annually, and 3 fewer deaths per 100,000 women.

The research highlights the public health value of urban greening and recommends tree planting in disadvantaged suburbs to reduce health inequities and climate vulnerability. From a cost-benefit perspective, the value of lives saved far exceeds the cost of planting and maintaining additional trees.

This work supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), and demonstrates UC's leadership in applied health and sustainability research.

2. Managing Water Flow to Protect Native Species

UC's Centre for Applied Water Science (CAWS) has been monitoring the Lachlan River catchment since 2014, demonstrating that even small volumes of environmental water can support native bird and fish populations. The research has shown that temperature control is also critical for fish reproduction, particularly for species such as Golden perch and Murray cod.

UC researchers have documented increasing diversity of native plants in the catchment, proving that flow control and monitoring are essential for protecting biodiversity. This work informs national water policy and showcases UC's contribution to ecological resilience and adaptive water management.

This initiative aligns with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

3. Decarbonising Urban Transport in Indonesia

The University of Canberra is leading a transnational initiative to accelerate Indonesia's transition to low-emission public transport through the Decarbonisation Pathways for Indonesia's Buses Infrastructure (DIBI) project. Supported by a $647,118 grant from the KONEKSI Knowledge Partnership Platform, this collaboration brings together Australian and Indonesian partners to design an electric bus system that is efficient, inclusive, and climate resilient.

The project integrates advanced modelling tools to estimate energy use across bus terminals and routes, enabling renewable energy adoption and ecosystem-friendly infrastructure. It also embeds Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) principles, ensuring that future transport systems meet the needs of diverse communities.

Led by UC's Research Cluster for Digital Inequality and Social Change (RC DISC), the initiative involves multidisciplinary expertise spanning technology, social sciences, and environmental research. Partners include Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta (UNS), the National Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence (NEVCE), and Australian government agencies such as DFAT and DISR. Testing with commuters in Surakarta City is already underway to capture real-world user experiences and inform system design.

This project exemplifies UC's commitment to global sustainability partnerships and climate action. It aligns strongly with SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), positioning UC as a leader in shaping equitable, low-emission transport solutions for the Asia-Pacific region.

C. METRICS AND KPIS

- **70%**+ of HRI publications in **top 10% globally**
- **$20M+** in sustainability-related research funding
- **100+** communities engaged through UC-led research
- **50+** countries involved in global collaborations

D. FUTURE GOALS

- Expand **interdisciplinary sustainability research**
- Develop a **tracking system for SDG-aligned research impact**
- Strengthen **Indigenous partnerships** in research design
- Increase **visibility in global rankings and reporting**

Domain 3: Operations

A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- UC has completed the rollout of **800kW of rooftop** solar across eight buildings, contributing to its renewable energy targets.

- The revised **Investment Policy** aligns UC's financial decisions with ESG principles.

- Electrification of heating systems and improved energy analytics are underway to support smarter building use.

- Inclusive design standards have been implemented in refurbishments, including Indigenous design elements and accessibility upgrades.

B. CASE STUDIES

1. Rooftop Solar Program

UC has installed solar arrays across multiple buildings, including student lodges and teaching facilities. The 792kW system will supply 7% of campus electricity and support UC's transition to net zero. This initiative supports SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

2. University Park Revitalisation

The University Park Revitalisation project is a flagship initiative that integrates sustainability, Indigenous knowledge, and ecological resilience into campus design. The project aims to enhance biodiversity, water flow management, and community amenity while strengthening connections between UC and the broader Belconnen region. It also plays an important role in providing amenity to students and future residents of the adjacent PEET development, improving campus connectivity to Belconnen, increasing safety, and managing overland water flows.

The project received an Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO) from the ACT Conservator in August 2025, approving the initiative from a flora, fauna, ecological, and biodiversity perspective. Following this, Development Application (DA) documentation is progressing well.

UC will now progress toward developing a Business Case for the project. The revitalisation of University Park demonstrates UC's commitment to regenerative design and place-based sustainability and aligns strongly with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

C. METRICS AND KPIS

- 100% renewable electricity on UC-owned sites by **2026**

- 20% reduction in energy intensity by **2032** (baseline: 2024)

- Zero fossil fuels in new buildings and vehicles from **2025**

- Campus-wide recycling and composting programs by **2026**

- Accessibility prioritisation plan funded and underway

D. FUTURE GOALS

- Finalise and implement a **Campus Water Management Plan**, including ecological water flow and reuse systems

- Expand **electric vehicle charging infrastructure** and end-of-trip facilities to support active transport

- Introduce **building waste recycling standards** in all construction contracts by 2026

- Continue to improve **data systems** for energy, water, and waste monitoring to support decision-making and reporting

Domain 4: Community Engagement

A. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- UC has deepened its engagement with Indigenous communities through initiatives like **Country as Teacher** and Indigenous place-naming.

- The **Connect Up 2617** project strengthened social connection and wellbeing among young adults in Belconnen and Bruce.

- The UCX **Community Gardens** have become a hub for food growing, applied learning, and community participation.

- UC Life's **Sustainability Week** has previously fostered sustainability literacy and civic engagement across the campus community. In 2026, this initiative will be replaced by a focused Earth Day event to maximise participation and impact.

B. CASE STUDIES

1. UC Sustainability Week

Organised by UC Life, this annual event has included workshops, markets, and outreach activities that promote sustainability literacy and community participation. While Sustainability Week will not run in 2026, UC Life will deliver a focused Earth Day event to maintain momentum and impact. Future iterations may be reconsidered pending funding and strategic priorities.

2. Connect Up 2617

Connect Up 2617 was a community-led initiative by the University of Canberra's Health Research Institute (HRI), designed to strengthen social connection and wellbeing among young adults aged 18–30 in the Belconnen and Bruce suburbs. Developed through local consultation and co-design, the program responded to data showing this age group experiences the highest rates of loneliness and lowest levels of social cohesion in the ACT.

A cornerstone of Connect Up 2617's approach was its weekly community activities, facilitated by local "Community Connectors." One standout example was the Dig It Summer Sessions held at the UCX Community Gardens, which invited young adults to get outdoors, grow seasonal produce, and connect over music and a free BBQ — all while learning sustainable gardening practices.

The initiative concluded at the end of 2025, having exemplified meaningful community engagement by empowering residents to shape and lead activities that reflected their interests and needs. It was supported by the Medical Research Future Fund and aligned with SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

3. Indigenous Place-Making

Projects include yarning circles, Indigenous design elements in refurbishments, and a review of signage and naming to reflect Ngunnawal country.

C. METRICS AND KPIS

- **Number of community partnerships** supporting sustainability initiatives (local and global)

- **Participation rates** in volunteering and sustainability events

- **Indigenous engagement metrics**, including co-designed programs and representation in decision-making

- **Community garden sessions** and food security program reach

- **Sustainability communications and outreach campaigns** delivered annually

D. FUTURE GOALS

- Strengthen **Indigenous engagement** across all sustainability pathways, including land management, curriculum, and governance

- Expand **community-based research and outreach programs**, particularly in areas of health, climate resilience, and biodiversity

- Develop a **formal volunteering and civic engagement** framework to support student and staff participation in sustainability initiatives

- Enhance **global partnerships** to share knowledge and co-create solutions aligned with the SDGs

- Continue to embed **reconciliation principles** into campus operations, education, and community engagement

Progress Against Sustainability Targets

1. ENVIRONMENT AND WATER STEWARDSHIP

IN PROGRESS Habitat Connectivity & Regeneration: Incorporated into the Campus Master Plan; University Park project progressing through EIS.

IN PROGRESS Water Management & WSUD: Flood modelling completed; WSUD principles embedded in design guides; Water Management Plan not yet finalised.

IN PROGRESS Building Waste Recycling Policy: Planning underway; funding applied for.

IN PROGRESS Material Recovery & Waste Reduction: Strong recycling practices in place across campus; further expansion planned.

IN PROGRESS Plastic Reduction: Retailers using compostable packaging; further contractual alignment opportunities identified.

2. TRANSITION TO A NET ZERO FUTURE

IN PROGRESS 100% Renewable Electricity by 2026: Rooftop solar installations underway, completion expected mid-2025.

IN PROGRESS Reduce Energy Intensity by 20% by 2032: Electrification feasibility studies underway; data capture improving.

IN PROGRESS No Fossil Fuels in New Assets: Electric fleet transition progressing; mailroom van now electric.

ON TRACK Sustainable Travel Policy: Policy published in Jan 2025; encourages the use of environmentally responsible travel options and virtual collaboration tools where practical.

IN PROGRESS Low-Emissions Transport: E-bike and EV salary packaging launched; active transport planning ongoing.

IN PROGRESS Net Zero-Aligned Providers: Revised investment policy approved by Council; pending ACT Treasury approval.

3. EMBRACE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

IN PROGRESS Engagement in Campus Decisions: Ongoing commitment; further formalisation needed.

IN PROGRESS Dedicated Indigenous Learning Spaces: Library refurbishments and teaching integration progressing; new ISSP-funded projects proposed.

4. HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

IN PROGRESS Connection to Nature in Master Plan: Initiatives like UCX Community Gardens and Library plant integration underway.

ON TRACK Food Welfare Programs: UCX Food Pantry and Discounted Meals Program expanded; Community Gardens linked to food support.

IN PROGRESS Accessibility Enhancements: Prioritisation plan funded; internal resourcing pending. Library meets accessibility standards.

5. NURTURING SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS

ON TRACK — Participation in Sustainability Activities: Events like Sustainability Week have encouraged student engagement.

NOT STARTED — Graduate Employment in Sustainability: Tracking system not yet developed.

IN PROGRESS — Graduate Attributes Refresh: Initial review underway; sustainability inclusion to be considered in 2025.

NOT STARTED — Mentorship Program.

IN PROGRESS — Applied Sustainability WIL/Capstone Units: Employability framework in place; dedicated sustainability units not yet developed.

Overall Summary

UC is making steady progress across numerous sustainability targets, with many initiatives in active development or implementation. Key strengths include:

- **UC Investment Policy** approved by Council, aligned with ESG principles

- **Solar array installation** completed across eight buildings (800kW capacity)

- **Sustainable Travel Policy** launched, encouraging environmentally responsible travel and virtual collaboration

- **UCX Discounted Meals Program** and expanded Food Pantry access

- **UCX Community Garden sessions** supporting student wellbeing and sustainability engagement

- **Indigenous design integration** in Library refurbishments

Areas requiring continued focus include:

- Finalising the **Water Management Plan** and ecological flow systems

- Embedding sustainability into **graduate attributes** and curriculum

- Launching the **mentorship program** for emerging sustainability leaders

- Expanding **material recovery infrastructure** and tracking waste reduction

- Strengthening **data systems** for energy and emissions monitoring

UC's Global Sustainability Rankings

UC continues to be recognised globally for its commitment to sustainability and social impact through leading university ranking systems. This page summarises UC's performance in the **2025 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, QS Sustainability Rankings**, and **QS World University Rankings.**

THE IMPACT RANKINGS 2025

- UC ranked **10th globally** out of 1,261 universities for **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**, reflecting our inclusive environment and effective policies supporting a diverse student community.

- UC participated in all **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and retained its position within the **top 11% globally** among participating universities.

- The rankings provide insights into UC's progress across key SDGs, including **Quality Education, Good Health and Wellbeing**, and **Gender Equality.**

Detailed SDG Rankings:

- SDG1: No Poverty – 401-600 out of 1,267

- SDG2: Zero Hunger – 301-400 out of 955

- SDG3: Good Health and Wellbeing – 101-200 out of 1,788

- SDG4: Quality Education – 301-400 out of 1,975

- SDG5: Gender Equality – 74 out of 1,559

- SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation – 301-400 out of 1,042

- SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy – 601-800 out of 1,181

- SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – 301-400 out of 1,350

- SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure – 401-600 out of 1,156

- SDG10: Reduced Inequalities – 10 out of 1,261

- SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – 401-600 out of 1,154

- SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production – 401-600 out of 973

- SDG13: Climate Action – 201-300 out of 1,089

- SDG14: Life below Water – 201-300 out of 711

- SDG15: Life on Land – 101-200 out of 854

- SDG16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions – 401-600 out of 1,265

- SDG17: Partnership for the Goals [mandatory] – 601-800 out of 2,389

QS SUSTAINABILITY RANKINGS 2026

- UC ranked **310th globally** out of 2,001 institutions – a decline from =274th in 2025 (out of 1,751).

- **24th out of 38** Australian universities.

- Rankings based on 2023 data: institutional metrics, alumni outcomes, and survey responses.

- Despite a higher overall score, UC's global rank declined due to the inclusion of 300+ new institutions.

- QS confirmed that most Australian universities experienced a drop in position.

Positive movement:

- Equality: rank improved from =193 to 110.

- Employability & Opportunities: score increased from 55.6 to 64.8.

Areas of decline:

- Environmental Sustainability: rank fell from =403 to 565.

- Knowledge Exchange: rank fell from =210 to 243.

- Health & Wellbeing: rank fell from =758 to 784.

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Biodiversity	The variety of living species, including plants, animals, and microorganisms, in a particular habitat or ecosystem. Biodiversity supports ecosystem resilience and is a key focus of UC's sustainability strategy.
Circular Economy	An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources through reuse, recycling, and regeneration. UC applies circular economy principles in campus operations and procurement.
Community Engagement	The process of working collaboratively with local, regional, and global communities to address issues affecting their wellbeing. UC's engagement includes partnerships, outreach programs, and co-designed initiatives.
Country as Teacher	An Indigenous-led educational approach that positions Country (land, water, ecosystems) as a source of knowledge and learning. This program is central to UC's integration of Indigenous knowledges.
Electrification	The process of replacing fossil fuel-based systems with electric alternatives, often powered by renewable energy sources.
ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)	A framework used to assess an organisation's sustainability and ethical impact. UC's Strategic Framework for Sustainability is aligned with ESG principles.
Environmental Significance Opinion (ESO)	A formal assessment by an environmental authority determining whether a project is likely to have significant ecological impacts.
Indigenous Knowledges	Knowledge systems developed by Indigenous peoples through long-standing relationships with Country. UC integrates these knowledges into curriculum, research, and campus design.
Net Zero	A state in which greenhouse gas emissions produced are balanced by emissions removed from the atmosphere. UC aims to achieve net zero emissions across its operations.

Place-Making	A collaborative process of designing public spaces that reflect cultural, ecological, and community values. UC's campus development incorporates place-making principles, especially in Indigenous-led projects.
Regenerative Design	A design approach that restores and revitalises ecosystems and communities, going beyond sustainability to create net positive impacts.
SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)	A set of 17 global goals established by the United Nations to address social, environmental, and economic challenges. UC's sustainability initiatives are mapped against relevant SDGs.
Sustainability Literacy	The knowledge, skills, and mindset required to understand and address sustainability challenges. UC promotes sustainability literacy through curriculum, events, and student engagement.
Water-Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)	An approach to urban planning that integrates water cycle management into the built environment. UC applies WSUD principles in its Campus Master Plan and infrastructure projects.
Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	Educational experiences that integrate academic learning with practical workplace application. UC embeds sustainability into WIL units across faculties.

Contact and Feedback Channels

For all sustainability-related queries, contributions, and sharing of news and events at the University of Canberra, please contact the Chair of the Sustainability Steering Committee via the email address below. This channel is open to staff, students, and external partners who wish to engage with UC's sustainability initiatives.

Email: sustainability@canberra.edu.au

For more information about UC's sustainability initiatives, updates, and opportunities to engage, please visit our website: https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/sustainability