



Communication on Engagement with the UN Global Compact

August 2024 to June 2026



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Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW campuses are located on the lands of the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Paddington Campuses) and Ngunnawal peoples (UNSW Canberra). This Communication on Engagement was written on the land of the Bedegal People. We also acknowledge that our students and staff live and work on the unceded lands of First Nations peoples throughout NSW and Australia. We pay our respects and thank all traditional custodians for your ongoing care and custodianship of the lands and the sea. We are grateful for the wisdom and guidance of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, as we work together to ensure UNSW is a physically and culturally safe and welcoming place for all.



Statement of Continued Support by the Vice-Chancellor and President

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to confirm that the University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) reaffirms our support for the United Nations (UN) Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

UNSW Sydney was established in 1949 in response to the societal need for specialised, high-quality education in engineering and science in New South Wales. Since that time, the University has been guided by a distinctive purpose: to advance the public good through education, research and engagement.

In our 75th year, 2024, UNSW launched our Progress for All Strategy, underpinned by the UNSW Societal Impact Framework. They articulate our ambition to create positive, enduring impact through the areas where UNSW is best placed to contribute to society, culture, the economy and the environment. The Societal Impact Framework's four Impact Focus Areas are to:

- accelerate the transition to a sustainable society and planet
- advance economic and social prosperity
- enable healthy lives
- strengthen societal resilience, security and cohesion.

At the centre of the Societal Impact Framework and UNSW's strategic activities are Indigenous knowledges, with our work underpinned by the cross-cutting themes of inclusion, social justice and integrity. The Framework is operationalised through five Impact Pathways across our core activities of education, research, engagement, operations and governance, and is informed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which allows us to contextualise and communicate our impact in line with international priorities and frameworks.

In line with these commitments, UNSW is proud to be a reporting 'Civil Society Organisations & Other' member of the UN Global Compact and the UN Global Compact Network Australia.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the UN Global Compact, covering the period 1 August 2024 to 30 June 2026. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our University has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for academic organisations.

We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely,

Professor Attila Brungs

Professor Attila Brungs, Vice-Chancellor and President

10 July 2026



About UNSW

2025
at a glance

86,235

total students

32,883

students commencing 2025

44,938

local students

41,297

international students

4,504

higher degree
research candidates

426,136

UNSW Alumni

Staff

			Total
2025	Academic staff	3676	8850
	Professional staff	5174	
2024	Academic staff	3610	8318
	Professional staff	4708	

Total staff
8850
(8147.88 full-time
equivalent)



Locations

UNSW operates across a network of locations that connect education, research and industry at scale. From our main campuses in Kensington, Paddington and Canberra, to regional campuses across New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Bengaluru, India, our locations place us at the centre of creative, commercial and national leadership precincts. Together, they enable a connected university with deep local roots to shape impact across Sydney, Canberra and beyond.

Our structure and operations

We are a body corporate established by the University of New South Wales Act 1989 (NSW), and an accredited higher education provider under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cth).

The University Council is the principal governing body, working to advance our objectives and interests. Its members bring diverse perspectives across different areas including finance, commercial activities, higher education, law, governance, management and strategic planning.

The UNSW Leadership Team guides the University towards ambitious goals, building on distinction and innovative education in service to the community, nation and world.

Our faculties and divisions are united by multidisciplinary thinking to bring together academic excellence and professional expertise to strengthen governance and deliver meaningful impact:

Faculties

[Arts, Design & Architecture](#)

[Business](#)

[Engineering](#)

[Law & Justice](#)

[Medicine & Health](#)

[Science](#)

[UNSW Canberra](#)

Divisions

Vice-Chancellor & President

Academic Quality

Education & Student Experience

Operations

Research & Enterprise

Societal Impact, Equity & Engagement

Reporting period overview



11th
ranked equal 11th
globally in 2025

THE Impact Rankings



1st
globally for Social
Impact in 2026

QS World Rankings: Sustainability



7th
ranked 7th
globally in 2026

QS World Rankings: Sustainability



1st
in Australia and
19th globally in 2027

QS World Rankings



Strategic commitment and global leadership

The UNSW Strategy affirms the University's responsibility to apply our talents, resources and global standing for the greatest societal benefit. During the reporting period (August 2024 to June 2026), UNSW launched our Progress for All Strategy and demonstrated sustained global leadership in environmental and social sustainability.

UNSW Sydney is ranked among the world's top 20 universities and first in Australia (QS World University Rankings 2027), reflecting more than 75 years of global impact arising from our research, the strength of our teaching and the ambition of our community. We are recognised for excellence and turning knowledge into real progress.

We have a long-held tradition of sustained innovation and focusing on areas critical to our future – from tackling the effects of climate change to developing lifesaving medical treatments.

UNSW ranked equal 11th globally in 2024, 12th in 2025 and equal 7th in 2026 in the QS World Rankings: Sustainability, becoming the top-ranked university in Australia and Oceania. Notably, UNSW was ranked 1st globally for Social Impact in 2026, reflecting exceptional performance in employability, knowledge exchange and the impact of education.

In the 2024 THE Impact Rankings, UNSW ranked 7th globally out of 2152 institutions, achieving its strongest result to date with top performance in SDG 13 Climate Action (2nd globally) and SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation (3rd). In 2025, UNSW ranked 11th globally out of 2318 institutions, maintaining our global leadership with leading results in SDG 13 Climate Action (equal 3rd), SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production (7th) and SDG 15 Life on Land (11th). In 2026 UNSW again showed commitment to sustainability leadership, with highlights in SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production (8th), SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation (5th) and SDG 13 Climate Action (2nd).

The University actively participates in leading global and national networks, including Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), University Social Responsibility Network (USRN), Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability (ACTS), Engagement Australia and the UN Global Compact Network Australia. These partnerships support knowledge sharing, adoption of good practice and collective progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UN Global Compact principles.

Governance, policy and accountability

During the reporting period, UNSW strengthened governance for equity, sustainability and societal impact by establishing and developing key structures, including the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability Governance (EDISG) Board, the Environmental, Social, and Governance Technical Statutory Advisory Group, the Societal Impact Framework and the UNSW Strategy: Progress for All. These mechanisms embed accountability for environmental, social and governance outcomes across decision-making, planning and performance.

UNSW also progressed a university-wide Policy Transformation Program led by the Office of Assurance and Integrity, consolidating more than 260 policy documents into a single code and 23 policies. The program emphasises plain language, accessibility, trust-based decision-making, clarified accountabilities and the removal of unnecessary administrative burden. Key policies updated during the reporting period include the Finance Policy, Delegations Policy and Information Governance Policy.

The EDISG Board oversaw significant progress on inclusion and equity, including development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026–2029. The plan moves towards a systemic, embedded approach to disability inclusion, aligned with Progress for All and the Societal Impact Framework. It also emphasises co-design, intersectionality and measurable impact.

UNSW also strengthened public engagement through the UNSW Centre for Ideas, delivering programs on human rights, gender equity, inclusion and climate change, reinforcing UNSW's role in informed public dialogue and societal leadership.

The University continued to increase institutional capability through responsible global growth and workforce development. The Bengaluru campus, officially opening in August 2026, reflects UNSW's commitment to equity, sustainability and ethical engagement across diverse cultural and regulatory contexts.

UNSW prioritises physical, psychosocial and cultural safety. All staff are accountable to the [UNSW Code of Conduct and Values](#), supported by mandatory training and annual attestation.

The University manages a complex global supply chain of more than 6000 suppliers. Recognising associated environmental and human rights risks, UNSW applies a risk-based approach to sustainable procurement, with a focus on Scope 3 emissions, modern slavery and circularity. [The Sustainable Procurement Framework \(2023–2026\)](#) and [2024 Supplier Charter](#) set clear expectations for ethical conduct, labour standards and environmental responsibility, strengthening supplier accountability and transparency. They are guided by internationally recognised principles, ISO 20400, ISO 14001, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Parts II & III Description of actions and measurement of outcomes

Below are examples of activities and policies at UNSW applicable to the reporting period and which are key components of the University's work to address the 10 principles:

Human Rights

UNSW recognises the importance of human rights and we do due diligence to uphold the sanctity of human rights. The University operates in a diverse environment and we recognise our role in supporting and taking action to make a positive contribution towards the protection and fulfilment of human rights for all, throughout our core activities.



Principle 1:

Support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

Operations and governance

The EDISG Board provides central oversight of UNSW's commitment to human rights, ensuring that equity, inclusion and sustainability are embedded across institutional policy, governance and operations. During the reporting period, the EDISG Board has played a key role in guiding and monitoring the development and endorsement of key policy frameworks, as outlined below.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

The [Disability Inclusion Action Plan \(DIAP\) 2026–2029](#) is the key mechanism through which the University puts into practice its commitment to human rights. This includes our obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as Australian disability legislation.

The plan builds on the previous DIAP (2022–2025), which delivered measurable improvements in accessibility and inclusion outcomes. The updated plan makes core institutional policies, systems and processes even more inclusive. It also establishes clear governance and accountability mechanisms, including a dedicated Implementation Group that reports regularly to the EDISG Board, ensuring ongoing oversight, monitoring and alignment with University-wide policy frameworks. More detail is covered in Principle 6 of this report.

Cultural Inclusion

UNSW has embedded an institution-wide commitment to eliminating racial discrimination through our [Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy](#) and supporting initiatives. The policy establishes that racism, racial discrimination and religious vilification are not tolerated in any form, and affirms UNSW's responsibility to provide a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for students, staff and affiliates. It adopts an action-oriented approach, requiring the University community to recognise, challenge and respond to racism, supported by reporting mechanisms including the UNSW Complaints Portal and options for anonymous reporting. The policy also emphasises shared responsibility and the role of active bystanders in addressing both overt and subtle forms of racism.

UNSW is progressing the implementation of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Religious Vilification Policy through the development of an Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan in 2026, alongside a broader program of work responding to the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Uni report.

In 2025, UNSW participated in the Racism@Uni Survey conducted by POLIS: The Centre for Social Research at the Australian National University. UNSW issued 77,770 survey invitations and received 2415 responses (3.1% response rate, compared to a 4.6% sector average). Most respondents reported positive experiences of belonging, safety and respect. However, findings also identified areas for improvement, including variation in perceived safety across cohorts, with particularly low levels reported by Jewish-identifying students, and comparatively higher reported rates of direct racism for some groups relative to other Group of Eight (Go8) universities.

These findings are being used to inform the University's Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan and targeted response initiatives. Through the Inclusive Communities team in the Division of Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, UNSW is implementing a coordinated program of immediate and medium-term actions focused on listening, engagement and response to the experiences of affected students and staff.

This commitment is further supported through targeted initiatives such as the Anti-Racism Grants program, which provides up to \$2500 for student and staff-led projects that challenge discrimination and promote inclusion, contributing to increased awareness and community capability to address racism across the University.

Centring Indigenous knowledges and communities

UNSW is deeply committed to building a university where Indigenous representation, knowledges and leadership are embedded at the heart of our purpose, our decision-making and our contribution to society. Our Indigenous Strategy reflects our collective responsibility to honour those who came before us, empower those working with us today and create lasting legacies for the generations to come. It affirms that Indigenous outcomes are a whole-of-university responsibility and fundamental to UNSW's integrity, excellence and impact.

The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous is leading UNSW's development of a [micro-treaty](#) with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-connected communities. Led by the Indigenous Representative Council, the treaty will establish a formal agreement between the University and these communities. It aims to empower Indigenous voices in decision-making at UNSW and foster self-determination. The initiative began in May 2024 and is a key action of our [Indigenous Workforce Plan 2025–2028](#), further discussed in Principle 6 of this report.

The University hosted a three-day Global Indigenous Knowledge Exchange event, held in February 2025 to support the exchange of knowledges, research and cultural practices across global Indigenous communities. By building a formalised global Community of Practice, the event aimed to enhance student, staff and community knowledge, translating education, research and community relationships into meaningful and reciprocal impacts for Indigenous communities worldwide.

There were 772 UNSW staff responses from across all faculties and divisions to a University wide consultation to help shape a new Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Protocol in July 2025. The ICIP Protocol will guide the respectful and authentic incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into teaching, research, events and activities. It will include guidance on ongoing consent, interpretation and presentation of ICIP, fair and proper remuneration of community members and Traditional Knowledge Holders, and the protection of ICIP more broadly.

Gendered violence prevention and response

UNSW has adopted a comprehensive, whole-of-institution approach to preventing and responding to gendered violence, recognising it as a critical human rights issue linked to gender inequality and harmful social norms. Through our [Stop. Empower. Support. UNSW Gendered Violence Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025](#), UNSW carried out a coordinated framework focused on prevention, education, cultural change and survivor support. This included establishing governance structures such as a dedicated steering committee, expanding reporting mechanisms through a central [Gendered Violence Portal](#), and embedding education and awareness initiatives across the University community.

Building on this foundation, UNSW strengthened our institutional response through the introduction of a new [Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence Policy](#) effective January 2026, which affirms that gender-based violence is unacceptable in all University environments and sets out trauma-informed, survivor-centred processes for reporting, support and response. The policy is complemented by training programs that equip students and staff to recognise and respond to disclosures, as well as active bystander approaches that encourage safe intervention.

In parallel, in early 2026, UNSW developed and published a Whole-of-Organisation Prevention and Response Plan aligned with the Australian Government's National Higher Education Code, reflecting strengthened legal and regulatory obligations to prevent and respond to gender-based violence across all aspects of University operations.

Disability Royal Commission Translation Framework

The Disability Royal Commission Translational Framework outlines UNSW's coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to implementing the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission's Final Report into meaningful internal reforms and external societal impact. Led by Professor Alastair McEwin, in the Division of Societal Transformation & Equity, the framework drives change across three focus areas: students, staff and community, by embedding disability rights and inclusion into education, research translation, employment, governance and public engagement.

Through cross-faculty collaboration; strengthened pathways for students and staff with disability; mechanisms to translate UNSW's disability research into policy influence; and partnerships with government and the disability community; the framework seeks to address the systemic drivers of exclusion and contribute to a more inclusive Australian society.



Social procurement

In 2024, UNSW became a member of [Social Traders](#) with the aim of increasing our annual spend and engagement with social enterprises to harness the University's buying power. This will allow the University to contribute to a more equitable economy, spending more than \$1 million with social enterprises who contribute to reducing inequality, alleviating poverty and cultural diversity and inclusion.

Throughout 2025, we continued to seek opportunities to maximise our social impact by actively engaging with Indigenous suppliers and social enterprises and saw a significant increase (155%) in our social procurement spend between 2024 and 2025. Manager, Sustainable Procurement, Jasmin Lewis, showcased this work at a [USRN forum in February 2026](#), reflecting the University's commitment to internationally recognised human rights standards. UNSW continues to support local, Indigenous businesses through its membership with [Supply Nation](#), spending over \$3.5M with Indigenous businesses in 2025. UNSW was recognised as a Procurement Leader in [Social Trader's FY25 Impact Report](#) published in April 2026.

Research

UNSW contributes to the protection and advancement of human rights through targeted research that informs policy, practice and public debate.

The [Australian Human Rights Institute \(AHRI\)](#) leads interdisciplinary research that directly influences national and international policy on issues such as modern slavery, climate change and human rights. In 2025, AHRI research examining the human rights impacts of Australia's fossil fuel exports contributed to public and policy debate on climate accountability and risk. Also, the AHRI's leadership in this space was recently highlighted through Director Professor Justine Nolan's presentation at the 2026 UN Global Compact Network Australia conference. Professor Nolan, shared findings from three years of fieldwork on how businesses can align profit and purpose to strengthen human rights outcomes, commercial resilience and sustainability across global supply chains.

UNSW's [Disability Innovation Institute](#) advances disability inclusion through co-produced research with people with lived experience. It develops practical tools such as [guidance for ethical inclusive research](#) and supporting interdisciplinary projects across six faculties. These initiatives strengthen institutional capacity and inform policy and practice in disability inclusion.

The [Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law](#) is shaping legal frameworks and policy responses to forced migration through research, global advocacy and multi-year programs examining evacuation, displacement and protection.

UNSW recognises our responsibility to support and protect individuals whose academic freedom and fundamental human rights are at risk and is a member of Scholars at Risk, an international network that supports academics fleeing persecution, conflict or repression.





Education and student experience

UNSW provides a range of support services addressing financial stability, accommodation, wellbeing and social inclusion for students from diverse backgrounds.

The University supports and advances human rights through our education and student experience by embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across teaching, co-curricular activities and student engagement. This includes an SDG Toolkit and YouTube playlists to make it easier for academic staff to integrate sustainability in their courses. A wide range of courses integrate SDG-related content, enabling students to engage with global challenges such as health, inequality and environmental sustainability. Initiatives like the SDG Showcase highlight student-led projects addressing real-world social and environmental issues.

These efforts are supported by structures such as the SDG Steering Committee and Education for Sustainable Development Community of Practice, which promote collaboration and integration of sustainability across the curriculum. Beyond the classroom, Arc @ UNSW and its network of more than 300 student clubs and societies play a critical role in fostering inclusion, belonging and community, alongside representative bodies such as the Student Representative Council that advocate for student voices. Together, these academic and co-curricular initiatives create an environment where students are empowered to engage with human rights issues, contribute to societal impact, and participate fully in university life.

UNSW offers significant support for refugee students through [dedicated scholarships](#) like the [Sanctuary Scholarship](#), which covers full tuition, a stipend and accommodation support for temporary visa holders. There is also the [Welcome Scholarship](#), a stipend for permanent visa holders. The University also provides equity pathways including the [Gateway Program](#), connecting students from diverse backgrounds to financial awards, equitable admissions and support services. The [Kaldor Centre offers a Displaced Scholars Mentoring Program](#) for academic support, with broader University networks also available for mental health and community engagement.

The [Cecilia Brungs Refugee & Asylum Seeker Scholarship](#) was established to support talented students who are asylum seekers or refugees on temporary and permanent humanitarian visas.

In 2025, there were 23 total refugee and asylum seeker scholarship holders, up from 16 in 2024.

[Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Access \(JEINA\)](#) focuses on expanding access to higher education and professional development for women from forced migration backgrounds. The initiative supports pathways to learning, leadership and employment, contributing to longer-term equity, inclusion and participation in Australian society.

UNSW recognises that international students may face additional challenges related to financial security, housing and access to essential services, and provides targeted support to promote their wellbeing and inclusion. A key initiative is the [Arc @ UNSW Food Hub](#), which addresses student food insecurity by providing free groceries and support services. Since its establishment in 2020 the Food Hub has evolved into a permanent free food pantry, delivering over 550,000 meals with more than 65,000 visits in 2024, with over 90% of services accessed by international students. The program typically supports 250–350 students per session, reflecting the scale of need within the student community. In March 2025, the initiative expanded, with a new location at the UNSW Paddington campus.

Housing support includes access to emergency accommodation, rental advocacy through Arc Legal & Advocacy, and temporary homestay options. Students are further assisted through dedicated University services, including [International Student Advisors](#), [Cultural Mentors](#), [The Nucleus](#) and [Academic Skills support](#), which assist with transition, wellbeing and academic success. Legal support is provided through [Arc Legal & Advocacy](#), while [health and wellbeing](#) services include on-campus medical care, counselling and 24/7 mental health support.

In 2025, a record 24 UNSW students undertook AHRI Global Student Fellowships at leading human rights or international development organisations in Australia and overseas, such as Human Rights Watch, Engineers Without Borders and the UN International Organization for Migration. There were more than 200 applicants for the program in 2025.

Principle 2:

Ensure not complicit in human rights abuses

Modern slavery risk management

The University undertakes mandatory annual reporting on our approach to managing risks associated with modern slavery. Our Modern Slavery Strategy is backed by an Action Plan and brings together teams across the University including Strategic Procurement, Facilities Management, Research Services, Conduct & Integrity and Legal & Compliance.

In 2024 UNSW used the strategy to focus our actions across three pillars – strong governance, risk management, and remediation and reporting. The aim was to align with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and strengthen anti-slavery commitments through updates to the Code of Conduct, Values and the Working@UNSW mandatory training module. Targeted modern slavery risk training was delivered to colleagues in IT and Conduct & Integrity, and Faculty Executive Directors. See [2024 Modern Slavery Statement](#).

In 2025 UNSW transitioned oversight of the Modern Slavery Strategy to the EDISG Board. This expanded the EDISG Board's remit to include broader ESG responsibilities and act as the central sustainability oversight body. The University commenced a review of the [2023–2025 Modern Slavery Strategy and Action Plan](#) to ensure alignment with best practice, the University's evolving risk profile and regulatory requirements.

In 2025 there was a shift from compliance to embedded risk management through governance reform and procurement system change. UNSW increased the minimum sustainability weighting in major tenders from 5% to 15% and introduced standardised ESG contract clauses to strengthen the influence of human rights considerations and due diligence in supplier selection.

The University also piloted and embedded the Cleaning Accountability Framework (CAF) and partnered with UNSW College to establish a structured modern slavery risk framework for controlled entities. The Modern Slavery team also engaged in workshops with key laboratory consumables suppliers to better understand their global supply chains and anti-slavery measures.

UNSW commenced development of a University-wide due diligence framework integrating modern slavery with other institutional risk pillars, including research, risk and national security. Selection of preferred platforms for 2026 was informed by market analysis of third-party risk management platforms to expand supply chain transparency across sustainability and modern slavery.

International student risk mitigation

In response to an October 2023 recommendation by the Office of the NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner (OASC) noting the vulnerability of international students under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW), universities were urged to work to protect them from modern slavery conditions while in Australia. UNSW prioritised this risk within our Action Plan and:

- reviewed our study abroad agreements and drafted stronger clauses for high-risk countries where modern slavery is most prevalent in line with the Global Slavery Index
- collaborated with the Australian Red Cross to rollout the Work Right Hub for international students in Australia. We also commenced work to create factsheets with legal and mental health support programs for students who raise reports about modern slavery
- in 2025, hosted a Term 3 Orientation Week stall for the SpeakUp campaign to engage 45,000 students directly about the strategy and raise awareness of how to report concerns.

Based on the overall risks and opportunities identified in the agents' responses, UNSW developed ESG-related contract KPIs covering operational risk identification and mitigation, and reporting. These were embedded in 2025 across all of UNSW's international student agent agreements. Progress towards the KPIs will be reviewed on an annual basis.



Labour

UNSW is committed to upholding fair and inclusive labour practices across our workforce and broader operations. This includes promoting safe and equitable working conditions, embedding responsible procurement and modern slavery prevention, and advancing equity, diversity and inclusion for both staff and students. Community events such as Diversity Festival further support an inclusive and respectful University culture.

Principle 3:

Uphold freedom of association and collective bargaining

Staff voice

UNSW's Insight Survey is the University's annual, institution-wide staff engagement survey designed to give staff a meaningful voice in shaping their workplace experience. It is an important mechanism for supporting open communication, representation and constructive dialogue between staff and leadership. Each year, the survey gathers detailed feedback on culture, leadership, daily work practices and organisational systems, enabling UNSW to identify strengths and address areas where staff experience barriers or dissatisfaction.

In 2025, more than 4600 staff participated, contributing more than 11,000 comments, with results showing a 73% engagement score. There were also improvements in leadership (+5 percentage points) and innovation (+8) compared with the previous year. Staff reported strong relationships with their managers through the new My Manager Index, while highlighting ongoing challenges in day-to-day systems and processes.

Based on this feedback, UNSW set two University-wide priorities for 2026. First, improving the day-to-day experience of work for all staff, and second, lifting the quality and consistency of coaching, performance, development and recognition, ensuring continuous progress is informed directly by the staff voice.

Enterprise bargaining agreements and process

The UNSW Employee Relations team provide high-quality support in managing the relationship between the University and key stakeholders, particularly on matters under the [University's Enterprise Agreements](#). The UNSW Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise agreements (2023), both have a nominal expiry date of 31 July 2026. These agreements include a 4% pay increase scheduled for July 1, 2026, marking the final scheduled raise in an 18% total increase deal secured across the life of the agreement.

As the agreements approach their nominal expiry, UNSW will re-enter the enterprise bargaining process with staff unions, including the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), through their authorised representatives in mid-2026. In doing so, UNSW continues its commitment to constructive workplace relations and fair, collaborative negotiation. Consistent with legislation, the Enterprise Agreements will continue to apply until they are replaced by new agreements.

The [Staff Complaint Procedure](#) outlines how UNSW staff should address grievances related to their work or work environment. Complaints must concern University matters, including work-related activities and functions, and may involve issues such as the conduct of another staff member, discrimination, harassment, bullying, workplace safety, or the application of University policies and procedures. This also covers concerns about job classification, pay, workload and other employment conditions set out in the Academic and Professional Staff Enterprise Agreements.



Wage remediation program

UNSW's pay remediation work, supported in part through [Project Phoenix](#), forms a major component of the University's broader wage remediation program addressing historical underpayments. Project Phoenix has contributed to auditing payroll processes, identifying errors, and shaping system and policy solutions to prevent recurrence, including improvements to long service leave calculations and broader compliance frameworks. As part of the University's comprehensive review of payments made to staff between 2014 and 2023, UNSW has strengthened payroll governance, enhanced time and attendance systems, and established confidential channels such as the Employee Advocate for staff to raise pay-related concerns. These actions sit alongside regular engagement with the Fair Work Ombudsman, and other key stakeholders, such as the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), to ensure ongoing compliance and transparency.

Student voice

UNSW monitors the student voice through formal surveys and representative structures, with results showing continued improvement in student experience. In the 2024 Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey, scores for freedom of expression reached 86% for undergraduate students and 88% for postgraduate students, indicating strong perceptions of being able to express views without discrimination. These insights are supported by Arc-led surveys, including safety and wellbeing checks, and the work of student representative bodies such as the Student Representative Council and Postgraduate Council.

Student voice and services are further supported through the [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\)](#), which funds student-led initiatives, advocacy, wellbeing programs and campus services delivered by Arc. This support ensures students have both a platform to be heard and access to support. Student feedback indicated that they wanted the fee to be used to support them in various initiatives like financial counselling, borrowing centre which includes items like household appliances, stationery and electronic items, practical skills-building classes, and more financial support through increased society and club grants.

Principle 4:
Elimination of forced and compulsory labour, and

Principle 5:
Effective abolition of child labour

UNSW acknowledges that First Nations Peoples in Australia have survived practices that today we call ‘modern slavery’, including forced labour, segregation, sexual exploitation and child labour.

UNSW applies a risk-based approach to labour standards across procurement and operations, with a focus on preventing labour exploitation, strengthening supplier labour practices, and reducing exposure to modern slavery risks within our large and complex global supply chain. The University engages more than 6000 suppliers and uses due diligence processes to assess higher-risk categories, strengthen supplier expectations, and embed modern slavery considerations into procurement practices. As outlined in the Principle 2 section of this report, UNSW undertakes reporting annually under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) to mitigate labour-related risks and be accountable for preventing forced labour and child labour within the supply chain.

UNSW’s procurement activities are guided by the Sustainable Procurement Framework and Supplier Charter, which set clear expectations for fair and lawful labour practices, including freedom from forced and compulsory labour and the prohibition of child labour. Our strategic priorities focus on environmental sustainability, preventing modern slavery, ensuring human and labour rights, and increasing social procurement. The University is committed to these priorities while maintaining service excellence and reducing overall consumption across the lifecycle of goods and services.

To support effective labour risk management, UNSW undertook an ESG materiality and risk assessment of strategic spend categories. This assessment identified procurement areas with elevated labour risks and informs enhanced due diligence and supplier engagement for medium and high-risk suppliers. Targeted action has been carried out in higher-risk categories, with contractual anti-slavery KPIs embedded in contracts for services such as cleaning, security and international student recruitment.

In recognition of heightened labour risks in cleaning services, UNSW achieved a Bronze Cleaning Accountability Framework (CAF) rating for our lower Kensington campus, becoming the first university in Australia to receive a CAF rating. This independent assessment provides transparency on labour conditions in a high-risk sector and supports continuous improvement through external benchmarking.



Category spotlight: head contractor – construction project

As part of the Campus Development Plan, UNSW embarked on a procurement project for a head contractor to lead the development of a large-scale mixed-use building on UNSW Sydney’s Kensington campus in 2025. Given the size and scale of the project, and the known modern slavery risks associated with the construction industry, the Strategic Procurement team worked closely with stakeholders in the University’s Estate Management team to ensure that compliance with anti-slavery requirements was a core component of the evaluation criteria in the project strategy.

Modern slavery was also given a heightened evaluation weighting to ensure that tenderers’ awareness of sector-specific modern slavery risks were reflected in the overall scoring and subsequent selection of an appropriate contractor. Also included in this evaluation weighting were risk identification and mitigation measures and labour and subcontracting arrangements. As with all strategic contracts, the project agreement includes clauses pertaining to the contractor’s obligations to mitigate or reduce modern slavery risks in its operations and supply chains.

Research

UNSW also contributes to broader efforts to address labour exploitation through research and policy engagement. For example, Professor Michael Salter leads research through the Childlight East Asia & Pacific Hub that generates evidence on online child sexual exploitation and abuse, including financial patterns used to detect exploitation. This work informs policy, legislation and child protection systems across Australia and the Asia-Pacific. It is supported by global partnerships and public engagement, including national polling in 2025 showing strong community demand for stronger protections for children online.

Principle 6:

Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Operations and governance

UNSW's Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Strategy 2026–2028 operationalises our commitment to eliminating discrimination in employment by embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across workforce practices, culture and systems. It builds on earlier strategies that established foundational governance and inclusion initiatives and represents a shift towards a more integrated, outcomes-focused approach aligned with the UNSW Strategy: Progress for All and the University's Societal Impact Framework.

The Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Strategy is structured around four key pillars – Inclusive Culture and Community, Excellence through Diversity, Inclusion by Design and Being Known for Inclusion – each supported by clear impact goals and measurable progress indicators. It places strong emphasis on improving workforce representation, particularly at leadership levels, embedding inclusive recruitment, retention and promotion practices, and using enhanced diversity data to identify and address systemic barriers. It also focuses on building inclusive leadership capability, strengthening psychological safety, and redesigning policies and processes through an intersectional lens to reduce discrimination and improve employee experience. Governance is embedded through a whole-of-university approach, with annual Diversity & Inclusion Impact Reports ensuring accountability and transparency in tracking progress and outcomes.

UNSW is developing an Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan for implementation from 2027.

Development of the Action Plan is being informed by a University-wide consultation program, including a series of listening sessions with students and staff held from June to August 2026. Further details of the University's anti-racism work are provided in the Principle 1 section of this report.

In March 2026, UNSW implemented a major upgrade to our people systems to better recognise and support the gender diversity of our community. The University moved from a limited three-category gender field to the Australian Bureau of Statistics-aligned five category standard, enabling more accurate, respectful and inclusive representation of students and staff. This improvement, developed with input from UNSW researchers and long advocated for by members of the community, enhances UNSW's capacity to collect high-quality, intersectional demographic data to inform gender equity policies and initiatives. Staff can now update their gender information at any time via the My Gender self service portal, with voluntary disclosure and privacy protections reinforced.

In 2024, UNSW launched our first [Gender Equity Strategy \(2024-2028\)](#), and increased support for non-binary and trans staff.

UNSW's [Indigenous Workforce Plan 2025–2028](#) sets out a strategic, University-wide commitment to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation, leadership and cultural safety across UNSW. The plan is anchored in principles of Indigenous self-determination and is aligned with the UNSW Strategy and Societal Impact Framework, with a strong focus on embedding Indigenous voices in decision-making and governance.

Key priorities include targeted recruitment and career development pathways, culturally responsive workplace practices, and the development of a [Micro-Treaty](#) to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous communities. UNSW has set targets, including increasing Indigenous staff representation and expanding leadership opportunities, supported by structured governance and accountability mechanisms to ensure sustained progress.

The UNSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022–2025 delivered substantial progress for staff and students with disabilities at UNSW, with 95% of actions completed or in progress at the end of 2025. This result reflects a strong institutional commitment to removing barriers to participation across education and employment. Key achievements included the introduction of a Workplace Adjustments Procedure and Toolkit, embedding accessibility across recruitment and onboarding processes, expansion of inclusive teaching practices through Universal Design for Learning, improvements to digital accessibility standards, and the integration of accessibility requirements into procurement and supplier frameworks.

Building on this foundation, the DIAP 2026–2029 has been developed through a user-centred and consultative approach. The guiding principle was "nothing about us, without us," and was informed by extensive engagement with students, staff and people with lived experience of disability. The new plan reflects a strategic shift from foundational initiatives towards embedding inclusion across systems, environments and culture. This change was supported by strengthened governance through the DIAP Implementation Group and oversight by the EDISG Board. The plan sets out four key priority areas – Our Community, Environments, Embedding Inclusion, and Societal Impact and Research. These areas focus on reducing participation gaps, improving accessibility across physical and digital environments, embedding inclusive practices into policies and processes, and leveraging research to drive broader societal impact.

UNSW also participated in [Australian Disability Network's Access & Inclusion Index](#) in 2024 to review our accessibility maturity across key business areas:

- UNSW achieved a 23% increase on our score from 2021
- UNSW ranked 4th overall from 44 participating organisations
- UNSW ranked 2nd overall in the education industry
- commitment was UNSW's highest performing key area with a score of 76%.

The UNSW Inclusive Communities team contributed to the [Universitas 21 \(U21\) Disability Inclusion Policy Mapping Report \(2025\)](#), based on analysis of 30 global universities. Key sector-wide gaps were highlighted, including inconsistent implementation of Universal Design for Learning, limited accessibility of work-integrated learning, and the need for stronger governance and co-design with people with disability.

Staff and student training to eliminate discrimination

UNSW continues to strengthen our approach to eliminating discrimination through targeted training and increased staff engagement. In 2024–2025, the University transitioned from externally sourced inclusion modules to [internally developed training](#), enabling more tailored and practical learning aligned with UNSW's context. Participation data shows sustained and growing engagement:

- LGBTQIA+ Allyship training recorded 273 completions in 2024 and 190 in 2025
- cultural Inclusion training increased from 57 completions in 2024 to 91 in 2025
- participation in Accessibility@UNSW workshops increased from 43 completions in 2024 to 56 in 2025, alongside 107 completions of the online module since its launch in late 2025.

This is complemented by the Accessibility Toolkit for Managers, [launched in 2025](#), which provides practical guidance on workplace adjustments, inclusive recruitment and building accessible team environments. Additional initiatives such as Neurodiversity in the Workplace training (44 attendees) and [NeuroKindred](#) community events further supported inclusion.

This growing awareness is reflected in workplace practices, with adjustment-related enquiries with the Inclusive Communities team rising from 7 in 2023 to 16 in 2024 and over 20 in 2025. The number of staff self-identifying adjustment needs at recruitment increased significantly from 643 in 2023 to 2885 in 2024. These trends indicate a shift towards greater confidence, awareness and uptake of inclusive practices across the University workforce.

Staff and student demographic reporting

UNSW supports Principle 6 through the development and execution of evidence-informed strategies, policies and frameworks that promote equity, diversity and inclusion across employment and workforce practices. In recognition of these efforts, UNSW was awarded Platinum status at the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) awards in May 2024, cementing our position as an industry leader in inclusion. UNSW's continued commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion was realised in the next two year project cycle through the [LGBTQIA+ Digital Resource Hub](#), a publicly open platform aiming to serve as a one-stop shop for staff, students and the UNSW community, offering a range of resources on LGBTQIA+ inclusion, for which we were again awarded Platinum status in May 2026. UNSW is one of only three Australian universities to hold Platinum status

The University undertakes annual reporting on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) target groups through the UNSW Annual Report. This is supported by internal dashboards and ongoing refinements to data methodology to strengthen accountability and inform targeted actions across recruitment, promotion, remuneration and workplace inclusion initiatives.

As reported in the 2024 UNSW Annual Report, women represented 65.27% of professional staff and 42.35% of academic staff, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff increased to 1.88% (professional) and 1.28% (academic). Staff identifying as having a disability accounted for 2.96% of professional staff and 2.30% of academic staff, with around 1% requiring workplace adjustments.

The Annual Report notes that improvements in data collection and alignment with NSW Public Service Commission standards have enhanced accuracy, meaning year-on-year comparisons should be interpreted with these methodological updates in mind.

UNSW reports annually to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and uses this data to drive targeted action on gender equity. This approach has delivered measurable outcomes, with UNSW recording the lowest gender pay gap among the Go8 universities in 2024–2025. UNSW's Average Total Remuneration gender pay gap decreased from 7.5% in 2023–2024 to 6.9% in 2024–2025, below the higher education industry midpoint of 9.4%. At the same time, the University's Median Total Remuneration gender pay gap was 2.4%, compared to the industry midpoint of 5.7%. These results reflect deliberate interventions informed by WGEA data across hiring, promotion and remuneration practices.

Engagement

Celebrating diversity

Diversity Festival brings the UNSW community together to celebrate inclusion, amplify underrepresented voices and strengthen belonging across the University. The Festival engaged more than 25,000 participants across 2024 and 2025 and generated over 1.4 million campaign impressions across traditional and social media channels, reflecting strong reach and engagement.

The program featured a diverse program of events addressing themes such as intersectionality, forced migration, disability rights and gender-based violence. Community-led initiatives were supported through targeted grants and partnerships across the University. These activities supported increased awareness, dialogue and capability within the UNSW community to engage with diversity and inclusion, contributing to a more inclusive, informed and connected University environment.

Mardi Gras 2026

Continuing a long tradition of involvement with the iconic celebration, UNSW participated in the 2026 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (13 February – 3 March), including marching in the Mardi Gras Parade alongside the Kirby Institute. The UNSW student and staff parade entry featured the Queer Community Quilt, which was created by more than 100 UNSW students, staff and alumni. These activities were delivered in collaboration with Arc and student collectives to support LGBTQIA+ visibility and inclusion across campus.

Research

UNSW research contributes to improving labour rights and workplace conditions by generating evidence that informs policy and practice. For example:

Research led by Dr Yuvisthi Naidoo on gender equality in the workplace identified persistent structural barriers, including gendered violence, insecure work and technological disruption, contributing to national discussions on workplace reform and equity.

A large-scale study of teacher wellbeing, led by researchers from the UNSW School of Education that surveyed nearly 5000 educators, identified high levels of stress, anxiety and workload pressure, with implications for workforce retention and education system resilience.





Environment

UNSW recognises the important role we have to play as responsible, respectful custodians of our campuses and broader environment. In 2013, UNSW was the first university in Australia to publish a [Sustainability Annual Report](#), and has continued to report on progress against our [Environmental Sustainability Plan](#) priorities annually, having taken action to mitigate our operational climate impact for over a decade. This reporting is complemented by the [UNSW SDG Annual Report](#).

The University contributes to the global response to environmental and climate crises through our core research and global partnerships. Environmental considerations are embedded across academic programs, helping to ensure graduates are equipped to solve global challenges and lead the transition to a sustainable society.

UNSW's leadership in climate action, responsible resource use and ecosystem protection was recognised in the 2024, 2025 and 2026 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings where we respectively ranked 7th, 11th and equal 41st globally. This is the world's only ranking that measures universities' contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and assesses their commitment to sustainability across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach and teaching. Across the three annual rankings cycles, UNSW achieved global top 10 ranks in SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 14 Life Below Water and SDG 15 Life on Land.

Our progress was further demonstrated in the 2026 QS World University Rankings: Sustainability, where UNSW ranked equal 18th globally for Environmental Impact.

Principle 7:

Support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Designing for a changing climate: Campus-wide climate risk assessments

UNSW is strengthening our resilience to a changing climate by embedding climate-risk considerations at the earliest stages of campus planning and project delivery. In 2024 more than 80 stakeholders engaged in a series of workshops examining climate risks, opportunities for UNSW and resiliency measures. In 2024–25, the University advanced this work through comprehensive climate physical risk assessments for both the Kensington and Canberra campuses, striving for future developments to be informed by evidence-based climate insights and local stakeholder perspectives.

These assessments explored how key climate-related hazards may affect campus infrastructure, operations and community wellbeing in the decades ahead. The process included extensive stakeholder consultation, bringing together input from Estate Management, design teams, protective services, academic and industry experts. This collaboration ensured that assessments captured not only technical climate projections but also the lived realities of site-specific risks and community needs. The findings are now shaping the briefings for new capital projects. Every major development must address site-specific climate risks through both design and operational solutions. This means each one of these projects must now have a clear pathway for mitigating climate impacts while enhancing safety, continuity and adaptive capacity across the campus.

Advancing sustainable investment practices

UNSW convened the Financial Investment Strategy Consultation (FISC) Working Group to consult with the University community on the University's financial investment strategy, notably the investment of the endowment and University reserves. The Working Group also provided recommendations to UNSW Council to align financial investments policies and frameworks consistent with the UNSW Strategy: Progress for All and Societal Impact Framework. Members of the Working Group were selected by expressions of interest and consisted of eight professional staff, six academic staff and one external UNSW governance committee member. The Working Group was co-chaired by Scientia Professor of Economics Professor Richard Holden and Director of Treasury Investment and Insurance Andrew Fellowes. It met seven times between December 2024 and June 2025.

The group's work informed a broader FISC process, which drew on insights from student & staff focus groups, as well as written feedback and submissions, which were sought from 82,000 UNSW students and 10,000+ staff.

In September 2025, the UNSW Council adopted all recommendations, which was the culmination of the consultation process and the independent expert review conducted by the FISC Working Group. The recommendations included commitments to increased transparency in investment practices, the introduction of a 'controversial weapons' exclusion, an enhanced fossil fuel exclusion to accelerate the energy transition, and a commitment to explore if excluding companies deriving significant revenue from gambling is implementable.

Living Campuses

UNSW has taken the Nature Positive Pledge to set specific, measurable targets for biodiversity on campus and in supply chains. The Living Campuses theme of the [UNSW Environmental Sustainability Plan 2022-24](#). While developed for the 2022–24 period, the plan continues to guide our operational sustainability work in 2025 and 2026 as we transition to our next phase of work. focuses on creating healthy, resilient places for learning and research where people and nature thrive. To support this goal, development of a nature value metric for the Kensington campus began in 2022. In 2024, Estate Management piloted the metric to test its application, refine implementation processes and identify opportunities to enhance nature value across UNSW campuses. By the end of 2024, nature value at the Kensington campus was remeasured against the 2022 baseline, showing an overall increase.

Building on this work, a draft UNSW Nature Positive Roadmap is under development. The roadmap extends beyond campus boundaries to include supply chains and offsite nature restoration, with the aim of strengthening nature value measurement and guiding long-term strategies to increase nature value across UNSW. The Nature Positive Roadmap is also a flagship project under Pillar 6 of UNSW Strategy: Progress for all.

The UNSW Kensington campus community is contributing to increasing biodiversity through the Muru Mirrung Trail (formerly the Bushtucker Trail). This initiative revitalises the campus landscape while creating habitat for native flora and fauna. Phase 1, completed in October 2024, involved more than 25 students and staff planting 265 native bush food plants across 26 species, selected with expert guidance from IndigiGrow. In 2026, the Trail is progressing to Phase 2, focusing on enhancing key landscape areas across the Kensington campus through additional native plantings and the installation of insect hotels to support habitat creation.

Campus electrification

UNSW's [Electrification Program](#) is a major initiative driving the University's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 by phasing out gas-powered systems across campuses and replacing them with clean, all-electric alternatives powered by renewable electricity.

A major milestone was reached in early 2025 with the completion of Stage 1 of the upgrade program, which saw electrification of the Kensington Colleges, Paddington campus, Scientia Building and David Phillips Field amenities. The program received [national recognition](#) at the 2025 Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA) Awards and the Australian Renewable Heat Awards, reflecting UNSW's leadership in clean energy transition.

Delivery of Stage 2 of the Electrification Program commenced in 2025 and includes more buildings that are major natural gas users at Kensington campus, as well as requiring all new building designs to achieve operational net zero since practical completion. Once completed, this stage will bring the reduction in natural gas use on campus to 40%. These strategies have enabled UNSW to achieve net zero Scope 2 emissions (market-based method) and contribute to the target of reducing our emissions to net zero by 2050.

UNSW's Ambient Loop: A Blueprint for Campus Scale Decarbonisation

UNSW's Upper Campus is progressing toward net zero with a hybrid ambient loop—a precinct-scale energy network that connects buildings to share heating and cooling efficiently. Designed for a diverse mix of laboratories, teaching spaces, and offices, the system accommodates each building's unique infrastructure and operational needs through tailored interfaces. This ensures reliable performance while future-proofing the network for expansion.

A key strength is its staged delivery. Buildings can connect progressively, enabling early energy sharing and minimising disruption to campus operations. This flexible approach allows upgrades to align with maintenance cycles, reducing cost and risk while accelerating electrification. Central to the system is integration with the campus Building Management System. A central platform optimises energy flows across the precinct, while individual buildings retain control of their internal systems—balancing efficiency, resilience, and operational autonomy.

These features position the ambient loop as a leading model for sustainable campus infrastructure, demonstrating how integrated energy systems can enable large-scale decarbonisation.



Principle 8:

Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Embedding climate action in every build

Through the [Capital Projects Sustainability Framework](#), Estate Management is ensuring that every new development and major refurbishment actively supports a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. The framework sets clear internal certification requirements, ambitious sustainability aspirations, and practical guidance to help project teams consistently achieve them.

The updated framework, released in 2025 and aligned with the Campus Development Plan, introduced a requirement for all eligible projects to pursue third-party certifications such as Green Star and WELL, strengthening accountability and benchmarking environmental performance.

To support delivery, monthly portfolio tracking sessions enable project and development managers to monitor sustainability commitments and embed climate-positive decisions across the project lifecycle. Work is also underway to integrate minimum sustainability requirements, including climate resilience, energy performance and certification pathways, into the [UNSW Design and Construction Standards](#). This will ensure sustainability is embedded as a baseline expectation in all campus development.



Sustainable procurement

UNSW continues to embed environmental responsibility into procurement through our Sustainable Procurement Framework, integrating sustainability across policy, process, stakeholder engagement and supplier management.

Under the 2022–24 Environmental Sustainability Plan, UNSW committed to reducing Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to net zero, with a 2030 target of a 50% reduction. Analysis of the University's value chain identified that most emissions are indirect (Scope 3), with a significant proportion linked to suppliers, reinforcing the role of procurement in addressing environmental impact.

In 2024, as part of framework implementation, an assessment of nature-related impacts and dependencies informed a supply chain nature roadmap to guide actions to reduce impacts, manage risks and improve data and capability. Building on this, UNSW implemented a carbon accounting platform to improve measurement of supplier emissions and finalised our Sustainable Procurement Strategy 2026–2028, embedding sustainability into business-as-usual processes.

To support consistent implementation, UNSW developed standard contract clauses and a KPI framework to monitor supplier performance. Practical tools such as a Sustainable Buying Guide and curated purchasing options were also introduced to support staff decision-making, with early indications of uptake reflected in purchasing behaviour following implementation.

UNSW Environmental Sustainability and Finance are working to develop a carbon inset strategy for the sequestration of carbon dioxide through large-scale tree planting. Pilot project feasibility stages were completed in January 2026. Implementation of inseting projects, including reforestation, is planned but remains subject to delivery timeframes required to achieve measurable and verifiable abatement.

Climate governance, disclosure and transition planning

Having embedded climate risk considerations into campus planning and capital project development, UNSW is now translating this work into action through enhanced climate disclosure, governance and transition planning. From 2026, UNSW makes a climate disclosure in the Annual Report in line with the New South Wales TPG24-33 Reporting framework for climate-related financial disclosures.

UNSW intends to develop a Climate Transition Plan between 2026 and 2027 to accelerate efforts to decarbonise, respond to climate risks and contribute to entity-wide transition. This will include the review and potential update of climate-related metrics and targets and will supersede the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2022-2024.

Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) is an internationally recognised standard for sustainable laboratory operations, requiring laboratory teams to complete actions, followed by an audit process to improve sustainability and research quality. Teams can achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold LEAF accreditation.



In 2025, the number of registered LEAF laboratories at UNSW increased from 75 to 116 across five faculties, representing more than 1600 laboratory users. Of these, 84 laboratories held current accreditation, up from 60 in 2024, with one school in the faculty of Science achieving 100% laboratory enrolment, a first in Australasia. More than \$14,000 in grants were awarded in support of sustainable laboratory practices, including reusable consumables, renewable energy solutions for fieldwork, waste reduction initiatives and outreach activities. A key initiative was the laboratory swap event, which redistributed an estimated \$90,000 worth of unused consumables and equipment to laboratories across campus in December 2025.

Entering its fifth year in 2026, LEAF recognised laboratories now account for about half of UNSW's total laboratory space, with UNSW on track to reach 100 accredited laboratories.

The Choose to Reuse campaign conducted in July 2025 supported UNSW's transition to a low-waste campus. It encouraged students and staff to say 'no' to single-use packaging and choose reusable alternatives when purchasing food and drinks, in response to an estimated 2.5 million single-use packaging items used at UNSW every year. The campaign was a continuation of previous Plastic Free Dining initiatives and aimed to:

- raise awareness of the environmental and health impacts of single-use packaging
- showcase the infrastructure and support available for reuse on campus (for example, dishwash stations, staff kitchen crockery, BYO accepted at retailers and discounts)
- foster a cultural shift towards reusability.

The campaign promoted everyday actions such as bringing a cup, container or cutlery from home, dining in or using staff kitchenette crockery. It empowered the UNSW community to adopt sustainable habits that contribute to the University's waste reduction targets while providing positive health benefits. Staff and students were further incentivised with a 'UNSW Reuse Champions' competition, which asked them to share photos of their reusable dining practices on campus to help inspire the campus community.



Ecosystem restoration and stewardship

The [Centre for Ecosystem Science](#) is a unique unit within UNSW, with researchers in ecosystem science and diverse scientific expertise in terrestrial ecology, wetlands, marine ecosystems, geographic information systems, remote sensing and the use of conservation tools.

Researchers publish in peer-reviewed journals, provide support to governments, including submissions on key policy and management issues relevant to the environment. They teach young scientists within undergraduate and postgraduate courses through interesting and challenging experiences, including field courses. The Centre aims to create a supportive environment for training our future environmental scientists so they can make an impact on environmental decisions.

Projects include:

- **Wild Deserts** has delivered significant environmental outcomes through the reintroduction of six locally extinct mammal species to the Strzelecki Desert, where they had been absent for over 100 years. By combining predator removal with adaptive, research-led management, the project is restoring ecosystem function at a landscape scale, including the re-establishment of ecological processes within a 40 square kilometre feral-free area, now the largest rabbit-free zone in New South Wales. Innovative landscape management practices are being adopted by other reserves around Australia. In June 2026, the NSW government extended its long-standing partnership with the Wild Deserts program for another decade.



• **Fowlers Gap Arid Zone Research Station**

was announced as a dedicated conservation site in 2024 by UNSW, with plans to restore the station in outback New South Wales, after 150 years of agricultural use. The 39,000-hectare property was established in 1966 and has been extensively used by researchers across ecosystem sciences from UNSW and other institutions. It is also an important site for teaching, with regular field excursions by students from both UNSW Science and UNSW Art & Design. Some areas of the site have been continuously monitored for more than 30 years, providing a unique, long-term ecological record.

• **The Platypus Conservation Initiative**

was established in 2016 to help reduce the risk of platypus extinction through scientific research, improved management and increased awareness. Monitoring confirmed the first successful breeding of platypuses in the Royal National Park following their reintroduction after a 50-year absence, demonstrating early progress towards a self-sustaining population. The initiative has advanced population monitoring, habitat assessment and partnerships with organisations including Taronga, WWF-Australia and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It supports population recovery and informs future reintroduction and climate adaptation strategies.



Global engagement

The International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA), founded by UNSW in 2020, unites climate research universities across 20 countries to accelerate action on climate change. It collaborates with UN agencies, networks, global partners and organisations that share its strategic objectives. UNSW hosted the secretariat from 2020 until 2026, when the University of Reading assumed the role.

In 2024, together with the IUCA, Monash University and UN-Youth Australia, UNSW co-hosted an online global thematic dialogue to consider global youth perspectives on climate education. The event convened youth leaders and youth empowerment experts across the world ahead of COP29.

Also in 2024, members of the UNSW water community [contributed to a global collaboration](#) led by the IUCA and the UN-Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change to assess the freshwater requirements of climate mitigation pathways. The study analysed the water intensity of mitigation options identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), including biofuels, hydrogen and battery technologies, and highlighted the trade-offs between water use and emissions reduction. The findings informed the [UN-Water Analytical Brief on Water for Climate Mitigation](#), launched at COP29, supporting countries to better incorporate water considerations into climate policy and planning.

In 2025, the partnership co-hosted the 'Right Here, Right Now' Global Climate Summit with UN Office of Human Rights, the University of Oxford and universities around the world for a global dialogue on climate change and human rights. The event featured a 24-hour live online academic plenary that circled the globe and enabled cross-regional conversations without the need for mass air travel.

The IUCA [Global Thematic Dialogue series](#) explored the role of universities in addressing health impacts of climate change and how higher education can shape climate policy. It convened nearly 120 universities and organisations in 2025.

Community engagement

UNSW promotes environmental responsibility across our community by building awareness, capability and public dialogue on climate and sustainability challenges.

Through initiatives led by the [Centre for Ideas](#) (CFI), UNSW engages broad audiences in critical conversations on climate change, sustainability and resource use. Through a program of live events and digital content aligned with UNSW's strategic goal of accelerating the transition to a sustainable society and planet. Some highlights from the reporting period are featured below:

The [Preppers](#) podcast examines the social and psychological impacts of climate change while encouraging collective action and public engagement. Released in 2024, it has become one of CFI's most successful podcast series, with a combined total of more than 15,000 listens across all episodes.

'[Degrowth](#)' (2024) featured UNSW's Professor Tommy Wiedmann and Professor Bronwen Morgan, alongside CSIRO researcher Sabrina Chakori and former Deputy Lord Mayor Jess Scully to discuss sustainability and the urgent challenge we face to create a world which ensures human needs are met without sacrificing a sustainable, inclusive future. This event attracted 680 registrations and generated 70 audience questions and was subsequently released as a recording to reach an even wider audience.

'[Climate Warriors](#)' (2025) brought together four transformative voices; renewable energy expert and former Biden administration advisor Saul Griffith, Solar Citizen CEO Heidi Lee Douglas, climate activist Grace Vegesana along with host and journalist Craig Reucassel to unpack the power and limitations of grassroots action, climate innovation and community-driven change. The event had 930 registrations and received 70 audience questions.

[Yael Stone: Giving to gain](#) (2026) featured actress, entrepreneur and climate advocate Yael Stone, who sat down with writer and broadcaster Benjamin

Law on International Women's Day to discuss what we have to give up in order to gain a life living in alignment with our personal values. 485 community members registered for the event, described in feedback as an "absolutely inspiring discussion."

Wider engagement included the 2024 [Living Water](#) exhibition and lecture series, which was a collaboration between the [Global Water Institute](#) and UNSW Library, celebrated UNSW's 75 years contributing to water security, ocean health and equitable access to resources. Free to all, Living Water reflected, celebrated and reaffirmed UNSW's commitment to the stewardship of the planet's marine, freshwater, and urban water ecosystems.

The exhibition team and partners were mentored by local Indigenous custodians and together developed a campus 'water walk', Yanma badhu. Participants were hosted and Welcomed to Country by Auntie Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor. Community members were invited to consider how water moves through and on Bidjigal and Kamaygal Land, walking together on the "reclaimed" dyuwumba/swampland of the UNSW Kensington campus and reflecting on the watercourse and surrounding wetlands. The walk turned attention to Country, memory, language, gravity, and timeframes longer than human life spans.

During [Climate Action Week 2026](#), UNSW joined communities across Greater Sydney to celebrate a movement, demonstrating how local action drives global climate progress. Activities reached more than 160 participants across workshops, webinars, and campus tours, including external community members. Workshops such as [Climate Fresk](#) distilled complex science into accessible formats and identified practical responses to climate change. Over 70 participants, with more than half from the wider community, attended a family-friendly screening and discussion of [Future Council](#), a documentary that explores how young voices and local action can influence systems and accelerate climate progress.



Principle 9:

Encourage development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

UNSW encourages the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies by coupling world leading research with deliberate pathways for translation, adoption and scale. Alongside technological innovation, UNSW develops and shares methods, design approaches and policy-relevant knowledge that enable others to apply environmentally sound technologies in practice.

Through interdisciplinary research focused on cleaner production, resource efficiency, waste reduction and nature-based solutions, UNSW advances environmentally sound technologies. It also supports their diffusion through industry partnerships, policy engagement, startup formation and public innovation platforms. This approach recognises that effective diffusion requires not only technical innovation, but also collaboration, market readiness, regulatory alignment and sustained engagement beyond the point of invention.

Research and innovation

UNSW's research and development ecosystem supports the translation of innovation into real-world application across key priority areas including energy, materials and climate resilience. This is supported by a diverse R&D ecosystem, reflected in the UNSW [100 Innovations Booklet](#), which includes researchers, centres, institutes, startups and industry partners co located on campus.

Examples featured in the Innovations booklet include:

- The [Australian Centre for Advanced Photovoltaics](#), a national collaboration of more than 250 researchers with over \$200 million in funding, underpins UNSW's global leadership in solar innovation. Technologies developed at UNSW now contribute to more than 90% of global solar cell manufacturing, demonstrating large-scale adoption of low-carbon energy technologies.
- [Living Seawalls](#), a nature-based solution restoring biodiversity in built marine environments, in 10 countries across four continents, demonstrates international diffusion and uptake of nature-based solutions.
- [Sustainable Infrastructure & Materials](#) (SONIA Green technology), which converts waste streams such as plastics, tyres and glass into construction materials, supports circular economy outcomes and industry application.

- [FIRECOAT](#), a fire-retardant coating developed in partnership with industry and government, has progressed from research to commercial deployment, with distribution through Bunnings and Ace Hardware. The product has protected an estimated 2500 homes to date, contributing to reduced property loss and improved resilience in bushfire-prone communities. The technology was featured in UNSW's 'Genuis' digital storytelling series, reaching more than 15,500 people across social media platforms.

UNSW's Centre for [Sustainable Materials Research and Technology \(SMaRT\)](#) is also advancing circular economy solutions through application in manufacturing and industry contexts. It works with industry partners to transform complex waste into new materials and products for manufacturing, reducing landfill and improving resource efficiency.

UNSW's [leadership in solar innovation spans 50 years](#), with technologies developed at UNSW now underpinning over 90% of global solar cell manufacturing. The innovation is being further developed through Australia's first dedicated [solar panel recycling research hub](#), supported by \$5 million in Australian Research Council (ARC) funding and 10 participating organisations to address end-of-life waste.

Research-led innovations are also supporting environmental restoration and climate adaptation. These include coastal protection solutions such as floating mangrove systems, marine ecosystem restoration initiatives and technologies such as BioShelter. A team of computational designers from UNSW developed the innovative 3D printed reef system, with pilot implementation at the Sydney Fish Market in 2025, designed to restore biodiversity and improve water quality.

At a systems level, UNSW contributes to the scaling of environmentally friendly technologies through collaborative initiatives such as the [NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub](#). This is a \$30 million program involving a 10-university consortium focused on accelerating low-carbon technologies including hydrogen, energy systems and sustainable materials.

[Project Halophyte](#) is working with local government, research partners and communities to develop floating mangrove pontoons in Fiji, supporting coastal protection and carbon sequestration in climate vulnerable environments. Researchers from the [Centre for Marine Science and Innovation](#) are advancing nature based solutions, including [seagrass restoration](#) and monitoring [marine heatwave response](#), generating evidence to inform marine ecosystem management.

Diffusion and innovation platforms

UNSW supports the diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies by connecting research with industry, government and investors.

- The UNSW Futures Expo Series 2024 showcased over 100 innovations and engaged more than 4000 multisector participants, linking research with industry and government priorities aligned to the National Reconstruction Fund.
- The [UNSW Sustainability Showcase 2025](#) at NSW Parliament brought together researchers, policymakers and industry leaders to explore solutions to key sustainability challenges. Around 30 experts from UNSW shared their expertise with short talks and first-hand demonstrations, highlighting how research and innovation can inform policy that delivers tangible community outcomes. The event complemented an annual showcase series held at national Parliament House in Canberra which demonstrate UNSW expertise in fields critical to Australia's future and respond to national priorities.
- The [UNSW SDG Showcase](#), held in 2024 and 2025, featured over 70 exhibitors annually and attracted more than 3000 attendees. The events showcased innovations in areas such as water security, circular materials and sustainable textiles, and supported collaboration and pathways for wider application.

Startup and translation pathways

UNSW also supports the translation of environmentally friendly technologies through startup formation and acceleration programs. In 2025, UNSW launched a record 25 spinouts, demonstrating strong commercialisation of research across sectors including climate and sustainability.

Through [UNSW Founders](#), the University provides mentoring, funding and industry connections to support early-stage technologies, and to progress them towards commercialisation and real-world deployment.

In 2024, UNSW Founders was recognised as Australia's top incubator/accelerator, supporting startups through mentoring, funding and commercialisation pathways. The program provided \$589,000 in non-dilutive funding and invested more than \$3.5 million into 24 startups through the 10x Accelerator program.

The [Climate 10x Accelerator program](#), part of the Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy initiative, supports startups developing emissions reduction and circular economy solutions, with 16 climate-focused ventures supported to date.



Anti-corruption

UNSW recognises the importance of ethical, transparent decision-making, reporting and behaviours across the University's operations and partnerships, and the important role of universities in furthering research and public understanding of corruption and how to prevent it.

Principle 10:

Work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

The UNSW Code of Conduct and Values apply to all members of the University community. Principle 3: 'We act with integrity, honesty and trust' underpins the University's response to Principle 10 of the UN Global Compact.

Throughout the reporting period, UNSW reinforced protections for those making Public Interest Disclosures following the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosures Act in 2023, ensuring confidentiality, safeguarding against detrimental action and committing to fair investigation processes. UNSW has also promoted a broader speak-up culture through our Conduct and Integrity Office.

The SpeakUp Strategy is UNSW's shared commitment to building a culture where respect and integrity thrive. It empowers every member of our community to understand the behaviours expected under the Code of Conduct and Values, and gives them the confidence, tools and reporting pathways to speak up when something isn't right. The strategy sets out a clear action plan of initiatives, communications and training designed to build a psychologically safe environment where speaking up is encouraged and supported.

In 2023, the SpeakUp brand was developed following consultation with students and staff, with the overarching campaign message of: "Want to speak up? You've got our support."

The campaign was shared via key UNSW communications channels throughout 2024 and 2025, and reminded the community that making a public interest disclosure aligns with our Values in Action. It also made clear that UNSW is committed to providing confidential pathways to receive reports of potential wrongdoing, including anonymous reports via Your Call, the independent external service provider contracted by the University.

Staff Insight survey results indicate steady improvement in psychological safety, with 85% of respondents in the 2023 survey reporting favourable or neutral comfort in voicing ideas and opinions. In the 2024 Pulse survey, 87% of respondents reported feeling safe and supported in raising concerns. There will be ongoing monitoring through the 2025 University wide staff survey and the SpeakUp campaign will continue to build confidence in the reporting process.

In September 2025, a student awareness campaign 'Safe to Speak at UNSW' reminded students and the rest of the UNSW community of the importance of speaking up, with a video explainer and key information about the threat of foreign government harassment.



Mandatory training

- The Working@UNSW module launched in November 2024 and gives staff essential guidance on ethical conduct; responsibilities, respectful and safe workplace behaviours, reporting serious wrongdoing and accessing support for issues. At 2 June 2026, data demonstrated that 98.09 percent of continuing and fixed term staff had completed the training.
- The Security@UNSW module, which launched in March 2025, equips staff with practical guidance on protecting personal and University information, applying secure data and recordkeeping practices and recognising and reporting cyber security threats. At 2 June 2026, 95.54 percent of continuing and fixed term staff had finished the training.

Governance and policy measures

The Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy emphasises UNSW's commitment to maintaining an organisation free from fraud, corrupt conduct, maladministration, and serious and substantial waste of public money. It makes a clear statement that such conduct will not be tolerated, and outlines actions to prevent, report on and respond to fraud and corruption. Review of the policy is underway in 2026 and seeks to strengthen alignment with Principle 10, updated processes and best practice.

As part of the policy transformation project, a new Finance Policy was introduced in early 2024. It places trust on those who spend UNSW's funds and manage our finances. The new policy simplifies guidance for staff on how to manage expenses and other finance-related activities.

The Public Interest Disclosure Policy was launched in 2023 and outlines the process for making a Public Interest Disclosure such as reporting serious wrongdoing. The policy is scheduled for a full review in October 2026

The University Council is responsible for the overall strategic direction, financial stewardship and institutional accountability of the University. Council members are subject to strict integrity obligations and are subject to duties to act in the best interests of the University, to exercise care and diligence, and to not improperly use their position or information. The Council also delegates authority over all academic matters to the Academic Board, which operates independently, safeguarding academic integrity and standards.

UNSW financial reports are prepared in accordance with the University of New South Wales Act 1989 (NSW) and relevant Australian Accounting Standards and are published each year in the UNSW Annual Report. Comprehensive, audited financial statements are submitted annually to the NSW Parliament.

All controlled entities of UNSW are subject to stringent governance frameworks, annual reporting, risk oversight and consolidation within the University's audited accounts. This ensures transparency and accountability while enabling the University to operate effectively in a competitive global education environment.

External engagement

The Supplier Charter sets UNSW's expectations for our suppliers to have measures in place to prevent bribery, fraud and corruption. These include business integrity policies and practices which support strong commercial compliance and ethics.

In May 2025 UNSW's Business Behaving Badly event, part of the Sydney Writers' Festival, brought public audiences face-to-face with experts dissecting recent corporate scandals, unethical labour practices and governance failures across Australia. The event helped strengthen public understanding of how misconduct emerges and why stronger accountability and anticorruption safeguards are essential.

UNSW Business School's BusinessThink website brings evidence-based insights and expert commentary on governance, ethics and corruption to public audiences, highlighting the University's research leadership in understanding and addressing misconduct.

Reference documents

- [Progress for All Strategy](#)
- [Societal Impact Framework](#)
- [UNSW 2025 Annual Report](#)
- [UNSW 2024 Annual Report](#)
- [Environmental Sustainability Reports](#)
- [UNSW SDG Annual Reports](#)
- [2024 Modern Slavery Statement](#)
- [2025 Modern Slavery Statement](#)
- [UNSW Council](#)
- [Academic Board](#)
- [Arc – UNSW Student Life](#)

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