
Environmental Policy

Campus Services Policy Group

1 Purpose

Victoria University of Wellington ('the University') will actively apply the concepts of sustainability and environmental awareness of the local and global environment.

This policy defines the environmental obligations of the University and considers how implementation of the policy should occur. The environmental policy is consistent with the University's [Strategic Plan](#) and will enhance the University's place as a leading Australasian research and teaching institution.

Commitment to this environmental policy will be met by demonstrating leadership in applying environmentally responsible practices for the purposes of sustainability.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy, applying to all Council members, staff, students and contractors of the University.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Environment:	Ecosystems and their constituent parts, including; (a) People and communities; and (b) All natural and physical resources; and (c) Amenity values; and (d) The social, economic, aesthetic, and cultural conditions (including University policy) which affect or are affected by the matters stated in paragraphs (a) to (c) of this definition
Sustainability:	Sustainability integrates the concern for social, economic and environmental issues, and involves thinking broadly about objectives, considering long-term as well as short-term effects, assessing indirect as well as direct effects, and taking extra care when changes brought about by development might be irreversible.
Environmental Footprint:	The impact of an organisation in environmental terms such as resource use, waste generation and physical environmental changes
Kaitiakitanga:	The exercise of guardianship by the tangata whenua of an area in accordance with tikanga Māori in relation to natural and physical resources; and includes the ethic of stewardship

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

The environmental policy has been produced as part of the growing awareness of human effects on the biosphere. Early international responses came from the United Nation's ('[Our Common Future](#)', '[Rio Declaration](#)' and 'Agenda 21' programmes) as well as academic groups such as the

[University Leaders for a Sustainable Future](#) or the [European University Association](#).

In New Zealand, government responses have included legislation ([Resource Management Act 1991](#)), strategic planning (Tertiary Education Commission's [Tertiary Education Strategy](#)) and encouraging best practice ([Enterprise3](#)). Within the academic and corporate sector, individual organisations have followed this international trend by addressing their own impacts on the environment at the national or local scale.

The University also recognises the need to address the wider environmental issues facing society as well as that its diverse academic and operational activities can have impacts on the environment.

4.1 Overarching Principles/Values

The University recognises its responsibilities to manage the nature and scale of environmental impacts of its activities, products or services. These responsibilities are recognised in the following principles:

- (a) A commitment to the principles and implementation of sustainability, including environmental protection.
- (b) A commitment to implementing sustainable and environmentally sound business practices to manage and reduce the University's environmental footprint.
- (c) A commitment to take account of intergenerational impacts as part of the University's decision-making processes.
- (d) A commitment to organisational and personal ownership of this environmental policy.
- (e) A commitment to raising environmental awareness and engagement and providing community leadership
- (f) A commitment to support the research and teaching of environmental sustainability.
- (g) A commitment to engage through consultation and take account of Māori perspectives on environment and sustainability.

4.2 Objectives

4.2.1 Environmental Management

This environmental policy promotes a clean, safe and healthy environment for members of the University and wider community. The University is committed to exceeding minimum environmental standards where practicable and within the organisation's financial constraints.

The commitment to environmental responsibility involves concerns for both natural and developed environments, and for the effective and economically and environmentally efficient use of resources.

Environmental management includes consideration of amenity values and the enhancement of natural areas. When modifying the natural or developed environment the University should have particular regard to the key urban design qualities listed in the [New Zealand Urban Design Protocol](#).

4.2.2 The Natural Environment

The University will:

- (a) Aim to exceed environmental standards set by local, regional and central government; including any relevant legislation or regulation and any other requirements to which the University subscribes.
- (b) Actively seek to enhance the biodiversity of natural areas and investigate opportunities to introduce more natural areas into the built environment.
- (c) Manage the University's natural and physical resources in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.

4.2.3 The Developed Environment

The University will:

- (a) Enhance the amenity values and natural character of the University with reference to the key urban design qualities listed within the [New Zealand Urban Design Protocol](#).
- (b) Promote and support the use of environmentally responsible transportation modes such as public transport, fuel efficient vehicles, cycling, or walking.
- (c) Commit to reducing the fossil fuel use of its vehicle fleet where cost effective.

4.2.4 Use and Re-use of Natural Resources

The University will:

- (a) Actively manage the use of energy and utilities (e.g. gas, electricity, water) in order to achieve a reduced level of user demand and more efficient usage of available resources.
- (b) Reduce waste by avoidance, recycling, reduction and re-use or efficiently using finite resources where alternatives are not available.
- (c) Commit to the procurement and use of sustainable and environmentally friendly resources within University financial constraints and where opportunities are available.
- (d) Commit to applying ecologically sustainable design principles and requirements to all new construction and refurbishment projects, within University financial constraints and where opportunities are available.
- (e) Manage the disposal of consumable resources with environmental sensitivity.

4.2.5 Researching and Teaching Environmental Sustainability

The University recognises that sustainability and environmental protection are themes that arise in many areas of university teaching and are increasingly important to the future of our community. The intent is that all graduates will leave the University having had the opportunity to develop an understanding of sustainability and environmental protection issues. Accordingly, the University will:

- (a) Promote and encourage quality research which recognises the importance of sustainability and environmental protection.
- (b) Promote and encourage the teaching of sustainability and environmental protection themes within University programs.
- (c) Promote and support interdisciplinary academic collaboration within sustainability and environmental protection themes

4.2.6 Environmental Emergency Response

- (a) The University's emergency response planning will address pollution response.
- (b) The emergency response shall consider the environmental effects of proposed responses and minimise those effects, provided that such minimisation does not compromise the effectiveness of the response.

4.2.7 Community Leadership

The University will demonstrate and encourage leadership in the promotion of environmental awareness and best practice in the wider community by:

- (a) Developing partnerships for environmental sustainability within the wider community, including partnerships to raise awareness of climate change issues.
- (b) Promoting the University as an environmentally responsible organisation.
- (c) Communicating and consulting as appropriate with the wider community on environmental issues.

4.2.8 Social and Cultural

The University will recognise that social and cultural values and rights are essential to achieving a sustainable future by:

- (a) Considering the different social and ethnic perspectives on environment and sustainability.
- (b) Acknowledging the interdependence of the University's physical and cultural environment.

4.3 Implementation and Review

The University has set up an Environmental Committee, with membership drawn from representatives of each Faculty, Campus Services, Communications and Marketing, Finance and the student body. The Committee shall be supported by Campus Services and chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, with the Chair appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Committee shall make reports and recommendations through the Committee Chair and liaise with other University units as appropriate.

The Committee will act as the champions of this policy and review the University's actions against the policy objectives by:

- (a) Monitoring consistency between this environmental policy and existing policies and frameworks, reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.
- (b) Conducting annual reporting to measure the University's environmental footprint and performance.
- (c) Developing and submitting annual environmental action plans to the Vice-Chancellor; including defined goals, action points and timelines to facilitate the effective application of this policy and improvement of the University's environmental footprint and performance over time.
- (d) Reviewing and recommending priorities for the implementation of environmental initiatives within an annual budget allocation.
- (e) Facilitating the collaboration of lecturers and researchers to share information and promote initiatives to integrate sustainability into academic work where appropriate.

- (f) Reporting to the Vice-Chancellor regarding environmental achievements and issues affecting this policy,

5 References

[‘Agenda 21’](#), United Nations Environment Programme

[‘Enterprise3’](#), Ministry for the Environment

[European University Association](#), Talloires Declaration

[Investment Plan](#)

[New Zealand Urban Design Protocol](#), Ministry for the Environment

[Our Common Future](#), World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

[Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#), United Nations Environment Programme

[Strategic Plan 2005-2015](#)

[Tertiary Education Strategy](#)

[Treaty of Waitangi Statute](#)

[University Leaders for a Sustainable Future](#), Copernicus-Campus

Previous Version: http://archived_environmentalpolicy_20080813.pdf/

6 Appendices

None

7 Approval Agency

Vice-Chancellor

8 Policy Sponsor

Director, Campus Services

9 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

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