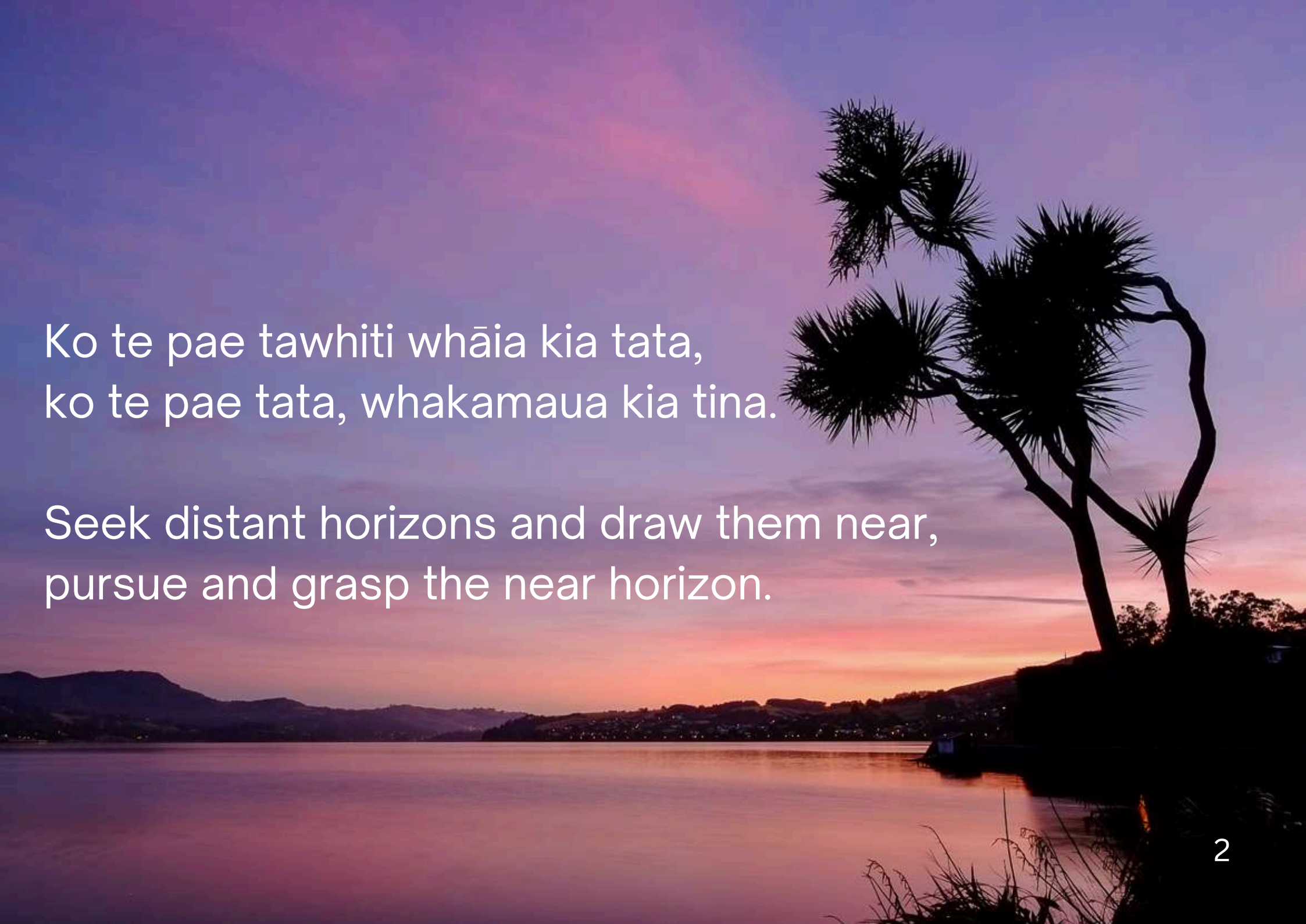
# Tī Kōuka
# Sustainability Update 2025

University of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Toitū te Taiao
Sustainability Office

V1.2


Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata,
ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina.
Seek distant horizons and draw them near,
pursue and grasp the near horizon.

# Contents

# Overview

This report is a snapshot of sustainability activity taking place across the University of Otago. it is not intended to be a comprehensive account of all activity, but rather an indication of progress, challenges, and the main areas of work.

This year we have introduced a section describing the contribution of research to sustainability. There is work underway so that the 2026 update will include a description of the contribution teaching makes to sustainability.

During the final rounds of consultation on Tī Kōuka, a materiality survey was undertaken. This identified the themes of most interest to the University community, and has informed the topics reported on here. Therefore, not all elements of Tī Kōuka are reported on separately or to the same extent.

# Tī Kōuka

The sustainablity strategic framework 2022-2030

Te puaka tī, he tohu raumati
Education for sustainability

E kore e riro, he tī tāmore
Research for sustainability

Whāia te ara tī
Leadership and governance for sustainability

He oraka kai te rua tī
Sustainable operations

Te tī e wana ake
Regenerative approach

Ka hau te tī
Regional and global impact

Te tī ka rito
Innovation

# Ka hau te tī

## Regional and global impact

The tī is renowned. Hau has many meanings, the initial meaning is to be famous or well known, this links Tī Kōuka to the other cabbage trees around the world. Another meaning of hau is ‘wind’, that the seeds of the tī kōuka are dispersed around the world on the wind. Another translation is ‘vitality’. The tī kōuka is all of these things.

# International Rankings overview

While finding a benchmarking methodology that adequately recognises regional and institutional characteristics can be a challenge, reference to international sustainability rankings is emerging as the most common way to undertake comparisons.

In the past we have chosen to describe our relative performance through the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking, the QS Sustainability Ranking, and through annual submissions to the Australasian Green Gown Awards. This year we have focussed on what we see as the more reliable and relevant of the sustainability rankings- QS Sustainability Ranking.

We have also begun work on more specific bench marking. This includes compiling a first application to the Sustainable Restaurant Association “Food Made Good” rating tool for all of our food services, and joining the “Climate Action Barometer” in relation to international education practice. The outcomes of which will be available late 2025.

This section will look at the outcomes of our last submission to THE Impact ranking and the most recent QS Sustainability rankings.

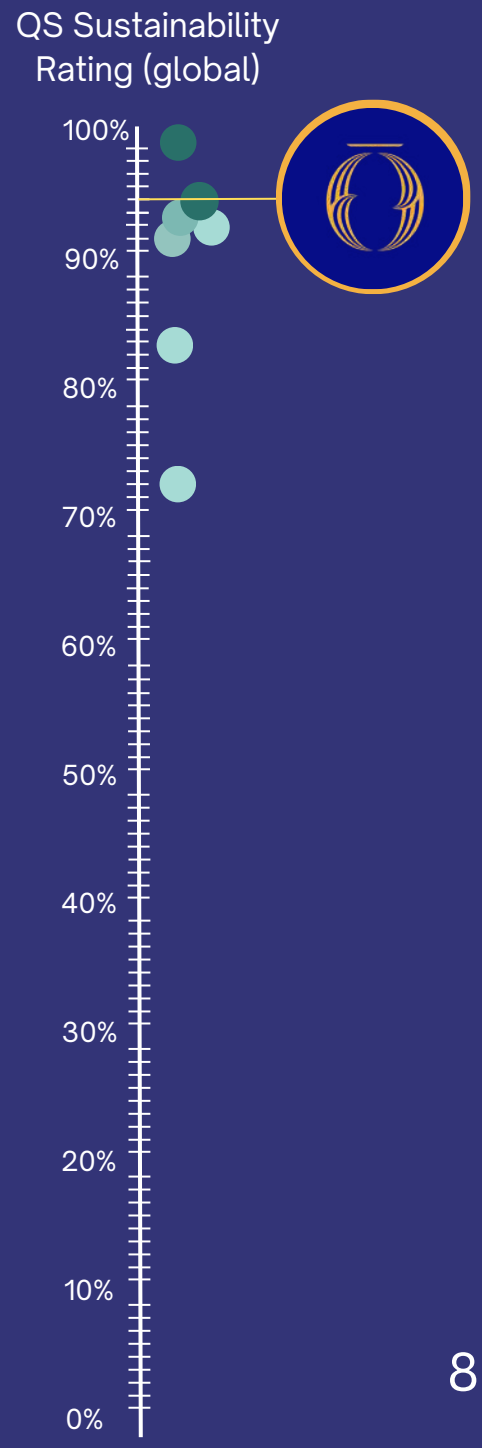
# QS Sustainability Ranking 2025

The 2025 QS Rankings now features over 1700 universities, and aim to measure an institution's ability to tackle the worlds most wicked environmental, governance, and social challenges.

The categories that are measured are Social Impact (45% weighting), Environmental Impact (45% weighting), and Governance (10% weighting). Each category being further subdivided into a range of Performance Lenses.

As indicated by the green dots in the diagram to the right, 6 of 8 Universities in Aotearoa are in the top 10% for the QS Sustainability Overall Ranking. The University of Otago is the joint second highest ranked university in Aotearoa, sitting at 78th place globally, which is within the top 5%.

Additionally, QS Stars was relaunched in January 2024 to better reflect the university's pivotal role in tackling contemporary global challenges while emphasising the increasing importance of sustainability to prospective students. This is a rating metric rather than a ranking. Not only did we receive a 5 star rating for environmental impact, but we also received a 5 star rating overall.




Link to QS sustainability ranking methodology

# QS unpacked

The overall QS Sustainability ranking is determined by performance in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) categories.

The table to the right indicates our relative performance in each category at a national and global level. This ranking indicates significant strength in Governance.

QS Sustainability rankings also contribute to our overall global ranking status. In the Global Ranking 5% of the points available in our scoring can come from the Sustainability ranking. As a high performer in the sustainability ranking 10.7% of the total points we were actually awarded in the Global Ranking came from the our Sustainability ranking.

| Category | Global Rank 2024 | Global Rank 2025 | Aotearoa Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall | 47th | Joint 78th | Joint 2nd |
| Social Impact | 116th | 98th | 2nd |
| Environmental Impact | 28th | 96th | 4th |
| Governance | 35th | 39th | 1st |

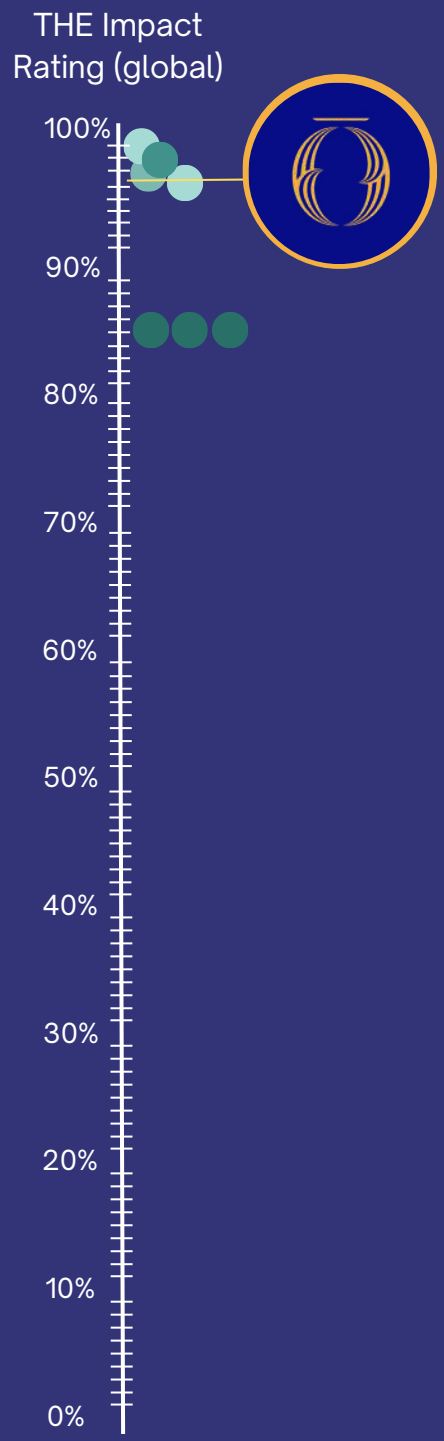
# T.H.E. Impact Ranking 2024

The 2024 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings include 2152 universities from around the globe. This is the final year we will participate in THE Impact ranking so that we can focus on our QS Sustainability rankings.

A range of indicators are used in this assessment to provide a comprehensive and balanced comparison across four key areas: research, stewardship, outreach and teaching, with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The universities of Aotearoa, as indicated by the green dots in the diagram to the right, scored highly amongst the 2152 universities assessed, with five institutions within the top 100.

The University of Otago was joint 4th highest ranked in Aotearoa, and we again held our position in the top 5% of all institutions ranked globally.



# E kore e riro, he tī tāmore

## Research for sustainability

The tī tree is firmly rooted in the ground and will not be carried away. This characteristic relates to the importance of understanding that knowledge is handed down through the generations and the role research needs to play in our transition to a more sustainable future.

# He tihi o rakahau

## A research strength

Sustainability research is one of seven areas of research strength that have been identified at the University of Otago. All of these areas are recognised as fields of research excellence where researchers are changing lives and environments for a better world.

In 2025 researchers have the opportunity to collaborate and create a new form of research group which focuses on a grand challenge. In the initial round of grand challenges applications were invited for Sustainability research aligned with Tī Kōuka.

While several sustainability related research themes and networks came to the end of their funding in 2024, Grand Challenge funding is a significant step forwards.

In this section of the report we will share some insights into the research activity that is aligned with the UN SDGs, and recognise some of the researchers making significant contributions.

It is incredibly important to recognise that while the methodology for identifying research contributions to sustainability is consistently used internationally and is part of the QS ranking scoring, it does not yet adequately recognise the significant contribution made by research undertaking though an indigenous lens.

# Credit Where Credit is Due

There is a long established methodology for identifying research that relates to Sustainability. Based on a bank of key words for which the title, abstract, tags, keywords, and text of a research outputs are searched.

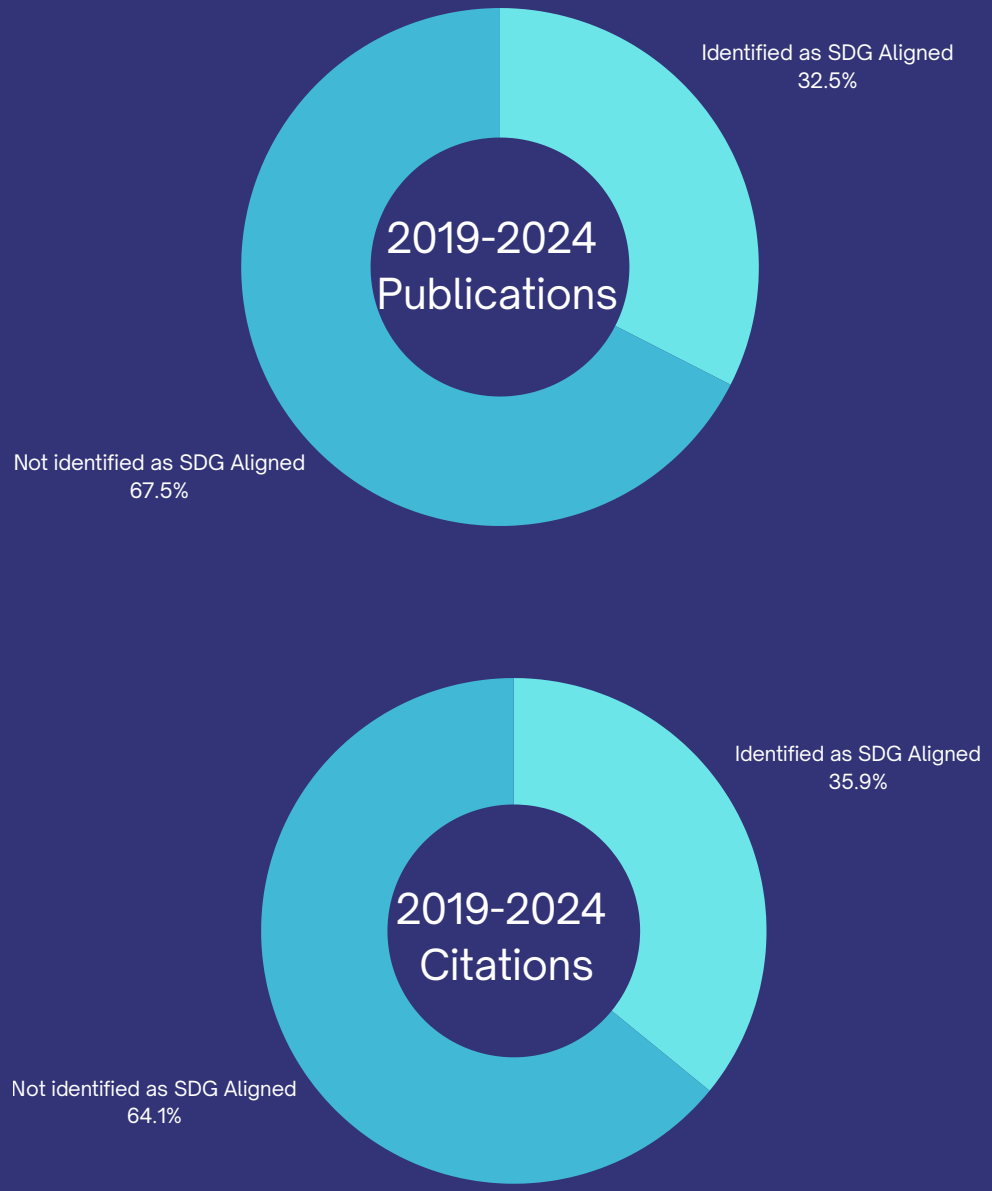
While there are narratives about institutions gamifying the methodology to greenwash their research outputs, we are advocating for a credit where credit is due approach. This means that when we authentically see a contribution from research to a SDG, we should be making sure that contribution is recognised.

The Library has provided some guidance on how to get your work recognised in this way via this page Research Metrics and Impact: Broader Impact.

While SciVal is the tool often used for rankings, we have used Dimensions to describe the alignment of research to SDGs. This is because Dimensions scrutinises a wider set of outputs, and therefore provides a fuller and more authentic picture of our contribution.

Searching for all SDG key words showed that almost 33% of University of Otago's research publications and almost 36% of the citations contributed to one or more SDGs (mean 2019-2014). There was a gradual year to year increase in the number of SDG aligned publications (29.7% in 2019 to 34.3% in 2024).

In the spirit of credit where credit is due the next few pages will look at each SDG in turn, and some of the researchers making valuable contributions.






(Total number of all publications found was 21,607 and 312,595 citations from 2019-2014)

# Celebrating research


Kimberley O'Sullivan, Associate Professor Anna Carr, Associate Professor Brent Lovelock, and Professor Chris Button, have all produced publications and been cited as contributing to SDG1- No Poverty. The areas of research included energy poverty, alleviation of indigenous poverty through tourism, and the development of professional footballers from Brazilian favelas.

Professor Alaa El-Din Ahmed Bekhit, Dr Dominic Agyei, and Professor Rachael Mclean have all contributed to research for SDG2 in areas such as waste utilisation in food production, health impact of indigenous foods, and environmental determinants of food and nutrition.



Notable contributors to health and wellbeing research include Professor Michael Baker, Professor Nick Wilson, and Professor John Crump who have contributed in areas such as global health security, pandemic response, the existential risk of climate change, and improving the health of individuals and populations in low- and middle-income countries in collaboration with local partners.

Professor Timothy Wilkinson, Dr Elizabeth Schaughency, and Professor Vivienne Anderson have contributed to quality education research in contexts such as healthcare workplace learning, building capacity to better serve children, and exploring effective practices for refugee-background students.

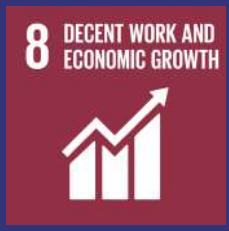

Professor Helen Roberts, Dr Pallab Biswas, Associate Professor Caroline Shaw, Dr Marie Russell have contributed to research including the role of gender diversity in governance, gender pay gap, women and cycling, transport as a determinant of health and health equity, and breastfeeding policy.

Dr Sarah Mager, Associate Professor Daniel Kingston, Professor John Crump, have contributed research aligned to SDG6 including themes such as headwater catchment hydrology in alpine and tussock grassland in the Southern Alps, the inter-relationships between the climate system and hydrological cycle, invasive bacterial diseases, and the global burden of disease estimates for both typhoidal and non-typhoidal Salmonella.



Professor Michael Jack, Professor Indrawati Oey, and Professor Keith Gordon have researched affordable and clean energy topics such as applying methods from theoretical physics to sustainable energy, exploring fundamentally new paradigms of energy generation, designing efficient technologies for renewable energy production, nanoscale energy conversion, food industry enabling technology, and sodium ion battery technology.

Associate Professor Anna Carr, Professor Brent A Lovelock, Dr Muhammad Ahmad Cheema, and Professor Fiona Edgar have contributed to establishing decent work and economic growth through investigating the intersections between tourism/recreation, indigenous peoples and mountain parks, safe haven assets in pandemics, and sustainable human resource management.





Professor Lincoln Wood, Professor Conor O'Kane, Dr Duminda Kuruppuarachchi contributed research related to sustainable supply chain practices, academic entrepreneurs and university technology transfer offices in the commercialisation of science, and environmental and climate finance.

Professor Emily Keddell, Professor Jamin Halberstadt, Associate Professor Dennis Wesselbaum have researched inequality in areas including child protection practice and policy, the global distribution of prejudice, and the impact of COVID 19 on wellbeing and inequity.



Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman, Professor Nevil Pierse, Dr Helen Fitt, and Dr Angela Curl have contributed research in areas including cold housing and fuel poverty, the importance of public housing, a Māori wellbeing model for housing and urban environments, health and wellbeing in urban environments, shared micro-mobility, the influence of built environment on equitable outcomes in travel behaviour and wellbeing, and inequity of food insecurity.

Professor Miranda Mirosa, Professor Lisa Mcneill, Professor Alaa El-Din Ahmed Bekhit, Professor Lincoln Wood have supported responsible consumption and production by research areas such as food waste reduction initiatives, online food delivery systems, meat consumption, consumer behaviour and fashion, product stewardship, emerging alternative proteins, sustainable procurement, and circular economies.



Professor Nicolas James Cullen, Professor James Higham, Associate Professor Annika Seppälä, Professor Andrew Gorman, Dr Christine Cleghorn, and Cliff Law have be part of Otago's significant contribution to climate change research including topics such as working on the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica to image sub-ice shelf geology to tell us more about how Antarctica has responded to past periods of climate change, atmospheric rivers, snowpack modelling, glacial ice retreat, climate science and tourism, the impact of academic air travel, space weather and climate research, emissions of household food purchases, lower emissions diets, and mitigation by marine CO2 removal.

Cliff Law, Professor Miles Lamare, Professor Stephen Wing, Professor Neil Gemmell furthered our understanding life below water looking at climate change and polar marine invertebrates, ocean acidification, food web connectivity in the Fiordland ecosystem, and advancing environmental DNA/RNA sampling workflows for monitoring biodiversity in remote marine environments.



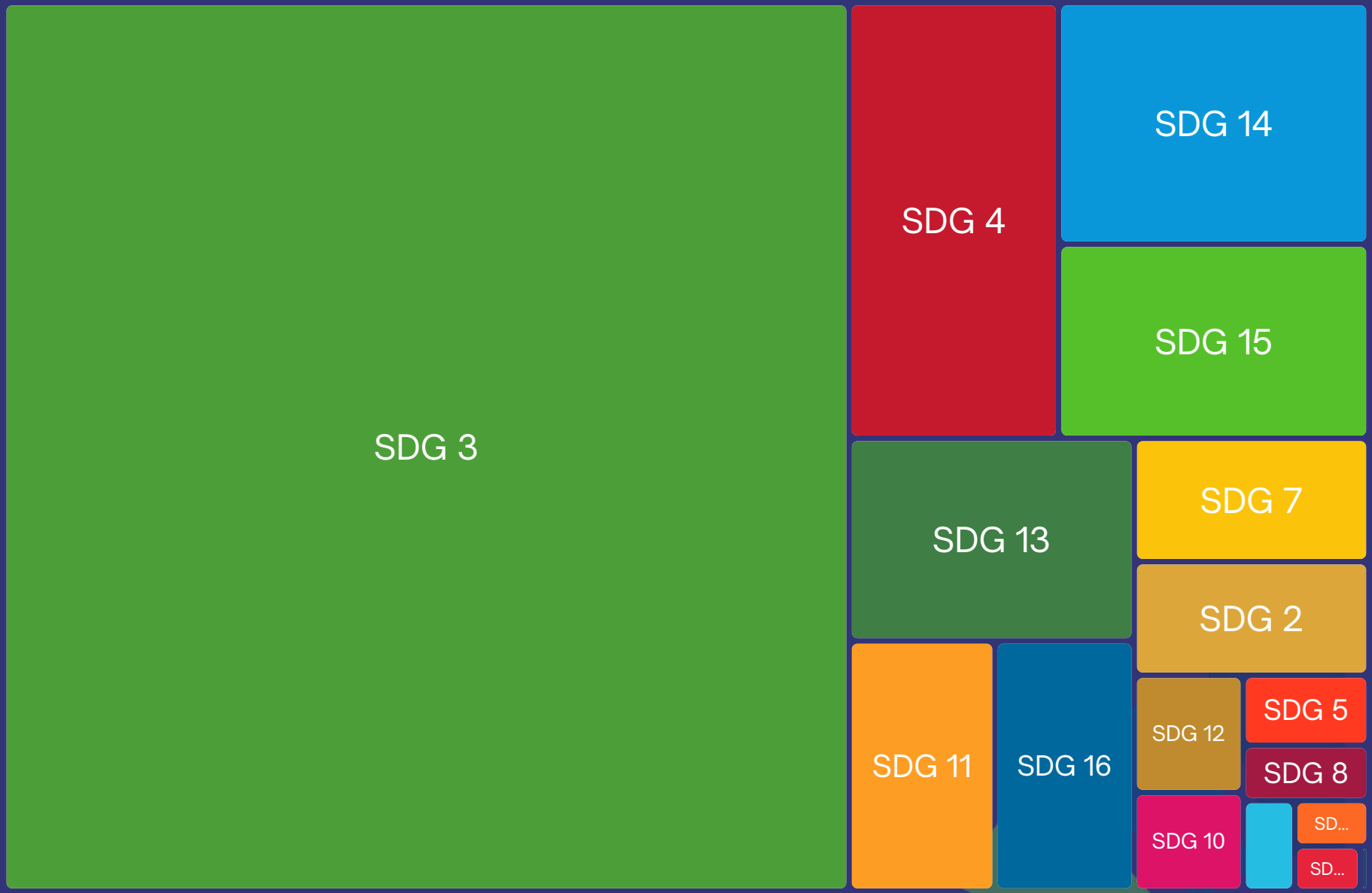
Professor Neil Gemmell, Professor Bruce Robertson, Associate Professor Michael Knapp, Professor Yolanda Van Heezik, Christoph David Matthaei, Professor Philip Seddon have contributes to our understanding of real-time genomic monitoring of the critically endangered kākāpō, genetic biocontrol for invasive species, population genomics New Zealand storm petrel, near-extinction event in the Chatham Island black robin, how environmental change and human migration shaped our present day biodiversity, urban biodiversity, impacts of nature-based tourism, and how heatwaves and carbon dioxide enrichment impact invertebrate drift and insect emergence patterns.

Professor Jing-Bao Nie, Professor Emily Keddell, Professor James Higham all contriubted to SDG16 through topics such as bioethics and human rights, medical war crimes, child protection reform, and justice and ethics in sustainable tourism.



Professor Alex Macmillan demonstrated working in partnership to achieve the SDGs by researching suburb-level changes for active transport in strong partnerships between researchers, public health practitioners, policy-makers and communities.

# Publications by SDG (2019-2024)




(14,359 publications linked to one or more SDG)

# He oraka kai te rua tī

## Sustainable Operations

There is wellbeing in the tī pit. It took many hands and a great deal of skill to maintain fully stocked storage pits with food from the tī tree.

While a full pit signified a tribe’s ability to sustain themselves and others through lean times, it also demonstrated their commitment as guardians of the environment in which they lived. Similarly, our operations and service areas must have the commitment and skills to lead in sustainable practice.

# Climate Related Risk

The University is not mandated to report, on climate related risk. We have however used the New Zealand Climate Standards as guidance on what to report.
XRB developed three climate standards for reporting on climate related risk. Standards CS1-3 were released late 2022, and a fourth standard in relation to assurance of green house gas emissions reporting was issues in 2023. These standards provide the reporting requirements for mandated organisations.
The four reporting areas are governance, strategy, risk management, and metrics and targets

## Governance

This area describes governance oversight and management responsibilities for climate related risks and opportunities.

University Council is identified as being responsible for the governance of climate risk.

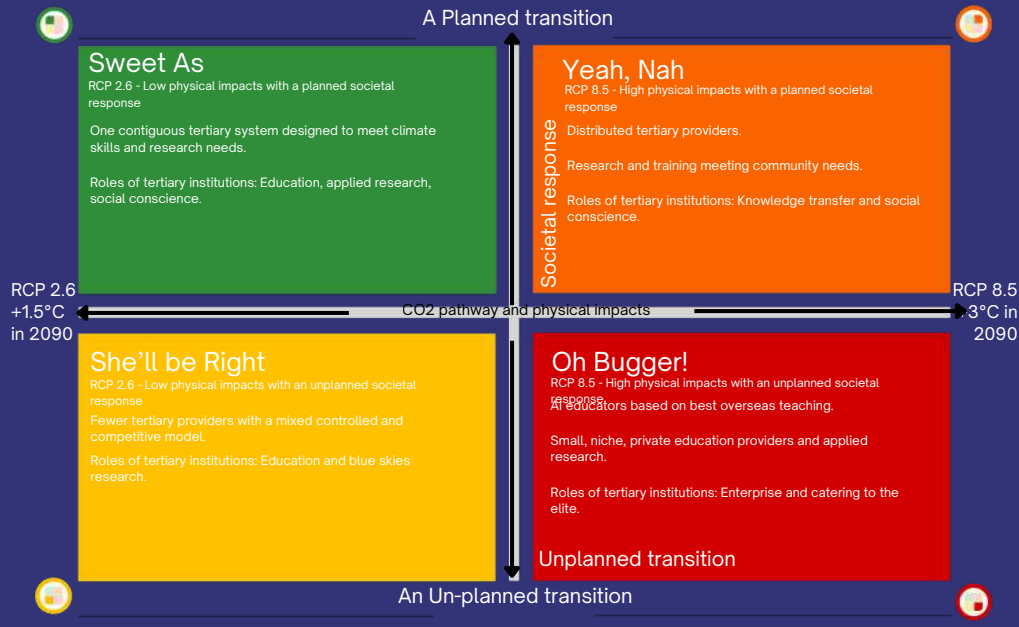
The University Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have been assigned specific responsibilities for the risks most relevant to their area. Each decision made by SLT is now required to demonstrate how the impact on and of climate change has been considered.

# Strategy

Current impacts (both risks and opportunities) of transitionary risks and physical risks have been considered within the context of a scenario analysis.

Four localised future climate scenarios were analysed. These scenarios are based on the Aotearoa Tertiary Education Sector Scenarios. A series of both future risks and opportunities were identified through engaging over 100 staff and students in workshops about the scenarios.

These risks and opportunities are described in the coming pages. Estimates of the financial impact of RCP 8.5 related physical risks are provided.



# The Otago Response

Over the course of 2024 the Sustainability Office has engaged with several groups for 1.5-2 hour workshops, which focus on the question:

"How might Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka respond?"

Over 100 staff and students took part in these workshops. This included students within a cross divisional undergraduate paper, academic staff from all divisions (including the northern campuses joining online), professional staff from Operations Senior Leadership Team, IT Managers, and Property staff.

The outcomes from each workshop included a description of how the University might respond in each of the sector scenarios on short (2025), medium (2050) and long (2100) term horizons. It included characteristics such as student numbers, forms of learning, the structure of our organisation, and the role we play. Across the groups there was a great deal of consistency in how our response was described for each scenario. The risks and opportunities we might face were identified in each scenario. These have been aggregated to show the most common and most material risks and opportunities this consultation exposed

Workshops participants were asked a concluding question at the end of the workshop:

"What are the key risks and opportunities governance and leadership groups should be grappling with now?"

| Future Risks |
| --- |
| Impact of climate change on our built assets reduces viability of core business model |
| Impact of climate change on student study choices reduces enrolments |
| Impact of climate change on social license for high emissions travel |
| Impact of climate change on our ability to honour commitment to Te Tiriri o Waitangi. |
| Impact of climate change on our partners in the Pacific region |
| Impact of climate change on new innovations and ventures. |
| Impact of climate change diminishes our ability to be critic and conscience of society. |
| Compounding effect of climate change and other financial pressures |
| Impact of climate change on our long supply chain. |

| Future Opportunities |
| --- |
| Developing online and blended offering through enhanced digital experience AI |
| Reduce exposure by reducing asset base (sale) |
| Differentiation of Otago experience |
| Mana Whenua leadership in increasing resilience |
| Develop the heath science role in climate health |
| Lead climate tech innovations |

# 4.4 What should leadership and governance groups be grappling with now?

The following comments were gathered from across the Otago workshops to provide governance and leadership groups insight as to what the University community thought they should be focussing on in relation to climate change.

- How can climate change be considered in every leadership or governance decision?
- How do we expand on our indigenous and interdisciplinary research focussed on climate change?
- How do we embed climate change into policy and processes that are flexible enough for innovation?
- How do we balance Pae Tata growth ambitions with emissions reductions and risk to social license?
- How are capital decisions future proofed?
- How can we find alternative funding sources while still staying true to our purpose and role?
- How do we invest in digital transformation to support enhanced digital delivery which compliments our campus experience?
- How can we make what we offer students more relevant to their futures?
- Do Leadership and Governance groups have the right capabilities to adequately address climate risks and opportunities?
- We monitor risks. How do we monitor the opportunities?
- How can we strengthen Tiriti and  community relationships now so that they are strong when we need to be resilient?

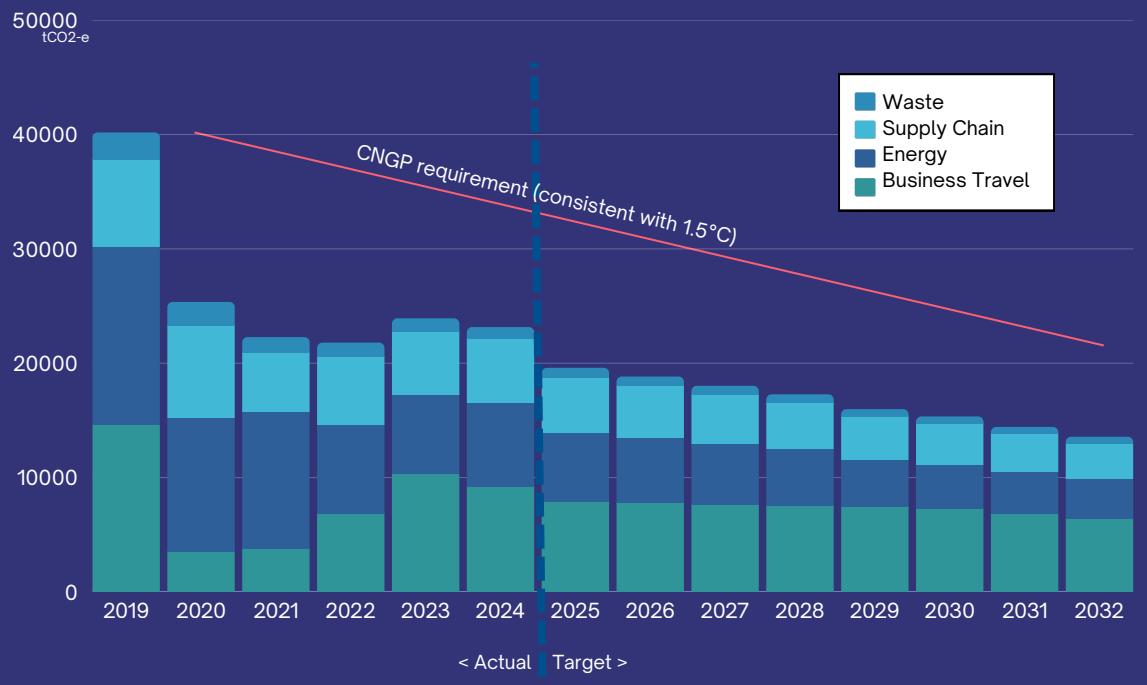
# Emissions Metrics and Targets

In 2019, the University of Otago committed to reaching Net Carbon Zero by 2030, which we will do by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions as a first priority and then offsetting the emissions that we have not been able to eliminate. The University Council reconfirmed this commitment in 2021 and agreed category-based emissions reduction targets. These targets were updated once more in 2024 to reflect internal and external changes and lessons learned so far.

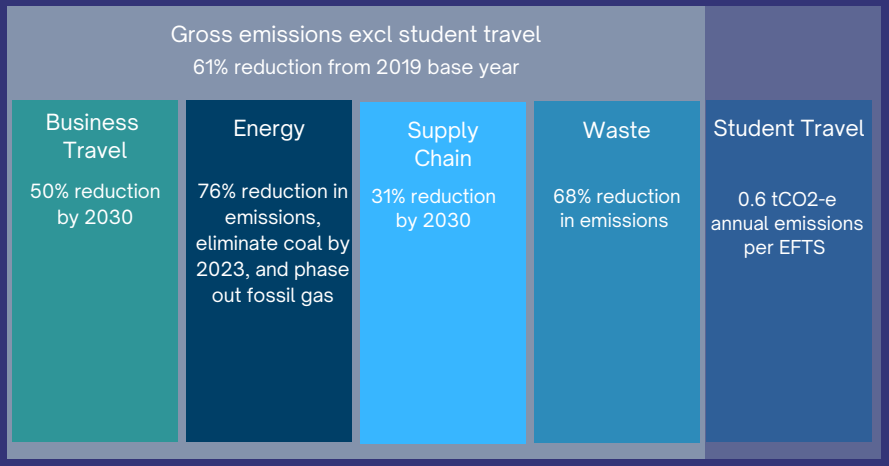
The current emission reduction targets and principles that will guide offsetting are set out in our Journey to 2030: Island Hop #1 document. Targets are also summarised below.

In terms of our broader responsibility within Aotearoa, as a tertiary institution, the University of Otago is in Tranche 3 of the Carbon Neutral Government Programme (CNGP). We began reporting our emissions to the programme in 2022. While we report on student travel emissions (commuting and air travel), these are not part of CNGP targets. As the chart to the right shows, our emissions to date and our target emissions in future years are below what the CNGP defines a 1.5° compliant path.

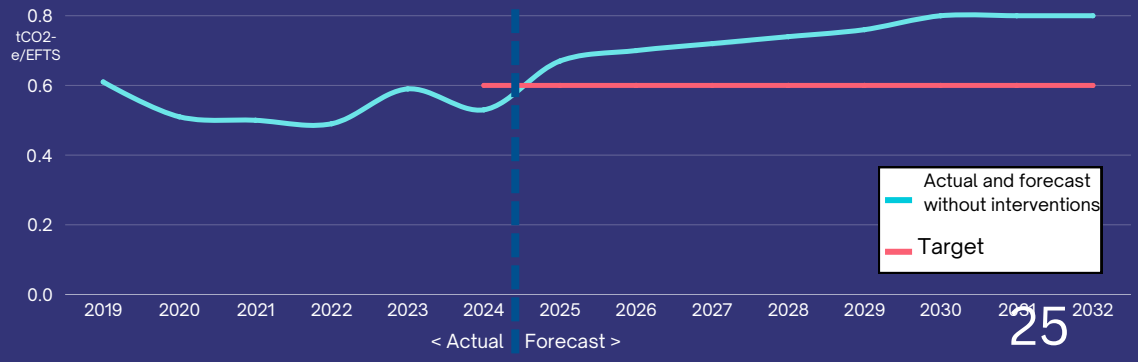
University of Otago gross emissions excluding student travel




Key emissions reduction targets 2019-2030



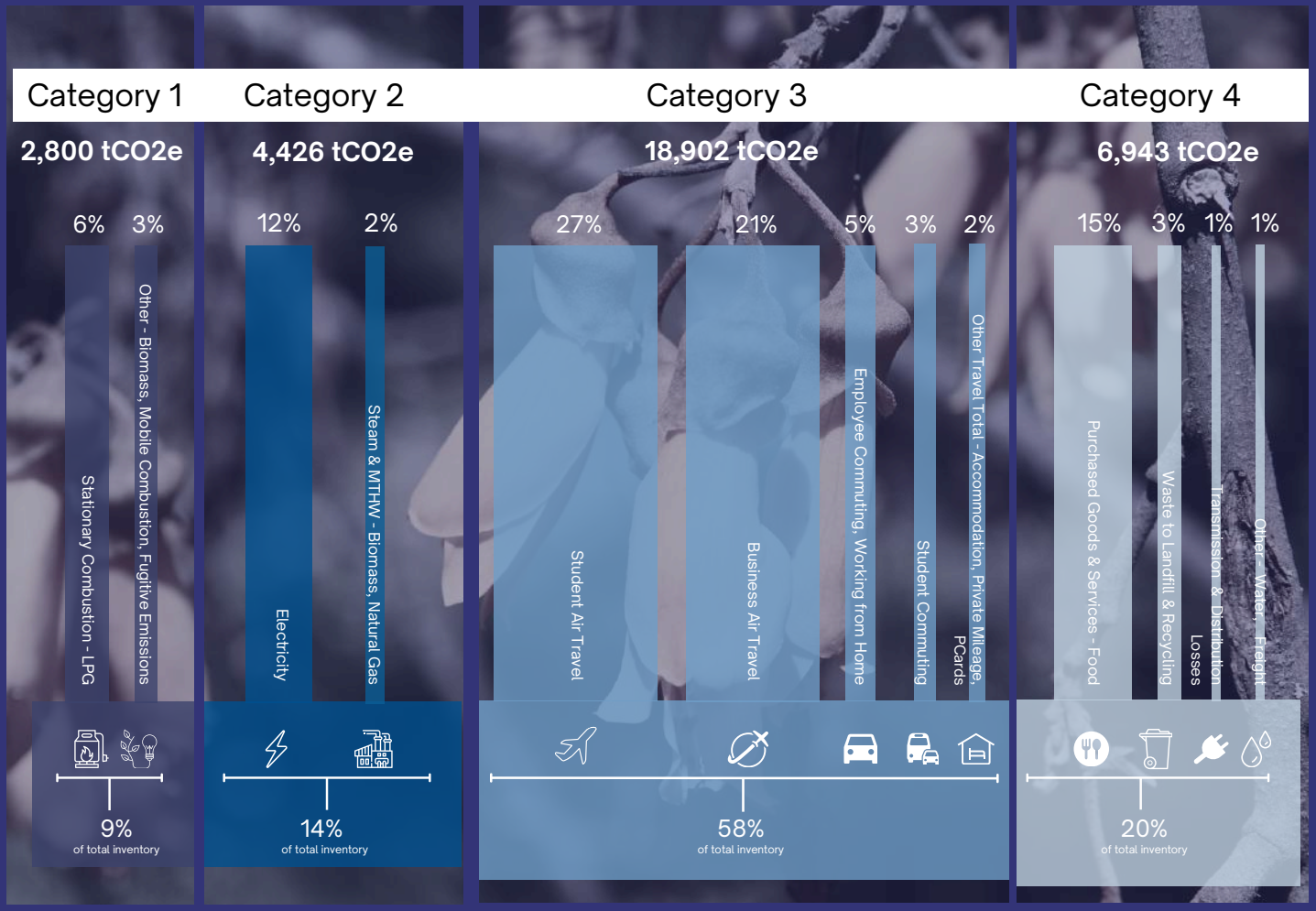

University of Otago student travel emissions per EFTS



# Our Emissions in 2024

In 2024, our total emissions of 33,071 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2-e) were 36% below our 2019 base year and 6% lower than in 2023. We were also 1% below our internal target for 2024.

The biggest driver of the annual reduction was reduced business air travel and student air travel emissions, influenced partly by lower emission factors for domestic aviation.




36% from 2019

6% from 2023

NB: The University uses emissions categories from the ISO standard in its reporting. Category 1 and 2 are the same as Scope 1 and 2 in the GHG Protocol. The ISO standard breaks Scope 3 down further into categories 3-6. The University does not have any Category 5 or 6 emissions. Thus our Scope 3 emissions in 2024 were the sum of Category 3 and 4 (25,511 tCO2e).

# Our four most material sources in 2024

Collectively, these four source made up 75% of our total emissions in 2024.

1

## Student Air Travel

14% from 2019

Student air travel was the largest source of emissions in 2024, comprising 27% of total emissions. Annually we account for a return flight for all domestic students studying away from home and a one-way flight for international students at the beginning and end of their programme of study. This reflects the level of control we have in terms of offering courses on campus versus online, and where were take enrolments from.

2

## Business Air Travel

44% from 2019

This covers all travel booked and/or paid for by the University. This was the number one emissions source back in 2019. Steps taken to reduce financial budgets for travel, change policies so online options and trip-stacking are better supported, and improving reporting are helping to keep this well below pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, it made up 20% of our total emissions.

3

## Purchased Food

30% from 2019

This category captures the 'cradle to gate' emissions of all the food purchased for our residential colleges and on-campus catering and outlets. We use ingredient-based emissions factors so we can see the impact of different menu design and service approaches. We are the only university in New Zealand reporting on food emissions and have shared our approach with other government departments that also purchase large amounts of food. In 2024, food made up 15% of total emissions

4

## Electricity

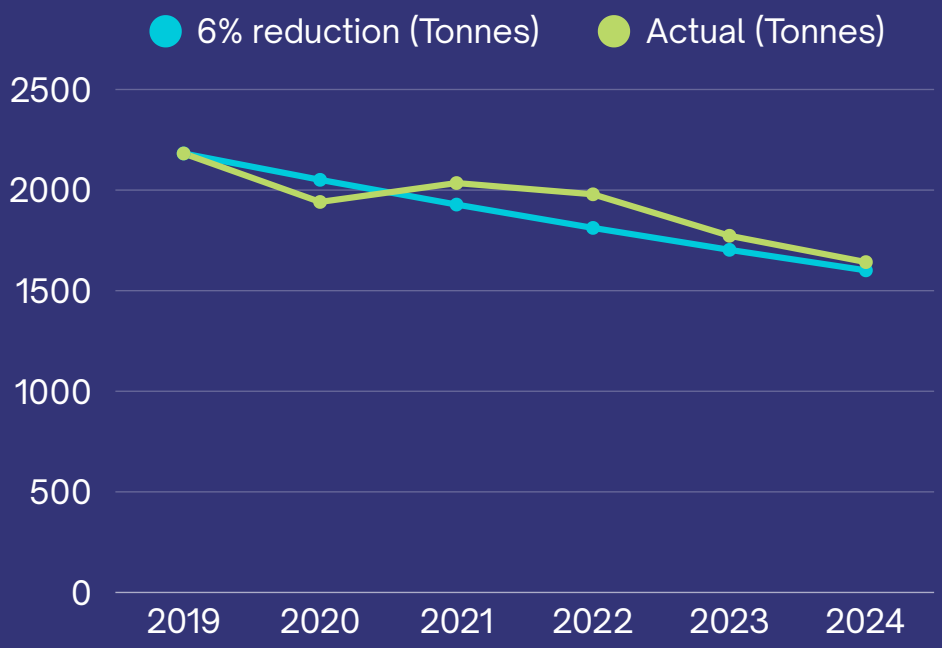
21% from 2019

Emissions from stationary energy accounted for 6,870 tonnes of CO2-e in 2023, with electricity making up 3,856 tCO2-e (12% of total emissions). We are driving greater efficiency in our buildings, but also have increased demand for electricity as we electrify heating and vehicles to lower total emissions. We source the majority of our electricity from that national grid, meaning this emissions source reflects our share of the non-renewable generation within the grid.

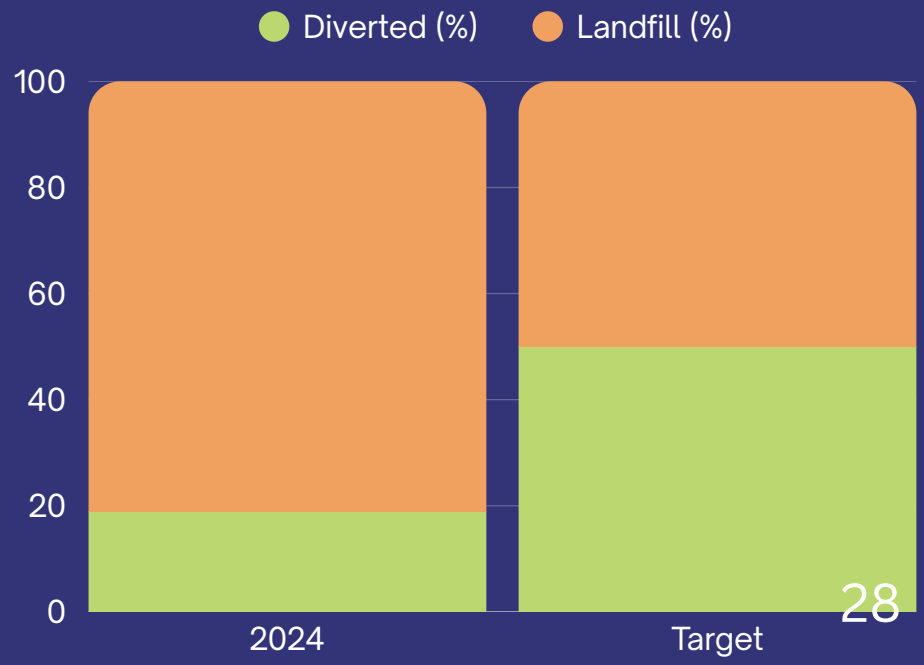
# Waste Minimisation

Waste on campus is a very visible aspect of sustainability that affects all of us. The data in this section of the report is drawn directly from the externally verified data in the 2024 GHG Inventory.

Two of the KPIs that are managed by a Waste Governance group are an annual reduction in total waste and increasing the percentage of the waste diverted from landfill. The first is an on going 6% reduction in the total amount of waste produced including recycling, green waste and food waste diversion. The second and more challenging KPI focusses on increasing the proportion of that total waste diverted away from landfill to 50%. This includes 17.6 tonnes of food waste diverted from college kitchens being converted to compost for use in college gardens including the sustainability neighbourhood vegetable gardens.


Reduce total waste by 6% per year.




Increase waste diverted from landfill to 50%

# Drop for Good

Drop (and Shop) for Good is a collaboration between OUSA, Property Services, and Toitū te Taiao (The Sustainability Office). It is an important part of our commitment to the Sophia Charter.
At the end of each year students donate their flatting goods, we store them over the summer, then sell them in Re-O week. The resulting funds support Te Oraka student initiatives throughout the year.

3 days and 31 pick ups from flats.

44 volunteers clocking up 396 hours

Reached 46,000 Instagram users

1800 student came to sale

Funded a Tētēkura for a year

In 5 years diverting est. over 400 tonnes from landfill

# Bike Grabs

In partnership with Southern Youth Development (SYD), the Sustainability Office run a weekly bike grab programme (at Te Oraka).

This programme takes bikes that have been abandoned around campus, donated by staff, or were on their way to landfill, and works with student to fix-up a bike. The students then have the opportunity to donate to SYD which supports their youth development programme for the rest of the year.

In 2024, this ongoing collaboration with SYD continued to thrive. We rehomed 126 bikes (up from 47 in 2023), completed 18 repairs (up from 3), and grew our annual donation from $1,003 to $5,113.

This partnership provides students with sustainable and healthy transport, keeps bikes out of the landfill, and benefits many young people in SYD programmes across Ōtepti.

# eRescue

The University's Information Technology Services (ITS) eWaste team has continued to grow opportunities for not-fit-for-university-purpose tech to be reused rather than sent for recycling.

"With digital infrastructure becoming centralised through the Otago University Digital Workspace project, the Infrastructure team was dealing with a large influx of equipment that was no longer fit for university purposes. But not-fit-for-university-purpose is not the same as not-fit-for-purpose and a lot of that equipment still had lots of life left."

Garreth Taylor, Team Leader Sustainable E-waste

In 2024 a total of 4682 items of e-waste were collected. This included desktops, displays, laptops, network devices and other smaller items. Over 1000 devices were put to reuse, rather than recycling.

In 2025 it is expected that this proportion of items for reuse will increase as the team work through how to process a wider range of items.

Much of the reuse is done so in partnership with Te Oraka and the funds gathered goes back to the students. It's selling IT equipment at one end and community building at the other. Read more about this in this Bulletin article.

# Sustainable Procurement

We have now seen significant year on year increases in frequency, weighting, and materiality of spending that is subject to sustainability criteria in decision making.

There has been $96 million of procurement decisions subject to weighted sustainability criteria between 2021 and 2024.

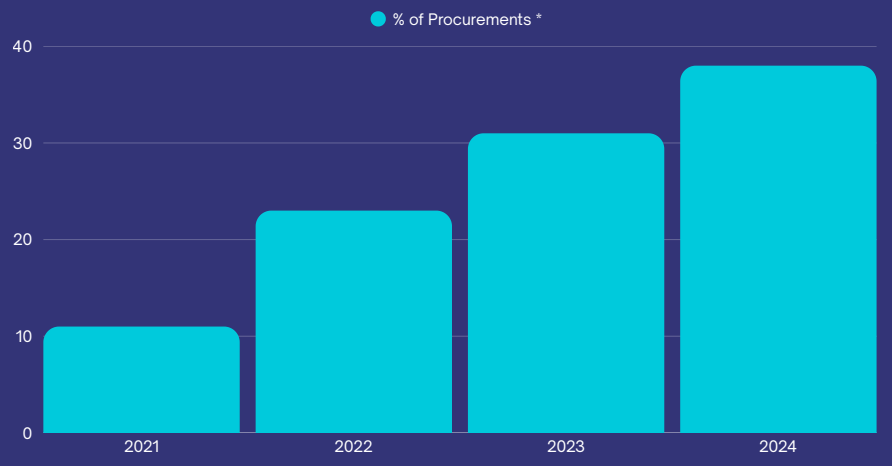
The typical weighting within quality criteria is between 4% and 20%.

These criteria address specific themes such as:

- waste minimisation
- energy reduction
- decarbonisation of supply chain
- sustainability reporting
- innovation
- modern slavery
- link to education and research opportunities
- all of life cycle analysis.

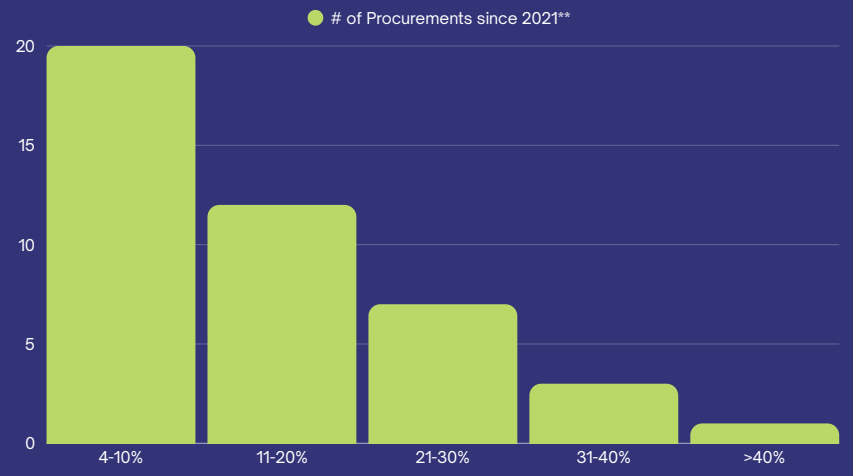
In 2025 an Ethical Procurement Policy will be developed and shared with the University community for consultation.

What percentage of procurements have weighted sustainability criteria?




*Does not include procurements with sustainability questions, but no weighting.

What sustainability weighting is placed on the quality criteria?




**only showing weighting of quality criteria, not of total criteria.

# Te puaka tī, he tohu raumati

## Education for sustainability

The flowering of the tī kōuka in spring is said to foretell the type of weather in the summer to follow.

This alludes to the importance of equipping our students and staff with the skills, understandings and values required to be more sustainable in their lives and work. It is how they act which will determine the sustainability of our long-term future.

# Integration

Within both the THE and QS global rankings there is some account of the extent to which papers and programmes address sustainability, or more specifically the UNSDGs. However, this is more of a sampling and does not provide a robust analysis of the contribution papers make.

In 2025 the sustainability Office in working with all academic divisions to evaluate the number and extent to which papers contribute to SDGs, mātauraka Māori concepts of sustainability, collaboration with communities, and use campus as a living lab. The findings will be part of the 2026 update report.

The sustainability office is also working closely with the DVC (Academic) to ensure sustainability literacy is well captured in the revised model of our Graduate Attributes.

There are many learning example of learning that sit outside of the formal delivery of papers. The section reports on Te Oraka engagement,  The Social Impact Studio, and Tī Kōuka Ora.

# Te Oraka: The Good Space

The name Te Oraka, which was gifted by the Office of Māori Development, loosely translates as meeting all your needs (physically and spiritually). This guides our kaupapa of being accessible, affordable and relevant to student sustainability needs, and informs our outputs as a space, our collaborations and what key messaging we push through our engagement platforms.

Over 2024, Te Oraka delivered 36 events, including Sustainability Week, reaching over 5000 students. These events allow for face-to-face engagement with students, and building a sense of community through sustainability. Our Tētēkura (student leads) lead the events to prioritise student-student engagement. All of these events are either free or heavily subsidised by the proceed of the thrifting shop to ensure the accessibility of the student experience.

Although our space is not profit driven, one measure of success for 2024 is through our sales. In 2024 Te Oraka processed $31,985 in sales, which includes our annual Shop for Good sale. This is a growth of 111% from the annual total of sales from 2023, which reflects a significant increase in the number of students utilising our space.

To continue to nurture students, Te Oraka hosts a Social Club. The Social Club allows us to build community through the space, further ensuring our kaupapa stands true as students connect with like-minded peers. There were students registered in the Social Club by the end of 2024.

In 2025 we have a Tētēkura role specifically looking at impact measurements so that we can better describe the benefits Te Oraka generates for students.

# Social Impact Studio

The Social Impact Studio champions the social side of sustainability with an emphasis on building communities where people and planet thrive together. Our work under Ka Kau Te Tī equips students with the skills, values, and experiences to contribute meaningfully to the wellbeing of their communities.

This year we've supported more than 550 students contributed over 2750 hours of volunteering through UniCrew, with a significant rise in engagement reflecting growing demand for purpose-driven experiences.

This includes initiatives like Reading Oasis and Minds Together and a new programme, Good Mahi, mobilised 152 volunteers, including staff, to contribute 456 hours of impact across Ōtepoti.

The conclusion of the University of Otago Student Leadership Award marked 11 years of student leadership and community impact, with 500 students contributing 43,142 hours of community engagement — and estimated equivalent of $1.2 million of value to the community.

New initiatives for 2025 include the Emerging Leaders Programme and Global Impact Scholar Programme. These programmes embed community engagement and leadership into the student experience, championing global citizenship and social responsibility as essential graduate attributes.

Social sustainability is an important part of achieving the university's vision for the future, and The Social Impact Studio is proud to contribute to a more just, connected, and compassionate world through our work.

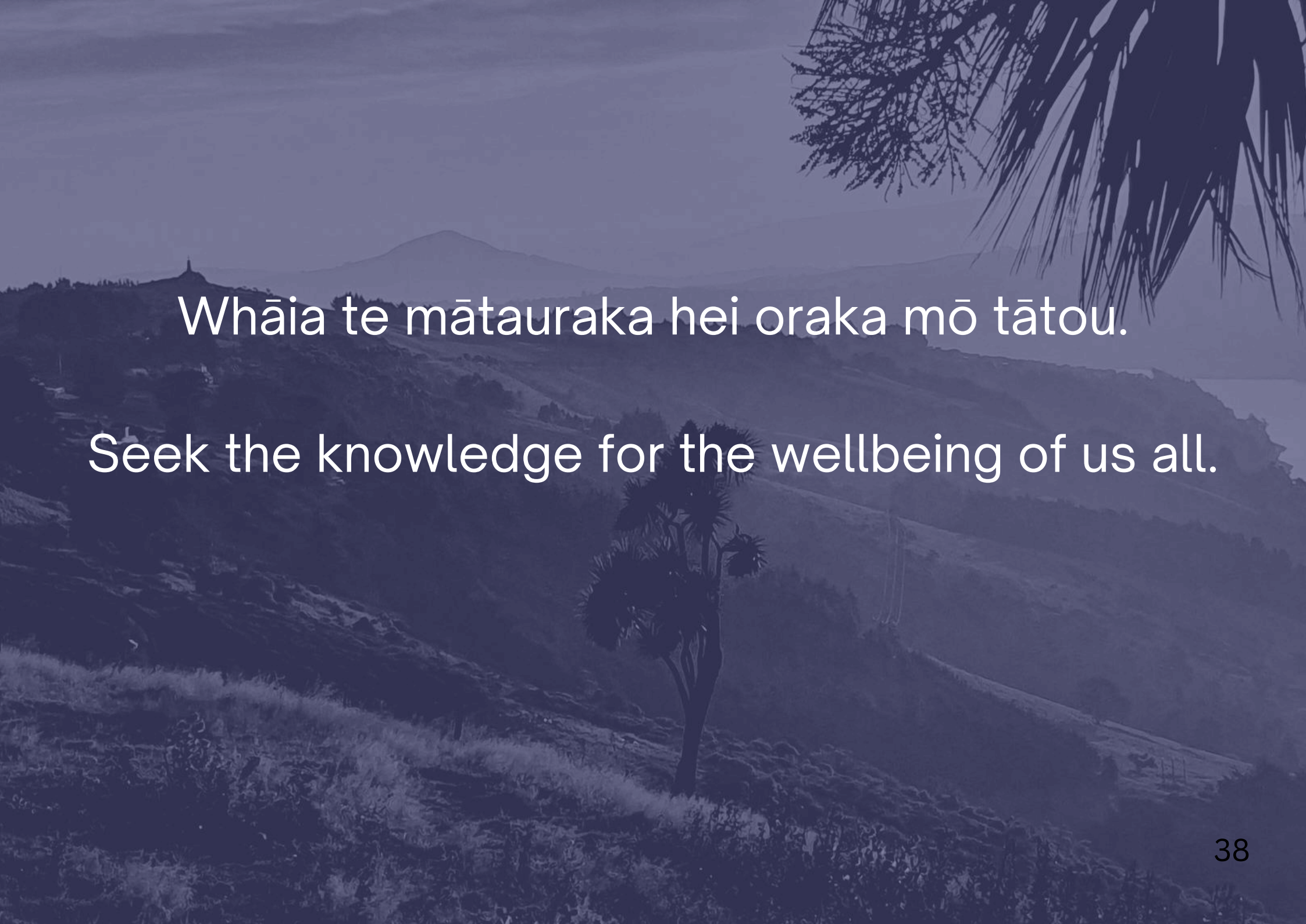
# Tī Kōuka Ora

The Sustainability Office launched Green Impact in 2019. Green Impact is an international scheme for staff and student engagement, where groups get together, complete sustainability actions, then submit evidence to achieve an award. This contributed to education for sustainability in the wider Otago experience for both staff and students.

In 2020 we transformed this into “Green your Scene” to provide a very “Otago” sustainability experience. This built to having 80 separate teams participating and gaining awards across all campuses. However, since COVID19 this level of participation has not returned.

So, in 2025 we are relaunching our approach to staff sustainability engagement. We are introducing Tī Kōuka Ora. Tī Kōuka Ora is an engagement programme completely aligned to the elements of Tī Kōuka 2030:The Sustainability Strategic Framework. Under each element there will be a series of activities, which will then be linked to eBadges that staff and students can share to celebrate their success on social media, CVs, and email signatures.




Whāia te mātauraka hei oraka mō tātou.
Seek the knowledge for the wellbeing of us all.