



UNIVERSITY
of
OTAGO

Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND

Tī Kōuka

The Sustainability Strategic Framework

Ti Kōuka:

The Sustainability Strategic Framework 2022-2030

The University vision for 2040 describes *our people and knowledge transforming lives, connecting communities, and nurturing the environment of Otago, Te Waipounamu, Aotearoa, the Pacific and the world*. This vision is underpinned by four guiding principles: Honouring Te Tiriti Partnership, Sustainability, Social Responsibility, and Academic Freedom.

This embraces sustainability in its broadest sense as demonstrated by our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The seventeen SDGs include diverse and interrelated aspects of sustainability across social, environmental, and economic domains. While they have many imperfections, they provide a useful definition of the breadth of sustainability. Sustainability is often described as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. However, the term regeneration is increasingly being used in reference to action that leaves the world a better place, rather than diminished. While the concepts of the SDGs provide a definition of the breadth of sustainability, regenerative provides us with an aspirational definition of the depth of impact of our actions.

Social responsibility is described as our contribution to global, regional, national, and local advancement. We engage and partner with communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific and beyond to undertake research, teaching and service that supports their needs. We support and promote equity, inclusivity, and diversity, and demonstrate ethical behaviour and compassion.

The University of Otago set out a commitment to a sustainability transformation in the Sustainability Strategic Framework 2017-2021. Since then, significant progress has been made, while at the same time expectations and the sense of urgency to make progress have heightened.

Ti Kōuka is the second iteration of the Sustainability Strategic Framework. While building upon the progress already made, Ti Kōuka provides direction for our sustainability transition through to 2030, in what the United Nations refers to as our *decade of action*. The process of developing this framework alongside the Office of Māori Development has been

critical in shaping our vision of a sustainable future and Tī Kōuka acknowledges the significant value of mātauraka Māori in creating a more sustainable future.

The framework consists of three layers. The first layer is a central metaphor communicating the areas of sustainability we need to develop, to create a thriving future-Tī Kōuka. The second, a further elaboration of the vision for sustainability in 2030. The third, an implementation plan describing how commitment to action will be created and made transparent. The framework provides vision and direction. Localised action plans are where objectives, goals and performance expectations will be articulated and iterated as we progress.

Tī Kōuka

Tī Kōuka has been developed in close partnership with the Office of Māori Development (OMD). Tī Kōuka (Cabbage tree) was important for many iwi. The trunk and roots provided sustenance, and the fibres of the leaves were used for making footwear, fishing lines and many other innovations. The reduced range of other vegetables available in the colder regions of Te Waipounamu (South Island) meant that Tī Kōuka was particularly important to Kāi Tahu. Given this strong connection to both land and culture Tī Kōuka provides a strong central metaphor through which to communicate our vision for a sustainable future. A future where the wellbeing of the environment and of people are inextricably linked- whenua ora, tangata ora.

Tī kōuka has inherent characteristics that Kāi Tahu Whānui valued and hence propagated in many temporary seasonal campsites. These characteristics made a significant contribution to sustaining generations of Kāi Tahu and have direct relevance to the work we will need to undertake to achieve a sustainability transformation. Seven characteristics have been identified in this core metaphor. They can each be interpreted from a Te Ao Māori perspective and from a Takata Tiriti¹ perspective.

¹ Parties to Tiriti o Waitangi who are not of Māori descent.

TĪ KŌUKA

The sustainability 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

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Te tī e wana ake

Regenerative approach

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Regional and global impact

Te tī ka rito

Innovation

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.

E kore e riro, he tī tāmōre- 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.

Whāia te ara tī- Leadership and governance for sustainability

Follow the path of the tī kōuka.

Tī kōuka were used as trail markers between settlements and through hazardous terrain especially in the south. The path to a more sustainable future is complex and challenging, but shared knowledge, values and aspirations can guide us. Strong leadership and committed governance are essential if we are to make significant progress.

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.

Te tī e wana ake- Regenerative approach

The tī sprouts.

There is a saying, 'Ehara i te tī e wana ake', which relates to the death of Tī Kōuka not being final, as it will sprout again and continue to live. To succeed in our sustainability transition, we need to aspire to more than simply causing less harm. We need to take a whole system regenerative approach.

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 dispersed around the world on the wind. Another translation is 'vitality'. The Tī Kōuka is all of these things.

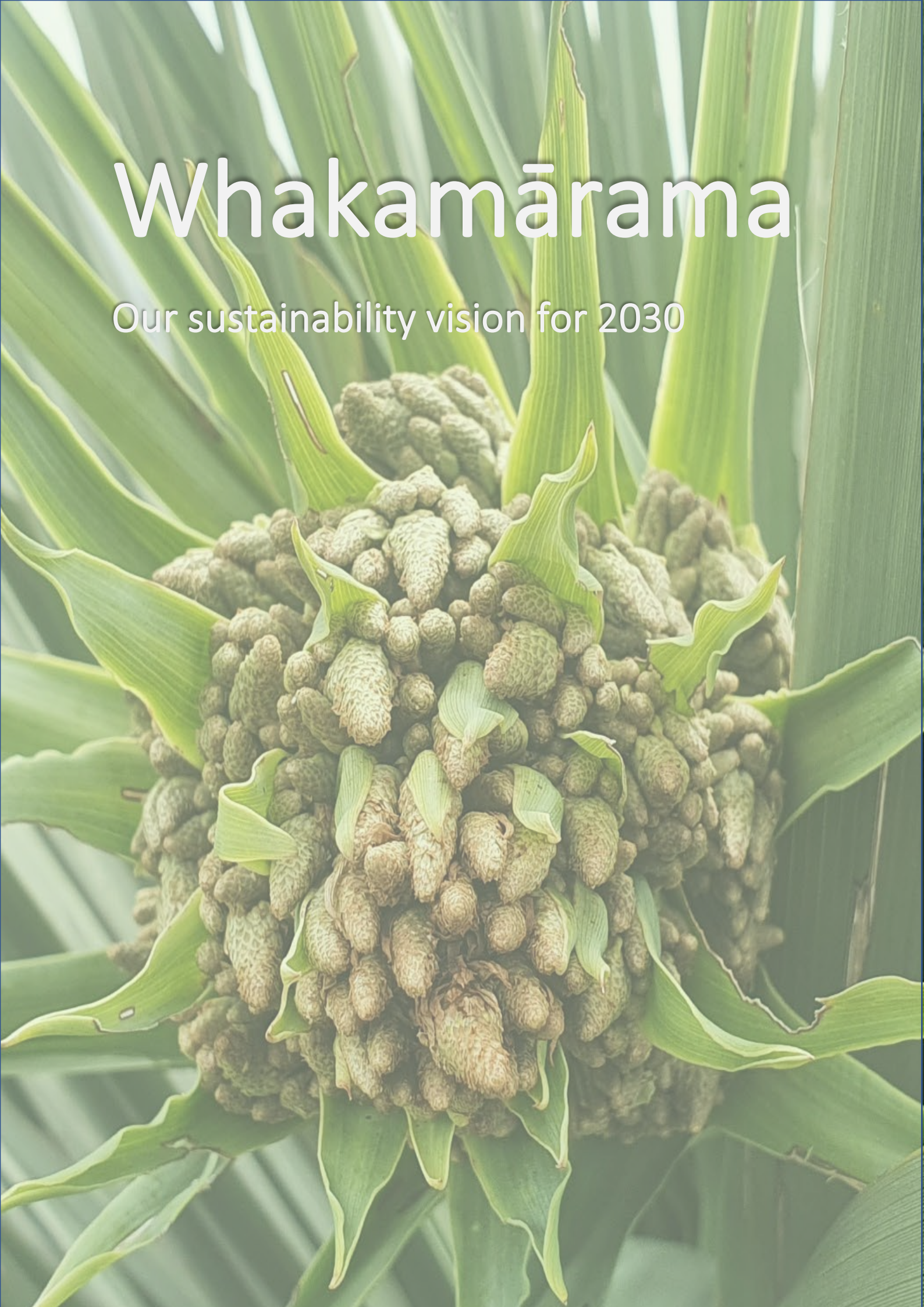
Te tī ka rito-Innovation

The tī throws up shoots.

This alludes to the new life that comes from the old, it is connected to innovation and links to the adaptability of tī kōuka being able to survive in many different habitats and environmental challenges.

Whakamārama

Our sustainability vision for 2030



Te puaka tī, he tohu raumati- Education for sustainability

Otago graduates have a high level of sustainability literacy and can contribute to sustainability within the bi-cultural Tiriti o Waitangi based context of Aotearoa-New Zealand. We offer a range of sustainability focussed study pathways at all levels. Opportunities to develop sustainability literacy and practice are embedded in all study pathways. Those opportunities are delivered in a diverse range of contexts and pedagogical approaches. Significant learning opportunities are available through the development of the University as a Living Lab for sustainability learning.

Through professional development opportunities and a strong professional network, our staff integrate sustainability into the student experience, teaching practice, and the design of papers and qualifications. They are resourced and recognised for doing so. The effectiveness of our education for sustainability is regularly monitored and evaluated to inform further developments.

The extent to which we have embedded sustainability literacy and practice into what we do attracts students who want to make a difference from around the globe. Our graduates are sought after for what they can contribute to a sustainable future in employment and research.

E kore e riro, he tī tāmōre- Research for sustainability

Sustainability is a major focus of research activity at the University of Otago, including the interlinkages between sustainability and Te Ao Māori. We provide a unique global offering in creating partnerships, solutions, and transformation for sustainability. This is enabled through a wide reaching and interconnected network of sustainability focussed research themes, groups and living labs which recognise the importance of Te Ao Māori to sustainability. Researchers are recognised for their contribution to a sustainable future. We develop and attract global leaders in sustainability research and have a strong cohort of emerging researchers who focus on sustainability.

The way we fund, conduct, and disseminate research which demonstrates our commitment to sustainability. Significant capacity has been built to support Te Tiriti partnership in all research at the University.

Our research influences policy and wider societal change through strong communication and engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders and communities. The impact of our sustainability research is regularly monitored and evaluated to inform further developments.

Whāia te ara tī- Leadership and governance for sustainability

The mission and vision of the university are aligned with a Tiriti based sustainable future. Our governance and leadership groups share an understanding and commitment to sustainability which is informed by the most current sustainability thinking including mātauraka Māori. All members of leadership and governance groups have knowledge and capability so that sustainability is integrated into every decision that maps our course.

Our institutional sustainability goals are ambitious, address a broad range of sustainability topics and incorporate Te Ao Māori concepts of sustainability. Our progress along this journey is regularly monitored and evaluated. Sustainability reporting, data and decision making is open and transparent.

Strategic decisions are multi-generational and incorporate a strong student voice. This positions us to be the best ancestors we can be.

He oraka kai te rua tī- Sustainable operations

Our people rely on sustainable operations to enable learning and research that fits with their values, including minimising harm. All our campuses are healthy welcoming places that are consistent with the sustainability values in our research and teaching. Campus experiences contribute to a connection with our environment, and the wellbeing of the university community. Activity in our community, including our colleges, requires strong leadership, planning, and education to realise our sustainability goals. A commitment to the many layers of benefit in a fair and circular economy is clear in our procurement decisions, and how we construct or refurbish buildings.

We take responsibility for our impact on climate change by continuing to drive down our emissions through structural change, policy, behaviour change and innovation, across a broad range of emissions. At every step we consider the social impact of our climate change action, to support a just transition to a low carbon future. We are certified as Net Carbon Zero or better.

Our Human Resource practices support equity, diversity, and sustainability in the workplace. Our staff acknowledge that we all have a role in creating a sustainable future and are recognised as sustainability experts in their fields.

We are planning, measuring, tracking, and reporting on our practice and feed this information back into continuous improvement.

Te tī e wana ake- Regenerative approach

We do not accept that doing less harm is enough. We are committed to taking a whole system approach to creating a thriving future. At the heart of this system is the learning and knowledge which we continuously share, challenge, and develop. This recognises both synergies and contradictions between sustainability objectives. We recognise that sustainability is complex and as a result our plans will need to readjust regularly.

Staff and students are proud to be part of the sustainability culture at Otago because they understand the positive impact we are making. The culture is apparent and consistent in our values, practice, and the campus environments. Students choose Otago because of the sustainability culture, and staff stay because they see their values matched at an organisational level.

Ka hau te tī- Regional and global impact

We work in Tiriti based partnership with Iwi to progress towards a thriving future which is reciprocal and just. We are responsive to global and local communities in a manner that is open to their ideas and perspectives.

We create a net good through community engagement, advocacy at local and national government, providing policy advice, relevant research, and the capabilities of our graduates. This impact is evident across the breadth of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In creating impact, we recognise both our Tiriti obligations and our obligations to our pacific neighbours who are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We regularly monitor, evaluate, and publicly report on our impact.

Te tī ka rito-Innovation

Many of the solutions to our sustainability challenges are already known. Some have been known within indigenous understandings for many generations. From this strong position we take a bold approach to innovation which will address our sustainability challenges.

Our innovation systems are trans-disciplinary, strongly linked to Mātauraka Māori, community, industry, and government. We have spaces and groups dedicated to generating and implementing innovative social and technology solutions. Through a living lab approach, academic staff, professional staff, and students work together, to develop innovative sustainability solutions.

Whakamahere

Implementation Plan



Whakamahere: Implementation

Ti Kōuka as a framework provides direction and vision. The framework can be compared to a compass or a constellation of stars that guide our actions. There also needs to be clarity, accountability, and resourcing to support those actions. The action plans sits separately from the framework (as it does for the Māori and Pacific Strategic Frameworks). This allows a more iterative, responsive, and local approach. Divisions, campuses, departments will be supported by the Sustainability Office to create their own plans, either as separate documents or integrated into their existing strategic plans.

The following actions will be taken to ensure that this vision leads to action. Actions that will lead to a thriving future:

- Every division, and each of the northern campuses will nominate a responsible person for progressing Ti Kōuka: The Sustainability Strategic Framework. This responsibility should be formally recognised, for example as chair of a divisional sustainability committee/task force, Associate Dean (Sustainability), or as part of the portfolio of a senior leader within that division.
- Senior Leadership team and every division will commit annually to a sustainability action plan relevant to their own context and role. This action plan can be integrated into an existing divisional plan or be created separately. The responsible person in that division will be supported by the Sustainability Office to ensure alignment with the framework.
- An advisory group for the implementation of Ti Kōuka will be formed. This will include the responsible person from each division, and other staff with relevant expertise. The role of the advisory group will be to guide implementation to focus on the most material issues, and a coherent approach across the University.
- To ensure progress is locked-in as normal practice a Sustainability Policy will be created which will provide the tumu or base, which branches out into the sustainability aspects of other policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Progress on implementation will be reported on in an annual sustainability report, and through integration with University Annual report.