UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

Sustainable Development Goals

REPORT 2024

Towards 50 years of impact and innovation

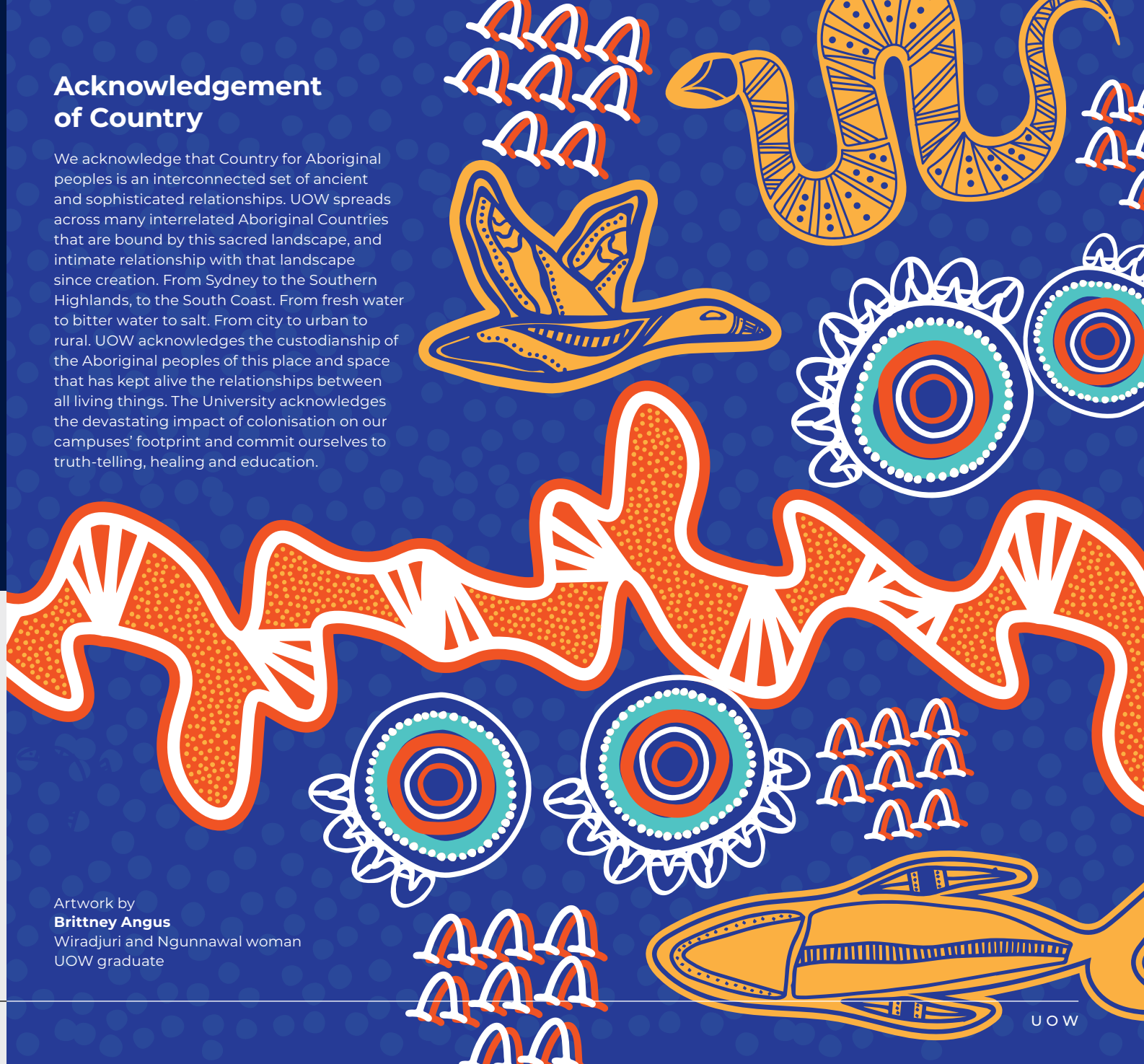
2024 marked a pivotal year for the University of Wollongong (UOW) as we approached our 50th anniversary in 2025. This milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on our groundbreaking achievements in research, teaching, learning and innovative partnerships, leading to advancements in healthcare, manufacturing and energy transition in 2024.

Throughout the year, we continued to actively integrate the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into many aspects of university life, resulting in UOW's continued achievement in the global Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. This report demonstrates the University's ongoing commitment to creating a more sustainable and equitable world, and our dedication to driving positive change for communities and the environment, locally, nationally and internationally.

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient and sophisticated relationships. UOW spreads across many interrelated Aboriginal Countries that are bound by this sacred landscape, and intimate relationship with that landscape since creation. From Sydney to the Southern Highlands, to the South Coast. From fresh water to bitter water to salt. From city to urban to rural. UOW acknowledges the custodianship of the Aboriginal peoples of this place and space that has kept alive the relationships between all living things. The University acknowledges the devastating impact of colonisation on our campuses' footprint and commit ourselves to truth-telling, healing and education.



Artwork by
Brittney Angus
Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal woman
UOW graduate

As the University of Wollongong (UOW) marks its 50th anniversary in 2025, we reflect with pride on our achievements over the past half-century. Yet, more importantly, we look ahead with determination to shape a better future for our communities and for the world. This **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2024 Report** is part of that forward-looking story.

Over the past year, we have deepened our commitment to sustainability by embedding the SDGs across our teaching, research, partnerships, and campus life. These collective efforts are laying the foundations for the next 50 years of impact and influence.

This report captures the many ways our students, staff, partners and communities are putting sustainability into action. From climate innovation and clean energy, to health and wellbeing, social equity, and the transformative power of education, it demonstrates how collaboration and shared purpose are driving meaningful change.

The past year has been a pivotal one. UOW's rise to 31st place in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and our entry into the top 100 globally in the 2025 QS Sustainability Rankings reflect the creativity, dedication and care of our community. Whether through pioneering hydrogen and steel decarbonisation technologies, expanding access and opportunities for underrepresented students, or forging partnerships locally and globally to advance wellbeing, UOW continues to embody the principle of thinking globally, acting locally, and creating impact through partnership.

But sustainability is not a destination; it is a journey that requires us to be bold, to adapt, and to care deeply about the legacy we leave behind. As the saying goes, "We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." That sentiment lies at the heart of this report, and at the centre of our **Vision 2035** and **Strategic Plan 2030**, where we commit to creating and applying knowledge that empowers people, strengthens communities, and supports a resilient and sustainable world.

I am proud of what we have achieved together in 2024, and even more inspired by what lies ahead. As we celebrate UOW's 50 years, let us carry forward the same courage, creativity, and care that have brought us here, ensuring the next 50 years are defined by solutions that uplift people and protect our planet.

Thank you for your continued commitment to a better, more sustainable future.

Warm regards

Professor G.Q. Max Lu AO
Vice-Chancellor and President

UOW's Vision 2035 and Strategic Plan 2030

THINK GLOBAL. ACT LOCAL. IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP.

As the University of Wollongong moves confidently into its sixth decade, Vision 2035 and the Strategic Plan 2030 set a bold agenda for the future – one defined by adaptability, innovation and a steadfast commitment to societal impact.

Our purpose:

To create and apply knowledge that empowers people, strengthens communities and supports a resilient and sustainable world.

Vision 2035:

Empowering student success, delivering world-leading teaching and research, and driving local and global impact, UOW will be recognised among the world's top 100 universities.

At the heart of this vision are the people who drive our success: students, staff, alumni, partners and communities working together.

Our full Vision 2035 and Strategic Plan 2030 can be viewed at **uow.info/strategy**

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a call-to-action for people worldwide to address five critical areas of importance by 2030: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. In total, there are 17 goals aimed at improving the planet and the quality of human life around the world.

Goal 1: No Poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Goal 2: Zero Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4: Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Goal 13: Climate Action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Goal 14: Life Below Water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Goal 15: Life on Land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Global highlights

=31st

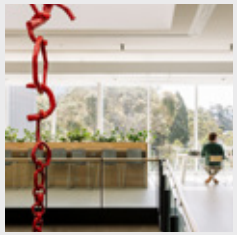
Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

2025

=98th

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability

2025



5+ stars

QS Stars Rating

August 2025

Top 100

THE ranking in 14 out of 17 SDGs

2025

Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2025

TOP 50 GLOBALLY

10th
SDG 6
Clean Water and Sanitation

11th
SDG 10
Reduced Inequalities

21st
SDG 13
Climate Action

=27th
SDG 8
Decent Work and Economic Growth
(2nd in Australia)

=38th
SDG 15
Life on Land

=42nd
SDG 5
Gender Equality

TOP 100 GLOBALLY

=55th
SDG 14
Life Below Water

=58th
SDG 16
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

=60th
SDG 12
Responsible Consumption and Production

=64th
SDG 17
Partnership for the Goals

=69th
SDG 7
Affordable and Clean Energy

71st
SDG 9
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
(1st in Australia)

83rd
SDG 1
No Poverty
(1st in Australia)

=94th
SDG 2
Zero Hunger

Environment and climate action

Our researchers continue to provide global leadership across critical environmental and climate challenges, from deciphering Antarctica's most extreme heatwave to revealing climate impacts on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. We maintain strong partnerships with universities, industry partners and government organisations worldwide, contributing essential evidence to international climate assessments. The University demonstrates expertise across atmospheric science, marine ecosystem research, bushfire risk management and innovative sustainability solutions.

10th
SDG 6:
Clean Water and Sanitation
THE Impact Rankings 2025

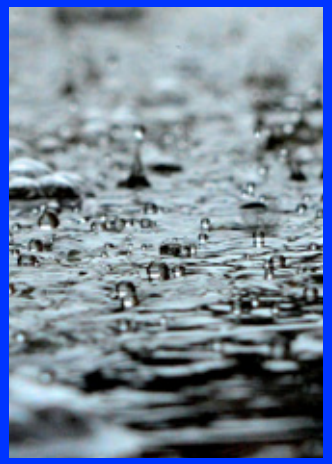
=55th
SDG 14:
Life Below Water
THE Impact Rankings 2025

21st
SDG 13:
Climate Action
THE Impact Rankings 2025

=69th
SDG 7:
Affordable and Clean Energy
THE Impact Rankings 2025

=38th
SDG 15:
Life on Land
THE Impact Rankings 2025

Sustainability in numbers



WATER CONSUMPTION

3.2 megalitres
of onsite rainwater storage

1%
increase in mains water consumption since 2019

PAPER CONSUMPTION

81%
reduction in office paper purchased since 2019

94%
paper consumed in 2024 was carbon neutral

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

21%
of people commuted to UOW via active transport in 2023

23%
of people commuted to UOW via public transport in 2023

Two electric shuttle buses
replaced hybrid buses in 2024

WASTE MANAGEMENT

54%
of waste diverted from landfill in 2024[1]

194 tonnes
of waste composted in 2024[1]

CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

86 native plants
planted in 2024, including trees, shrubs, grasses, ground covers and palms

CAMPUS FACILITIES

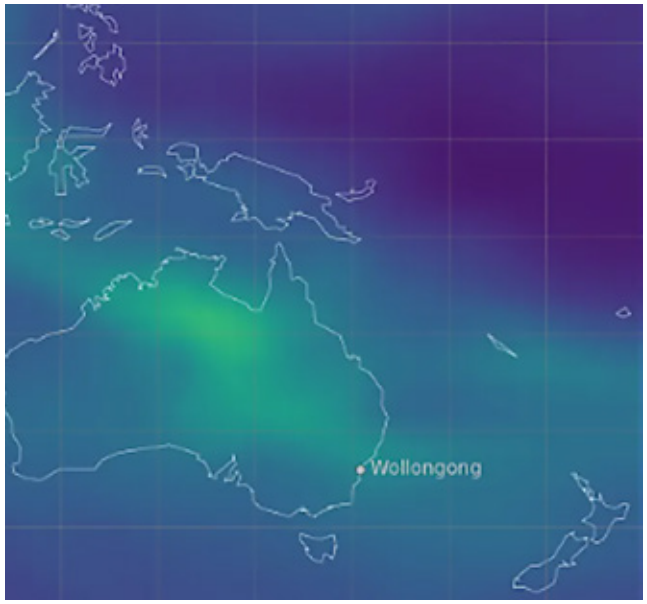
13 secure bike bases
and end-of-trip facilities

1. Wollongong campus only

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable Buildings Research Centre

The Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC) is a multidisciplinary facility addressing the challenges of making built environments sustainable. The Centre is pioneering new approaches to building design, construction and retrofitting techniques to create more effective places to live and work. The SBRC building is the first in Australia to be certified under the Living Building Challenge (LBC) framework for sustainable, regenerative buildings. It is also 6 Star Green Star – Education Design v1 accredited.



RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The Centre for Atmospheric Chemistry

Research at the Centre for Atmospheric Chemistry advances our understanding of atmospheric trace gas and aerosol chemistry, atmosphere/biosphere exchange of trace gases, and long-term changes in atmospheric composition and chemistry – from local to global scales. For more than 25 years, the Centre has established the most intensive atmospheric composition and chemistry research and training program in Australian universities. The Centre also collaborates widely in Australian and international atmospheric science communities, including other universities, CSIRO, ANSTO, BOM, federal and state government departments and international networks.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The Centre for Sustainable Ecosystem Solutions

The Centre for Sustainable Ecosystem Solutions (CSES) aims to be a nationally and internationally significant driver of innovative research into the way that threatening processes affect the structure, function and composition of ecosystems. This includes maintaining and extending existing ecosystems and their biodiversity, of both plants and animals, especially ecosystems under threat. The Centre reports on the extent and effects of invasive species, the changes to species and ecosystems by disturbances, the effects of climate change on plants and animals, and the importance of human input.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS)

The Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) is Australia's only multidisciplinary, university-based Centre dedicated to research, education and training on ocean law, maritime security and natural marine resource management. ANCORS has an unrivalled reputation for capacity building in the law of the sea, ocean policymaking and maritime security.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Australian Centre for Culture, Environment, Society and Space (ACCESS)

In a volatile world, how can we understand the challenges and opportunities of changing socioenvironmental relations to shape more just and sustainable futures for people and places? ACCESS research combines analysis of environment, culture, society and space to explore the complex, place-based challenges and opportunities arising from the diverse transformations of cities, regions, economies, and communities. It also addresses how we can tackle these challenges with strategic decision-making, enacted at multiple scales across institutions and communities.

Aimee Silla (2024). *Safeguarding our fabulous frogs*, Sustainable snapshots competition, Staff first place winner – Category 2: Sustainability in Action.

INITIATIVE

Putting Country into focus celebrates sustainability

In August 2024, UOW launched the Sustainable snapshots: Putting Country into focus photographic competition and exhibition, inviting eligible staff and students to celebrate their connection to Country and showcase sustainability in action. The competition received over 70 entries, each accompanied by a title and a reflective caption, highlighting personal connections to the natural environment and sustainable practices across UOW campuses.

The initiative fostered a vibrant dialogue about sustainability and cultural connection at UOW. Through creative expression, participants and viewers were encouraged to reflect on their relationship with Country and the practical steps they can take toward environmental stewardship. The exhibition celebrated individual perspectives while reinforcing the University's commitment to sustainability, community, and Indigenous values. **Dr Aimee Silla** from the **School of Science** was the winner in the Sustainability in Action category. Her photograph entitled *Safeguarding our fabulous frogs,* featured the critically endangered Booroolong frog (*Litoria booroolongensis*).

CASE STUDY

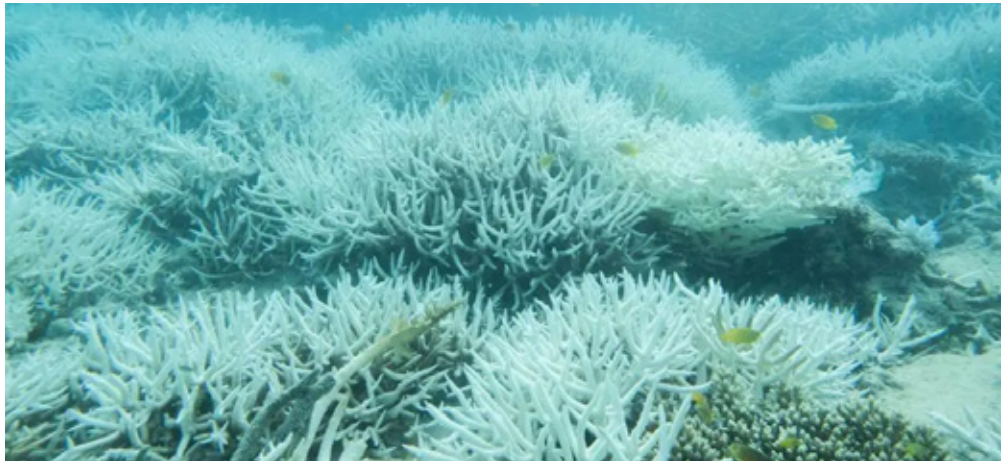
Deciphering Antarctica's biggest recorded heatwave

In January 2024, a team of 54 international researchers, including UOW's **Distinguished Professor Sharon Robinson** and Honorary Senior Fellow Dr Dana Bergstrom, joined forces to dissect the meteorological drivers of an unprecedented heatwave. In March 2022, East Antarctica experienced a heatwave of extraordinary intensity, with temperatures soaring up to 40°C above average in what became the continent's most extreme recorded temperature event.

Under the leadership of Swiss climatologist Professor Jonathan Wille, the comprehensive study identified the heatwave was driven by a rare atmospheric river event that linked tropical weather systems to polar extremes. The research highlighted cascading impacts across the Antarctic system, including record low sea ice extents and ice shelf collapse events, which threaten global sea-level stability and climate regulation systems.

The extreme warming event provided scientists with crucial real-time data about how rapidly Antarctica's climate system can shift under global warming conditions. The research played a vital role in raising awareness among policymakers and the public about the urgent reality of climate change impacts in polar regions.

The study reinforced the critical need for international cooperation and urgent climate action to prepare for increasing climate extremes, providing evidence that even the most remote regions of Earth are experiencing unprecedented changes that will have global consequences.



CASE STUDY

400-year temperature record shows catastrophe for Great Barrier Reef

According to new research led by UOW Research Fellow **Dr Benjamin Henley,** the Great Barrier Reef is under critical pressure, with warming sea temperatures and mass coral bleaching events threatening to destroy the remarkable ecology, biodiversity and beauty of the world's largest coral reef.

University of Wollongong researchers, including marine scientists and climate experts, analysed coral cores to build a 400-year temperature record of the Great Barrier Reef. Their work demonstrated that recent warming far exceeds natural variability, correlating with increased coral bleaching and reef degradation.

Professor Helen McGregor from the School of Science was the second author of the study. "The Great Barrier Reef is facing catastrophe if anthropogenic climate change is not immediately addressed," Professor McGregor said. "The very corals that have lived for hundreds of years and that gave us the data for our study are themselves under serious threat."

The research, published in the world-leading scientific journal *Nature*, has equipped policymakers with crucial evidence to pursue deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions internationally, emphasising the urgent need for emissions reductions and reef protection policies. The study's evidence base supports advocacy for sustainable marine management and has influenced global climate negotiations focused on preserving vulnerable ecosystems.

CASE STUDY

Two centuries of bushfire data reveals surge in frequency and intensity

Groundbreaking research has shown a significant shift in fire characteristics in southeastern Australian over the past 200 years, led by Rebecca Ryan from UOW's School of Science.

The research team, including **Emeritus Senior Professor Ross Bradstock,** Honorary Fellow **Dr Kat Haynes** and **Professor Anthony Dosseto**, combined geological sediment analysis with historical records to track bushfire activity over two centuries across Australia.

The comprehensive study analysed fire indicators preserved in sediment cores, revealing that bushfires have become significantly more frequent and intense, driven by climatic shifts associated with global warming and changes in land management practices following European colonisation.

The evidence has been instrumental in shaping state and national fire management strategies, and promoting prescribed burns, community education programs and resilience-building initiatives across fire-prone regions. By providing long-term context that extends far beyond modern records, the study enhances scientific understanding of fire ecology and supports evidence-based policymaking aimed at mitigating future fire risks amid accelerating climate change.

CASE STUDY

UOW research reveals recycling process creates harmful microplastics

Environmental engineers from UOW have discovered an unintended consequence of plastic recycling, with evidence that mechanical recycling can produce microplastic particles that enter soil and water systems.

The study, conducted by **Professor Faisal Hai**, Head of the **School of Civil, Mining, Environmental and Architectural Engineering** and then UOW PhD candidate, now graduate, **Dr Michael Staplevan**, identified key stages in recycling where microplastic release is highest, providing crucial insights into contamination pathways. The research employed advanced analytical techniques to track microplastic generation throughout different recycling processes, revealing that certain types of plastic processing create substantially more environmental contamination than others.

The findings call for improved technologies and stricter regulations, prompting local governments and industry partners to re-evaluate recycling practices and increase investment in clean technologies. The research has contributed to broader discussions on sustainable waste management and circular economy principles, influencing both public awareness and legislative frameworks.

CASE STUDY

Humanure as a resource: The Pootopia! project

Following its launch in 2023, the Pootopia! project at UOW continued to challenge conventional views on human waste by treating human excrement (humanure) as a valuable resource rather than a problem. Supported by UOW's **Global Challenges Program**, the multidisciplinary team included artists (**Associate Professor Lucas Ihlein** and **Dr Kim Williams**), economists (**Associate Professor Amir Arjomandi** and **Associate Professor Alfredo Paloyo**), engineers (Professor Faisal Hai) and microbiologists (**Professor Martina Sanderson-Smith**).

The team expanded their research and public engagement through pilot composting toilet installations at events and locations such as the Yours and Owls music festival and the Wollongong Botanic Gardens. These installations successfully engaged hundreds of participants, generating important data on system performance, public attitudes, and the feasibility of scaling humanure composting in real-world settings.

The project's collaborative approach, involving partnerships with the permaculture community, festival organisers and the waste management sector, fostered public discussion about sustainable sanitation, regenerative agriculture and circular resource cycles. In 2024, Pootopia! focused on investigating long-term infrastructure potential, policy implications, and strategies for behavioural change, aiming to influence public health outcomes and equitable access to sanitation.

By integrating research, community trials and education, Pootopia! demonstrated how rethinking human waste can support cleaner environments, strengthen community resilience to climate change and contribute to a more sustainable future for all.

CASE STUDY

Global Climate Change Week 2024 focuses on food-water-energy nexus

From 14–18 October 2024, UOW hosted Global Climate Change Week, featuring five days of discussions, seminars and climate action events. The week raised awareness about the importance of sustainable practices and asked participants to take action in their daily lives. It also fostered collaboration between UOW, partners and community, promoting a global dialogue on climate change solutions.

Highlights included the seven-day PlanEATary Quest, launched as an interactive activity demonstrating how to adopt healthy and environmentally sustainable dietary behaviours. Meanwhile, the Agroecology Dialogue at **iAccelerate** provided a chance to connect with local farmers, First Peoples and activists to discuss creating more sustainable, community-driven food systems.

'Meet the Researcher' sessions featured Senior Research Fellow **Dr Jeff Kelleway** from the **Environmental Futures Research Centre** presenting on climate change and coastal impacts, and **Associate Professor Owen Price**, Director of the **Centre for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires,** presenting on connections between weather and record bushfires. **Professor Karen Charlton** from the **School of Medical, Indigenous and Health Sciences** joined local food producers, Dr Pia Winberg of Venus Shell Systems and Ryan Atchinson, creator of Smith Street Garden, to explore eating in ways that are healthy for both people and the planet.

UOW Malaysia hosted three main events: the Colour Fun Run; Connectopia 2024 for mental health, featuring workshops, panel discussions and a mental health hub; and the 5th Engineering Research Symposium (EUReS), focused on sustainable engineering research with international keynote speakers.

CASE STUDY

Regenerative aquaculture for NSW South Coast sustainability

The University of Wollongong, together with the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, worked alongside industry leaders, government stakeholders, experts and community members to understand the challenges and potential of regenerative aquaculture on the NSW South Coast.

Regenerative ocean aquaculture is non-intensive, feed-free aquaculture which allows the stock to grow on its own, using natural food sources and conditions. Conducted over a 12-month period, the research explored how Indigenous, community and economic values can inform the emerging seaweed farming and evolving shellfish farming sectors in waters off the NSW South Coast.

Led by UOW Principal Research Fellow **Associate Professor Michelle Voyer** from ANCORS, the project team explored opportunities for the development of kelp and mussel farming aquaculture in the local area. The study found a very high degree of support for the development of this industry across the NSW South Coast.

To support the transition and responsible growth of a regenerative aquaculture industry in the area, the study recommendations focused on the establishment of research trial sites, co-designed site selection, and the development of a framework to support First Nations leadership in the regenerative aquaculture industry.

Health and wellbeing

The University of Wollongong's comprehensive approach to good health and wellbeing extends from early childhood nutrition and student wellness programs through to cutting-edge research in disease prevention, cardiovascular care and mental health support. Finding solutions to some of the world's biggest health issues remains a strategic focus for the University, from groundbreaking international research collaborations to innovative AI technologies addressing complex challenges. With our state-of-the-art facilities and strategic partnerships, our work delivers meaningful change that supports the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities across Australia and beyond.

Top 100
in Nursing
QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025

=83rd
in the world
QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 – Health & Wellbeing

31st
for Nursing
ARWU 2024

98.5%
of UOW medicine postgraduates in full time employment 2022–2024

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Molecular Horizons

The molecular life sciences are at the forefront of scientific discovery, unlocking the innermost secrets of the living cell and developing new ways to detect and attack disease. Molecular Horizons is dedicated to illuminating how life works at a molecular level and solving some of the biggest health challenges facing the world. To enable this world-leading research, UOW has invested in a suite of revolutionary technology, including Australia's most powerful biological electron microscope, the Titan Krios cryo-EM microscope. Molecular Horizons is the hub of a global partnerships network tackling a wide range of health issues.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Australasian Health Outcomes Consortium

Australasian Health Outcomes Consortium (AHOC) is a research consortium within the **Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health** that aims to improve services and outcomes for patients through benchmarking of care and treatment and supporting service improvement. AHOC generates robust evidence through its provision of clinical quality registries in rehabilitation, pain and palliative care. The registries provide evidence to guide treatment and care for individual patients, measure outcomes and deliver benchmarking for the relevant health sector. AHOC centres identify and promote best practice in clinical care, drive quality improvement and conduct research.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Intelligent Polymer Research Institute

A key research strength at UOW, the Intelligent Polymer Research Institute (IPRI), has made several significant contributions to the discovery of new materials and the development of new fabrication methods. Researchers have made extraordinary leaps in translating materials science into game-changing devices that will significantly impact the areas of diagnostics, energy, health and soft robotics. In partnership with the Australian National Fabrication Facility (ANFF), IPRI is building a global reputation for discoveries in materials science and the implementation of that knowledge in both energy and health to create significantly more value for the University.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Health Innovations Research Centre

The Health Innovations Research Centre (HIRC) envisions a future where health outcomes are optimised through pioneering research, innovative solutions and collaborative partnerships with the community. The Centre's vision is to be a global leader in multidisciplinary health research, driving transformative discoveries that will enhance the wellbeing of people and communities worldwide. The HIRC is committed to advancing knowledge and addressing pressing health challenges through cutting-edge research, education and community engagement.

INITIATIVE

First Bite – Get it Right program gets childhood nutrition on track

Led by UOW's world-leading children's nutrition experts, **Professor Bridget Kelly** and **Dr Megan Hammersley**, and PhD student Sharon Duncan, First Bite – Get it Right is a nutrition program conducted in partnership with UOW researchers and the Illawarra Shoalhaven and Western Sydney Local Health Districts.

The primary aim of the program is to increase preschool children's intake of vegetables. The eight-week program used multiple strategies, including training for educators, a daily vegetable break, vegetable-related hands-on learning curricula, and information and resources for parents.

Researchers measured changes in children's vegetable intake using a Veggie Meter, a device that measures skin carotenoid levels, which reflect fruit and vegetable consumption. The results showed that children who received the intervention had an increase in carotenoid levels compared to those who didn't receive the intervention, especially in centres that followed the program closely.

With only two per cent of Australian children aged four to eight years meeting the recommended daily vegetable intake, this intervention shows strong potential to drive meaningful improvements in early childhood nutrition and establish healthy eating patterns for life.

INITIATIVE

Student wellness programs foster campus community and wellbeing

In 2024, the Wellness by Pulse program delivered 216 events and activations across UOW campuses to help foster the health and happiness of students at UOW.

A range of workshops, regular events and keystone events took place across the year, including IDAHOBIT Day, RUOK? Day, International Day of Happiness, Mental Health Festival, and Fit + Well Festival. These events connected students and staff with resources and organisations to develop the UOW community's understanding of mental health and wellbeing.

The relaunch of the Wellness Ambassador Program also saw the upskilling of 15 students passionate about health and wellbeing, providing peer-to-peer support that helped establish a greater sense of community and belonging on campus. Stress Less Weeks featured three days of free lunches, workshops and mindfulness activities, while the Creative Cooking Series incorporated food education and peer connection through sharing meals.

The program demonstrates UOW's ongoing commitment to nurturing student mind, body and spirit through comprehensive wellness initiatives that address both individual wellbeing and community connection.

CASE STUDY

Groundbreaking research combats health problems in APAC regions

University of Wollongong researchers are tackling pressing health challenges across East Asia and Australia, addressing global health inequities through innovative collaborative research partnerships. Two major three-year projects led by UOW have been funded under the **National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) e-ASIA 2024 Joint Research Project scheme**.

The first project – led by **Associate Professor Guangming Jiang** from UOW's School of Civil, Mining, Environmental and Architectural Engineering and Professor Martina Sanderson-Smith from the School of Science and Molecular Horizons – uses artificial intelligence and wastewater surveillance to track the origins and spread of infectious diseases across the region.

The second project, led by **Distinguished Professor Xu-Feng Huang** from the School of Medical, Indigenous and Health Sciences, examines the role of increased fibre intake in combating metabolic syndrome. Collaborating with researchers from Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, the UOW team examined molecular mechanisms underlying metabolic syndrome to inform new personalised nutrition and lifestyle recommendations to control metabolic syndrome in South-East Asia and Australia.

CASE STUDY

How indoor air quality affects the transmission of airborne diseases

UOW's Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC) completed a comprehensive review examining the impact of indoor air quality on airborne viral disease transmission in Australia's indoor environments. Commissioned by the Office of the Chief Scientist of Australia on behalf of the Prime Minister's National Science and Technology Council, the review synthesised evidence across mechanisms of airborne disease transmission, strategies to improve air quality, indoor air monitoring potential, and energy efficiency impacts.

The research examined economic and health impacts of airborne diseases, with findings offering practical guidance for creating healthier indoor environments in public buildings, schools, offices and healthcare facilities.

This work demonstrates UOW's leadership in translating building science research into practical solutions that protect public health. The research provides actionable insights for improving air quality while maintaining building energy efficiency, providing crucial evidence for policy makers and building managers.

CASE STUDY

Can AI technology help prevent suicide in prisons?

University of Wollongong researchers **Professor Bronwyn Everett**, Honorary Fellow **Dr Rebecca Bosworth** and **Professor Wanqing Li** received NSW Government funding to develop artificial intelligence technology for suicide prevention in corrections centres.

The interdisciplinary team from UOW's **School of Nursing** and **School of Computing and Information Technology**, along with partners from Western Sydney University and 3Aim Solutions, explored a radar-based solution paired with AI to monitor vital signs of at-risk individuals in their cells.

The technology aims to provide early warning systems enabling staff intervention before crises occur. Currently, NSW correctional centres rely on camera monitoring and routine checks, but vital sign monitoring remains limited. In 2020, 12.8 per cent of people entering prison in NSW reported self-harm history and 11.8 per cent attempted suicide.

"Self-harm and suicide prevention in correctional facilities is a public health priority requiring diverse expertise," Professor Everett said. "We hope that through this study we can develop a solution that will improve the health and wellbeing of populations who are at increased risk."

CASE STUDY

Home exercise pilot aims to reduce frailty in cardiovascular patients

Senior Research Fellow **Dr Julee McDonagh** from UOW's School of Nursing was awarded funding to pilot an innovative home exercise program to improve frailty in cardiovascular patients.

Heart failure currently impacts one to two per cent of Australians, with around half becoming susceptible to developing increased frailty following treatment. This distressing geriatric syndrome can lead to both physical and cognitive decline, increasing patient vulnerability and severely impacting quality of life.

The research project's home-based program is designed to be practical, safe and effective for patients in their own environment, and tailored to their individual needs and limitations. It focuses on building strength, endurance and functional capacity.

By reducing frailty, the program aims to improve patient independence and reduce hospitalisation rates, with long-term potential to enhance quality of life for thousands of Australians.

CASE STUDY

UOW academics tackle nutrition and lifestyle management in multiple sclerosis care

Senior Research Fellow **Professor Yasmine Probst** from the School of Medical, Indigenous and Health Sciences and PhD candidate Karen Zoszak were awarded more than $300,000 in research funding from MS Australia to understand how lifestyle management and dietary advice impacts health outcomes for people living with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Professor Probst, who lives with MS, led a multidisciplinary team of health professionals to advance a clinical trial to test lifestyle management and help participants make positive changes to nutrition, physical activity and self-management of the disease.

Changes to health measures, including disability, fatigue and sleep were assessed, with long-term evaluation to consider whether a tailored lifestyle approach can result in increased weight loss and greater improvements to MS symptoms.

Meanwhile, Ms Zoszak investigated whether online dietary advice for MS aligns with Australian Dietary Guidelines and explored associations with health outcomes in people living with the disease. Her research addresses growing concerns that people with MS often search online for dietary advice that may be unreliable, contradictory or potentially harmful.

With more than 33,000 Australians currently diagnosed with MS, this work aims to ensure people receive accurate, evidence-based nutrition and lifestyle guidance to increase their confidence and support their health and wellbeing.

Social equity, diversity and inclusion

The University of Wollongong continues to lead nationally in social equity, diversity and inclusion, ranking first in Australia for equity in 2024.* With around 40 per cent of students from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education, UOW demonstrates an unwavering commitment to creating pathways for diverse communities to access quality education.

Our researchers drive meaningful change through pioneering studies examining refugee settlement experiences, gender barriers in STEM academia, and corporate accountability in global supply chains. The University maintains comprehensive support systems for students, including our expanded Pulse Pantry initiative, which assisted over 7,500 students experiencing food insecurity in 2024. Through targeted scholarship programs, extensive regional campus networks and innovative partnerships with social enterprises, UOW is proud to foster inclusive environments where all students and staff can thrive and contribute to a more equitable society.

11th
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
THE Impact Rankings 2025

=42nd
SDG 5: Gender Equality
THE Impact Rankings 2025

5 stars
Inclusiveness
QS Stars, August 2025

=65th
in the world
QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 – Equality

=71st
in the world
QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 – Social Impact

*2024 Australian Financial Review (AFR) Best University Rankings

Reducing inequalities in numbers

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

31%
of successful applicants in 2024 came from regional or remote areas

3.1%
of successful applicants in 2024 identified as Indigenous

15.9%
of successful applicants in 2024 were from low socio-economic backgrounds

$1,290,500
in scholarships was delivered to students from low socio-economic backgrounds in 2024

729
students received equity scholarships in 2024

30.6%
of students who started in 2024 were first-generation students

21.3%
of international students in 2024 were from developing countries

STRIVING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

50%
of the University Council in 2024 were women

43.7%
of senior academic staff in 2024 were women

61%
of students who commenced in 2024 were women

56.4%
of graduates in 2024 were women

78.6%
of graduates in health-related courses in 2024 were women

INITIATIVE

Pulse Pantry addresses rising student food insecurity

With 53 per cent of UOW students experiencing food insecurity in 2024, the University's Pulse Pantry initiative continued to assist students facing financial hardship or who required a last-minute meal. Launched as an ongoing initiative in 2021 after an overwhelming response to COVID-19 pantry packs, the service operates on a points-based system where students receive 10 points weekly to claim items.

In 2024, 7,599 students accessed the service (a 10 per cent increase from 2023) with 96 per cent being international students. The initiative expanded to twice-weekly operations during high-stress periods and introduced innovative initiatives such as the Pulse Giving Tree campaign. Held throughout December 2024, the campaign generated almost $1,500 in financial donations via the UOW website and over 500 grocery and hygiene items dropped at donation spots.

Additionally, a pilot program in partnership with **Aspire Events, Venues and Catering** distributed unused catering orders to students via Pulse Pantry, while offering corporate clients the option to sponsor meals for students. Supported by generous donors and volunteers, Pulse Pantry continues to represent a collaborative approach to addressing student food insecurity and food waste in an era of rising living costs.

INITIATIVE

Sustainable Futures Opportunity Scholarship champions environmental stewardship

The University's Sustainable Futures Opportunity Scholarship supports students with their studies and champions the continued need of sustainability. It represents UOW's commitment to environmental leadership and carbon neutrality by 2030, as well as recognising that creating a sustainable future requires diverse voices and perspectives.

Building on UOW's comprehensive equity scholarship program, this initiative specifically targets students passionate about environmental sustainability and climate action. The scholarship aligns with the University's broader sustainability goals while ensuring equitable access to education in environmental fields.

Recipients are selected based on demonstrated financial need and commitment to environmental stewardship, supporting UOW's vision of empowering students to become leaders in addressing global sustainability challenges.

INITIATIVE

Woolyungah Indigenous Centre

The Woolyungah Indigenous Centre (WIC) is committed to building the aspirations of First Nations Australians in tertiary education. The Centre provides programs and facilities that encourage, support and advance students from entry to university through to successful completion. The Indigenous Admissions Program (IAP) administered by WIC offers an alternative pathway for First Nations Australians seeking entry into UOW's undergraduate programs. UOW has taken significant steps to help mitigate the risk of academic attrition among First Nations students by encouraging the use of a new online tool to self-identify areas where support is needed. WIC provides a culturally safe space and all the elements for a supportive academic journey, including tutoring programs, academic and accommodation scholarships, and financial support.

CASE STUDY

UOW ranked first place nationally for equity and access

The University of Wollongong was named the top university in Australia for equity in the 2024 *Australian Financial Review* (AFR) Best University Rankings, placing equal ninth overall with excellent results in all criteria.

The AFR rankings evaluate universities across equity, teaching, research and career impact, with UOW ranking among the top 15 in each category. The equity pillar measures five groups of disadvantaged students: non-English speaking background, disability, Indigenous, low socio-economic, and regional/remote.

Around 40 per cent of UOW students come from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in higher education, supported by extensive regional campuses in the Shoalhaven, Southern Highlands, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley, alongside metropolitan campuses in Liverpool and Sutherland. The first place ranking for equity underscores the University's commitment to expanding access to higher education for students from all backgrounds.

CASE STUDY

Annual Chocolate Scorecard drives corporate accountability in global cocoa industry

Spearheaded by an international team, including **Associate Professor Stephanie Perkiss** from UOW's **School of Business**, the annual Chocolate Scorecard initiative made Easter 2024 a little less sweet, but a little more meaningful.

The international initiative evaluates retailers and chocolate companies against seven sustainability markers, including traceability, living income, child labour and deforestation. A traffic light system is used to rank retailers and manufacturers, in descending order, green, yellow, orange, red or grey for their overall progress towards these categories.

The 2024 scorecard revealed concerning practices, with Australian retailers Coles, David Jones and Kmart receiving red ratings for their own branded chocolate, while Woolworths scored orange. German supermarket chain Aldi, which accounts for 10 per cent of the national grocery market in Australia, emerged as the leader in the national retailer field, with a yellow rating for progressing in policy and practice. Globally, no retailer scored a green rating.

The project objective is to encourage companies to improve transparency and social and environmental practices each year. Chocolate manufacturers report that the scorecard influences their strategic direction, demonstrating how academic research can drive change in global supply chains.

CASE STUDY

Exploring refugee experiences in regional Australia

Led by UOW **Associate Professor Natascha Klocker** from the **School of Social Sciences**, *Settling well in regional Australia: Experiences of people from refugee backgrounds* represents one of the most comprehensive assessments of the impacts of refugee settlement in regional Australia. The study is funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Program until 2026, with support from five partner organisations including the Department of Home Affairs and Multicultural NSW.

The project examines how regional settlement impacts people of refugee backgrounds themselves, as well as the communities in which they settle. The research team has conducted in-depth interviews with hundreds of former refugees, community stakeholders and First Nations custodians, operating across six study sites in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Settling Well aims to answer a range of important questions, with findings expected to enhance government decision-making and maximise positive outcomes for both former refugees and their destination communities.

CASE STUDY

Research reveals career barriers for women academics in STEM

A UOW doctoral research study has uncovered critical insights into how women in Australian STEM academia experience career progression. *Identities, intersectionality and career progression of women academics in STEM* explored how women academics' identities are shaped and sometimes constrained by university processes.

Through interviews with 32 women academics and 18 career progression decision-makers across 14 Australian universities, the research examined career-related conversations around mentoring, performance and promotion. Analysis revealed that these discussions are not always fair or neutral, often reflecting hidden expectations around gender, race and professional identity. These findings demonstrate how power and discretion influence who receives recognition or support, offering insights into how academic careers can be made more fair, inclusive and supportive of diverse identities.

Conducted by doctoral candidate Iresha Donmanige and **Associate Professor Shamika Almeida** from UOW's School of Business, the research aims to create more equitable institutions by improving governance practices and strengthening quality education through the retention and progression of underrepresented academics.

CASE STUDY

How women survive and thrive during uncertainty

A UOW study examining women entrepreneurs' experiences during crises has provided valuable insights into psychological resilience and business sustainability in developing economies.

Surviving and thriving during uncertainty: Evidence from women entrepreneurs focused on Sri Lanka's flower industry, analysing the psychological capacities of women entrepreneurs before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research revealed the complex interplay between women entrepreneurs' psychological capital, including self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience, and their emotional responses to unprecedented disruption. Despite facing disproportionate impacts from social, cultural, health and economic disruption, these women demonstrated remarkable adaptive capacity.

Led by **Dr Nelly Liyanagamage** from the School of Business, the research found that women entrepreneurs, while particularly vulnerable to uncertainty, possess unique psychological resources that enable business continuity. The research offers practical recommendations including development programs to enhance small business competitiveness and increased government assistance through incentives for growth, market access and internationalisation.

CASE STUDY

Students collaborate with non-profit to enhance disability employment pathways

A work-integrated learning partnership between UOW and local social enterprise Flagstaff Group provided students with the opportunity to develop a pioneering program to enhance employment pathways for people living with disability.

Through site visits and direct engagement with Flagstaff Group, postgraduate business students **undertaking a research capstone subject** gained firsthand insight into the challenges and opportunities surrounding inclusive employment. The collaboration encouraged students to explore how meaningful work can be created within community-focused, values-driven organisations, beyond traditional corporate landscapes.

Students applied academic knowledge in practical settings, creating strategic proposals shaped by Flagstaff's principles of equity, wellbeing and workplace diversity. The partnership proved mutually enriching, with Flagstaff gaining fresh perspectives and innovative recommendations, while students experienced real-world application of their knowledge to address genuine social challenges.

Industry and energy transformation

The University of Wollongong has positioned itself at the forefront of the clean energy transformation, pioneering innovative solutions in energy generation, storage and industrial decarbonisation. UOW collaborates extensively with industry partners to drive Australia's transition to renewable energy, developing sustainable technologies that connect industrial centres with clean energy sources.

From breakthrough electric smelting technologies for steel production to innovative waste heat recovery systems, the University's work spans the spectrum of industrial transformation. Through strategic partnerships, UOW creates practical pathways for regional economic development while addressing global sustainability challenges. Our researchers are committed to the growth and implementation of renewable energy and providing scalable models for widespread industrial adoption to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support Australia's net zero goal.

Industry and energy transformation in numbers

=27th
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
THE Impact Rankings 2025

=60th
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
THE Impact Rankings 2025

=69th
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
THE Impact Rankings 2025

Top 50
Mining and Mineral Engineering
ARWU 2024

Top 50
Energy and Fuels
US News Best Global Universities Ranking 2025

Top 100
Energy Science and Engineering
ARWU 2024

Top 100
Mineral and Mining Engineering
QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Engineering – Mineral and Mining
QS Stars, August 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Innovation
QS Stars, August 2025

Reducing our emissions footprint

15%
reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2019 (scope 1 and 2) in 2024

41%
of energy consumed from low carbon sources (15% in 2019) in 2024

1561MWh
of total onsite renewable energy generation (GJ) in 2024

1.6MW
of solar PV capacity operating on campus in 2024

Partnerships

$18.2M
received from industry partnerships*

$42.9M
received from government agencies*

285
active research partnerships with industry and government*

*Data from 2023 HERDC submission

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Blue Energy Futures Lab

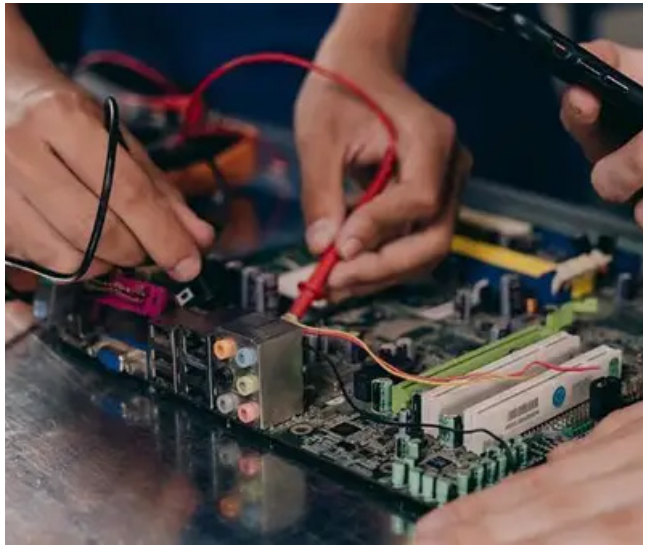
The UOW Blue Energy Futures Lab is a collaborative research network focused on providing evidence-based advice to inform policy development, industry investment and community engagement around the emerging offshore renewable energy industry. The Lab brings together diverse expertise across law, social sciences, policy, economics, engineering, business and marine sciences to address the complex challenges of offshore energy transformation.

As an anchor institution in the Illawarra region – one of six areas in Australia identified as suitable for offshore wind development – UOW is uniquely positioned to lead research into Australia's energy transition. Research capabilities at Blue Energy Futures Lab include social dimensions of energy transitions, ocean governance, blue economy planning, maritime law, regulatory frameworks, and environmental impact assessment. Central to the Lab's approach is respectful acknowledgement of First Nations communities' critical role in sustainable transitions through the **Blue Futures Translational Research Initiative**.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

ARC Training Centre in Energy Technologies for Future Grids

The pace of transformational change in the energy sector has been incredibly rapid, and many industry sectors are finding the transition challenging. The ARC Training Centre in Energy Technologies for Future Grids addresses the need for a new generation of electrical power engineers who intrinsically understand the dynamics of this new electricity supply paradigm. It offers the industry a world-class educational capability designed to train a cohort of engineers with the multi-disciplinary skills required to facilitate the transition to the electricity supply system of the future.



RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Australian Power Quality Research Centre

The Australian Power Quality Research Centre (APQRC) at UOW's Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC) is an internationally recognised Centre of Excellence that supports research, education and consulting in distribution and transmission system power quality, reliability and renewable energy systems. Partnering with industry to improve the quality and reliability of electricity supply for consumers' benefit, we have pioneered and now maintain a national database of real-time power quality throughout Australia.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Australian Institute for Innovative Materials

The Australian Institute for Innovative Materials (AIIM) is a modern, purpose-built facility transforming multi-functional materials research into commercial reality. The researchers at AIIM are at the cutting edge of developing and applying new and innovative materials. It is the first facility that bridges the gaps between breakthroughs, prototyping and commercialisation. The multi-disciplinary focus of the Institute brings together biologists, clinicians, chemists, physicists, engineers and materials scientists. AIIM comprises the Intelligent Polymer Research Institute (IPRI), the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science (ACES), the Institute for Superconducting and Electronic Materials (ISEM), and Electron Microscopy Centre (EMC).

INITIATIVE

Energy Futures inspire the next generation of sustainable scientists

UOW Science Space is set to become home to a state-of-the-art gallery, after receiving a $2.5 million grant from the Australian Government in 2024. The interactive Energy Futures Zone will feature 25 new hands-on exhibits, focusing on hydrogen, wind, solar, wave and gravity energy technologies, plus nine renewed exhibits.

The zone forms part of a broader $10 million initiative to develop skills and courses for emerging energy industries. By engaging audiences of all ages, it aims to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and innovators leading Australia's sustainable energy transition.

The exhibits will educate visitors about energy generation mechanics while highlighting potential careers in the growing energy futures field. Scheduled to open in late 2025, the Energy Futures Zone will mark a new era for Science Space and its visitors, strengthening UOW's role in advancing public understanding of clean energy technologies.

CASE STUDY

Bringing energy efficiency to dairy farming

University of Wollongong researchers are pioneering circular economy approaches to transform Australia's energy-intensive dairy industry through innovative waste heat recovery systems. The collaborative two-year project, led by UOW's **Professor Zhenjun Ma** and Research Fellow **Dr Emily W. Yap**, investigates scalable thermal energy sharing solutions to improve energy efficiency in dairy farming and production.

The dairy industry is Australia's third largest rural sector and its processing operations result in a significant amount of waste heat. The research, conducted in partnership with Bega Group and GeoExchange Australia, applies circular economy principles to identify optimal waste heat recovery and energy efficiency opportunities on farms and in processing factories.

Energy monitoring is being conducted on sites across the Bega Valley Shire, providing critical data on thermal energy flows and recovery potential. The research project supports the **Regional Circularity Co-operative**'s goal to transform the Bega Valley into a living exemplar of circularity by 2030, demonstrating how agricultural waste streams can become valuable energy resources while supporting emissions reduction and economic resilience.

CASE STUDY

Enabling demand flexibility for net zero buildings

Professor Zhenjun Ma and a team from the Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC) have pioneered demand flexibility solutions, enabling buildings to shift or reduce energy use in response to grid requirements. As Australia progresses toward net zero emissions, integrating renewable energy sources into buildings becomes essential; but their intermittent nature can destabilise electricity grids.

In collaboration with CSIRO and over 50 international researchers, the SBRC explored the deployment of a digital-grid infrastructure that unlocks five megawatts of flexible energy across 200 non-residential buildings. This would allow buildings to better align energy use with periods of high renewable generation, resulting in reduced emissions, lower energy costs and improved grid reliability.

Alongside physical testing, the SBRC team has developed virtual building models to simulate energy scenarios and test flexibility strategies without disrupting daily operations. This combination of experimental data and digital modelling forms a powerful toolkit for identifying scalable, practical demand flexibility solutions.

The project demonstrates how buildings can actively support the transition to renewable energy and net zero targets. In recognition of the SBRC's innovation and impact, Professor Ma received a prestigious national excellence award in 2024.

CASE STUDY

Clean energy roadmap supports local jobs

An experienced team of UOW researchers, led by **Associate Professor Tillmann Boehme** from the School of Business, was appointed to head up the development of an Illawarra Clean Energy Industry Roadmap for Business Illawarra. The critical project helped to ensure the Illawarra region captures maximum economic benefit from Australia's clean energy transformation.

The team's comprehensive research examined how to retain economic opportunities from the clean energy boom within the region, focusing on workforce development, supply chain optimisation and financing mechanisms. The initiative addresses opportunities across offshore and onshore wind, clean hydrogen production and green energy storage.

The project is guided by a steering group including Oceanex, Hysata, BlueScope, Squadron Energy and Endeavour Energy, ensuring industry-relevant outcomes. With federal investment in an Energy Futures Skills Centre and Renewable Energy Training facility in Wollongong, plus the NSW government's $275 million Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative, this roadmap strategically positions the Illawarra to maximise clean energy opportunities and deliver green jobs to the community.

CASE STUDY

Steel production gets decarbonisation boost

A team of UOW researchers secured $4.2 million funding from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and industry partner BlueScope Steel to investigate ways to utilise low and medium grade iron ore in low emission steelmaking and further decarbonise domestic steel production.

The team includes project leaders, Senior Research Fellow **Dr Xue Feng Dong** and Research Fellow **Dr Raymond Longbottom**, together with **Professor Brian Monaghan** and **Professor Paul Zulli**, all from the **School of Mechanical, Materials, Mechatronic and Biomedical Engineering**. Over five years, they will explore the viability of Australia's abundant Pilbara iron ores in a potential breakthrough, low-emissions, electric smelting furnace (ESF)-based steelmaking route.

This research addresses a critical opportunity for Australia, which accounts for up to 53 per cent of global iron ore exports annually. By demonstrating viable pathways for low-emissions steelmaking using domestic ore resources, the project stands to revolutionise the steel industry and bring net zero one step closer, supporting both industrial decarbonisation and economic resilience.

CASE STUDY

Net zero energy housing for social equity

Researchers at UOW's Sustainable Buildings Research Centre (SBRC) used standardised simulation methodology to evaluate how energy efficiency upgrades can transform social housing into net zero energy developments. The study assessed the impact of energy efficiency upgrades across multiple climate zones in NSW, focusing on practical, cost-effective measures to improve thermal comfort, reduce carbon emissions and reduce tenant energy costs.

It was demonstrated that energy efficiency upgrades for low rise unit complexes – particularly solar photovoltaic systems, insulation and appliance electrification – can significantly improve thermal comfort while reducing energy use, costs and carbon emissions. By demonstrating cost-effective upgrade strategies that deliver both environmental and social benefits, this research supports climate change adaptation and thermal comfort improvements for low-income households. The study's findings support a clear pathway for achieving net zero targets in social housing while simultaneously improving living conditions for vulnerable communities.

Quality education and inclusive learning

The University of Wollongong is committed to delivering transformative educational experiences that prepare learners to tackle global challenges and create positive change. In 2024, we continued to expand access to quality education through innovative digital platforms, comprehensive scholarship programs, and research-informed community engagement that spans from early childhood to international partnerships.

Our approach to education extends far beyond traditional classroom boundaries, embracing online learning that reaches global audiences, cross-cultural programs that build international understanding, and community festivals that translate cutting-edge research into accessible experiences for families. Through a range of inclusive initiatives, partnerships and programs, we are dedicated to nurturing the next generation of globally minded leaders, while ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds can access world-class education close to home.

1st in Australia
Undergraduate Teacher Education
QILT 2025

3rd in NSW
Undergraduate Creative Arts
QILT 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Employability
QS Stars, August 2025

Top 100
Environmental Education
QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

1st in Australia
Undergraduate Law and Paralegal Studies
QILT 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Teaching
QS Stars, August 2025

=20th
Impact of Education
QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Early Start

Early Start's purpose is to help children flourish and realise their potential, particularly those from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds as well as those living in regional and remote communities. It is a revolutionary initiative that uniquely combines research, teaching and community engagement in the earliest years of life. Early Start Research is one of UOW's research strengths. The team collaborates with the Abbott Foundation, the World Health Organization, NSW Health, Goodstart Early Learning, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), with a goal to overcome disadvantage and effect real social change.

INITIATIVE

Global learners tackle climate change through accessible online education

UOW launched The Climate Challenge in December 2024, a free online course designed to help learners of all backgrounds understand our changing climate. Spearheaded by **Professor Troy Heffernan** from the School of Business, with support from Dr Marianne Peso from the UOW Future Education Division, the initiative enlisted cross-disciplinary academics to create evidence-based course materials addressing one of our time's most pressing challenges.

Within six months, 884 people from over 62 countries completed the course, spanning from Australia to Bangladesh to the Philippines, Germany and the United States. The comprehensive curriculum covers the science of climate change, the role of misinformation and critical source evaluation, as well as a range of solutions for climate action.

In an era of widespread climate anxiety, the course offers both facts and hope, highlighting real-world solutions while empowering learners with comprehensive climate literacy. This global reach demonstrates UOW's commitment to democratising climate education and building worldwide capacity for climate action through accessible, high-quality online learning.

INITIATIVE

Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Scholarship recognises next generation of changemakers

The University's Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Scholarship program continued to identify and nurture exceptional young leaders from across regional NSW and beyond. In 2024, 15 first-year students were announced as the recipients of the prestigious scholarship, representing diverse academic pursuits from law and science to education, arts, mathematics, psychology and international studies.

The annual scholarship program provides $30,000 per year for the length of an undergraduate degree, up to a maximum of four years, alongside leadership training, mentorship and global mobility opportunities. The program seeks to inspire young, passionate leaders and give them the knowledge, skills and worldviews to be future change makers, while ensuring diverse regional representation.

CASE STUDY

UOW delivering on the Australian Universities Accord's equity agenda

In 2024, UOW's commitment to educational equity continued to position the University as a sector leader in delivering the Australian Universities Accord's reform agenda. Around 40 per cent of UOW students come from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education, demonstrating the University's longstanding dedication to expanding access.

UOW is already exceeding expectations in participation rates among First Nations people, people from low socio-economic status backgrounds, and regional and remote students. This success proves that inclusion and diversity does not come at the price of excellence, innovation or scale, evidenced by UOW's position in the top one per cent of the QS World University Rankings 2024.

The University's pathway programs and network of regional campuses create vital opportunities for students to access world-class education close to home, supporting both individual aspirations and community economic development across NSW.

CASE STUDY

Early Start festival brings research and play together

The 2024 Festival of Digital Play at UOW's **Early Start Discovery Space** brought together cutting-edge research and accessible community engagement. The family-friendly event translated research findings through play to inform families about the changing digital space, what it means for children and the ways technology may be used to encourage positive interactions.

The festival was co-facilitated by Early Start Director of Research **Professor Lisa Kervin**, researchers from the **Australia Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child**, and the Discovery Space team. It offered a range of digital play experiences, including robot rallies, mechanical marvels, coding in space, Lego trains, digital microscopes, and other pop-up play activities.

With all activities designed to showcase how digital technologies can enhance children's learning and development, the festival addressed families' growing needs for guidance on digital resources. The event demonstrated how research-informed approaches to technology integration can celebrate opportunities, while addressing challenges in children's digital experiences.

CASE STUDY

Building cross-cultural psychology expertise

In 2024, The Psychology in an International Context: Singapore (PICS) program connected psychology students from UOW Wollongong with peers in Singapore, with a focus on fostering graduates who are culturally competent and globally minded. This innovative partnership program empowers students to build cross-cultural understanding and develop expertise for addressing global mental health challenges across the Indo-Pacific region.

Students engaged in comprehensive workshops covering counselling skills, research methodologies and career development, building practical knowledge to apply in the areas of mental health and community support. They also gained experience of collaborating to design research studies that tackled real-world, cross-cultural issues, bridging theory with practice.

Delivered in partnership with the Singapore Institute of Management, the annual program offers enriching experiences to students, through collaborations with the Institute of Mental Health and the National University of Singapore. Since launching in 2015, 290 students have taken part in the program, with participants consistently reporting enhanced confidence, valuable international networks, and expanded study and career opportunities.

CASE STUDY

Food-water-energy nexus symposium advances climate education

As part of Global Climate Change Week 2024, UOW hosted Sustaining Our Future: Navigating the Food-Water-Energy Nexus. The symposium considered how multidisciplinary discussions can inform communities as well as develop UOW curriculum and practice with respect to sustainability and climate change for future generations of learners.

The online event brought together UOW experts to address the food-water-energy nexus in the climate crisis, examining how demand for all three is increasing rapidly. The symposium explored how to achieve integrated and sustainable management of water, food and energy to balance the needs of people, nature and the economy.

The symposium exemplified UOW's commitment to embedding sustainability education across curricula while fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to address complex climate challenges. By bringing together diverse expertise, the event demonstrated how academic institutions can translate research into educational frameworks that prepare future generations to tackle interconnected global challenges.

Community engagement and partnerships

At UOW, community engagement is fundamental to our identity as a university that creates knowledge for the benefit of society. We believe that meaningful partnerships are built on shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to addressing the challenges that matter most to our communities.

Our approach to partnership extends from supporting local families and grassroots organisations to collaborating with government and international bodies on complex policy challenges. Through these diverse relationships, we aim to ensure that university resources, expertise and research translate into practical outcomes that improve lives and strengthen communities.

The University of Wollongong recognises that the most effective solutions emerge when academic knowledge meets community wisdom and lived experience. Whether fostering innovation in regional areas, supporting community-led environmental initiatives, or developing new approaches to social challenges, our partnerships are designed to create lasting positive change. We are committed to being an accessible, responsive institution that serves as a catalyst for community resilience and sustainable development across the regions where we operate.

=58th

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

THE Impact Rankings 2025

=64th

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

THE Impact Rankings 2025

71st

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

THE Impact Rankings 2025

Community engagement and partnerships in numbers

WORKING WITH LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

77*
active research partnerships in 2023 were with not-for-profit organisations

62%^
of publications contributing to the SDGs in 2024 featured international research collaboration

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ADVOCACY

115
subjects were about the SDGs in 2024

24,029
students studied subjects about the SDGs in 2024. An increase of 88.6% from 2023

451
UOW publications in 2024 written in collaboration with unique organisations from government, industry, university and community

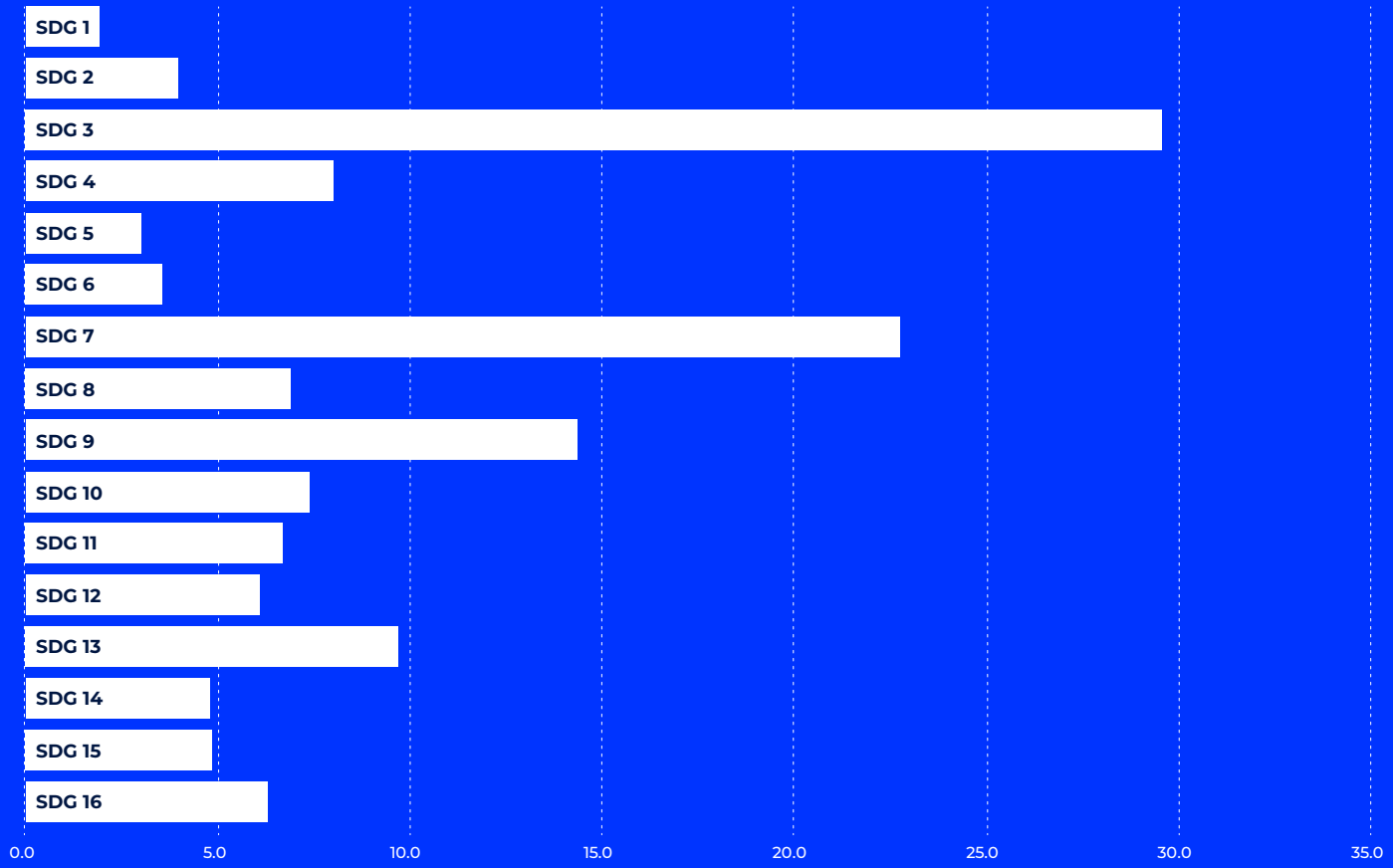
RESEARCH

6.2%^
of UOW publications contributing to the SDGs in 2024 were in the top 1% of journals

42%^
of all UOW publications in 2024 (3531) were aligned to at least one SDG

DISTRIBUTION OF UOW 2024 PUBLICATIONS ACROSS UN SDGS

Chart 1: Percentage of publications out of the total 1475 publications produced by UOW in 2024 that were aligned to a UN SDG[1]



* 2023 HERDC data
^ SciVal Scopus 2024 Data

INITIATIVE

iAccelerate

iAccelerate plays a key role in the dynamic community of entrepreneurs and innovators transforming Australia's economy. As the country's largest university-led incubator, iAccelerate has partnered with around 522 start-ups and scale-ups, creating more than 1,182 jobs and injecting $161.7 million into the economy since inception.

Each company is introduced to the SDGs as a foundational subject in the education program, ensuring entrepreneurs are socially conscious and equipped to make a positive impact on the world.

iAccelerate is the only program of its kind that integrates a pre-accelerator, accelerator and incubator under one roof. In 2024, in response to industry needs, iAccelerate also created and delivered modules and short courses in social enterprise, advanced manufacturing and circularity.

2024 iAccelerate impact in numbers

52%
of companies had at least one active female founder

24
First Nations entrepreneurs supported through regional workshops and the Activate program

48
regional entrepreneurs supported through regional workshops and the Activate program

17
female STEM PhD candidates placed on internship in our ecosystem

INITIATIVE

UOW launches Indigenous Education and Engagement Strategy 2024–2028

In 2024, UOW's **Indigenous Strategy Unit** launched the Indigenous Education and Engagement Strategy 2024–2028, marking a significant milestone in the University's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advancement.

The comprehensive strategy encompasses deliverables and strategic actions designed to resurrect, reinvigorate and advance partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and community. At its core, the strategy navigates the transformative path of students while celebrating the interconnectedness of community and education.

The strategy aims to provide an overarching framework of self-determination, illuminating the University's commitment to an accountable and transparent way forward for staff, students, communities and partners. It reinforces UOW's position as a leader in Indigenous higher education, providing clear priorities and measurable outcomes for meaningful progress.

INITIATIVE

Strengthening community partnerships for greater impact

The University of Wollongong has formalised its commitment to community engagement through the launch of the Local Community Partner Program, recognising the vital contributions of local not-for-profit organisations and creating structured pathways for enhanced collaboration.

The program launched in July 2024 with five leading Illawarra organisations: Raising the Bar Foundation, Healthy Cities Illawarra, The Disability Trust, Illawarra Academy of Sport and Greenacres. While UOW has engaged with these organisations for many years across research partnerships, student placements and community initiatives, the program formalises these relationships to amplify mutual impact.

The initiative provides partners with access to UOW's facilities and expertise while offering students invaluable workplace training and placement opportunities with high conversion potential to employment outcomes.

The program plays a key role in building meaningful relationships that enrich Illawarra communities while strengthening collective impact and progress towards common goals.

INITIATIVE

UOW and James Martin Institute announce strategic partnership

The University of Wollongong announced a partnership with the James Martin Institute for Public Policy (JMI), enhancing its ability to deliver transformative outcomes and real-world impact for the public good. This significant partnership positions UOW to contribute expertise to complex societal challenges on a much larger scale.

As a joint venture between government and universities, JMI enables policymakers to harness multidisciplinary expertise to drive policy innovation and tackle complex public policy challenges. The partnership with UOW brings vital regional perspectives to policy discussions, which is important in developing responses that take the requirements of large regional cities into account.

The partnership provides UOW researchers with access to Policy Fellowships and the JMI Policy Challenge Grant pool. This competitive program gives experts a chance to generate research-informed policy innovations, with the potential to address Australia's most significant public policy challenges.

CASE STUDY

Strengthening family connections in The Dad Space

Recognising the increasing presence of fathers and male caregivers at Early Start Discovery Space, UOW researchers created The Dad Space program to acknowledge and support the unique contributions of fathers to child development and family wellbeing.

Associate Professor Jane Herbert from the **School of Psychology** co-designed the 10-week program, alongside PhD candidate Amy Hofmeier, and Early Start specialists and staff. The unique program combined expert-led sessions with hands-on Discovery Space activities, allowing fathers to share parenting experiences, build community networks, and practice evidence-based play approaches with their children in a supportive environment.

By equipping fathers with research-informed strategies and celebrating their essential role in family structures, the initiative aimed to strengthen long-term family and community wellbeing and demonstrated the positive influence engaged fathers have on children's social-emotional development.

Launched in late 2024, community response to The Dad Space was overwhelmingly positive. Across two terms, more than 85 father-child pairs attended the program, with many becoming regular participants and familiar faces in the Early Start community.

CASE STUDY

Catalysing collective action for effective weed management

Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) Fellow **Associate Professor Sonia Graham** from the School of Social Sciences investigated how seven communities successfully controlled weeds over 30 years. Weeds represent a major threat to natural ecosystems and sustainable rural industries, and current policies call for communities to act collectively to manage weeds; however, there is little empirical evidence about effective approaches.

Drawing from over 100 interviews, Associate Professor Graham's extensive case studies demonstrated that collective approaches through Landcare and Rivercare groups achieved superior economic and environmental outcomes compared to individual efforts. Most significantly, the research revealed substantial social benefits from collaborative weed management, such as nurturing robust social networks that enable community resilience in responding to climate-related hazards.

For the first time, the study has provided evidence that collective weed management delivers greater environmental impact while simultaneously strengthening community bonds. This groundbreaking work shows how community-based environmental action can be a powerful strategy in successful climate adaptation.

CASE STUDY

Whale Songlines bridges culture and science for marine conservation

As part of the Global Challenges Program, UOW's Whale Songlines project pioneered innovative environmental storytelling through extended reality (XR) technology, bridging Indigenous knowledge systems with contemporary data visualisation to empower creative cultural leadership.

Led by Senior Lecturer **Guy Freer** from UOW's **School of the Arts, English and Media** and Research Fellow Dr Emily W. Yap from the Sustainable Buildings Research Centre, the unique art and science collaboration projects real-time environmental simulations onto 3D-printed terrain models. Using recyclable PET plastic, the sustainable technology displays whale migration patterns, water flow dynamics, sea temperature changes and sea-level rise scenarios, creating powerful storytelling platforms where scientific data meets diverse ways of knowing.

The interdisciplinary team worked alongside local communities and international partners, including the Australia Pacific MicroLab in Tonga, combining visualisation technology with traditional Pacific knowledge systems to support marine conservation.

The system's intuitive interface enables users to upload custom datasets, adjust parameters in real-time, and create compelling visual stories about changing landscapes. By combining cutting-edge technology with traditional knowledge systems, Whale Songlines empowers diverse communities to understand, share and act upon environmental experiences, fostering informed decision-making and culturally appropriate climate action for sustainable futures.

CASE STUDY

Illawarra Cancer Carers continues vital support of UOW research

In 2024, the long-term partnership between UOW and Illawarra Cancer Carers (ICC) continued, with the not-for-profit organisation providing a generous donation of $47,500 to UOW's Molecular Horizons to support the research of innovative cancer treatments. The University and ICC's 18-year partnership demonstrates the transformative power of community-supported research. Over this time more than $1.2 million has been gifted to UOW to support cancer research through local fundraising events such as stalls, raffles and an annual banquet.

Senior Professor Marie Ranson, from Molecular Horizons and the School of Science noted that the long-term support from the ICC helped drive cancer research conducted by her team, as well as research and clinical collaborators in the Illawarra region as a whole.

Two UOW research projects that received early and crucial support from ICC donations have gone on to attract commercial support. The most advanced of these is the Deflexifol project, which was picked up by local pharmaceutical startup FivepHusion, enabling clinical trials in Wollongong that demonstrated promising results in 60 people with advanced cancer.

CASE STUDY

Reimagining urban greening through human-plant relationships

Understanding the complex relationships between people and plants in urban environments is critical for successful city greening initiatives. UOW researchers are pioneering groundbreaking research that examines how humans experience urban vegetation in their everyday lives and why conflicts over greening projects continue to emerge across Australian cities.

This innovative project is led by ARC Future Fellow, **Associate Professor Dr Jennifer Atchison**, from UOW's **Geography and Sustainability** discipline within the School of Social Sciences, in partnership with the University of Canterbury and the University of Melbourne. Using cutting-edge concepts and methods to generate new knowledge about contested human-plant geographies, the team investigated how diverse socio-cultural relations drive disputes over urban greening in three Australian cities, offering crucial insights that have been poorly understood until now.

The research addresses a vital challenge facing urban planners and policymakers: while urban greening is essential for sustainable, liveable and climate-adapted cities, conflicts over these initiatives continue to cause delays and even project failures. Expected outcomes include transformative understandings of key human-plant relationships, facilitated international collaborations, and significant findings that will improve urban greening policies and governance frameworks.

CASE STUDY

UOW hosts 28th Indigenous Nationals

The University of Wollongong hosted the 28th Indigenous Nationals in June 2024, bringing together more than 500 Indigenous student-athletes from 33 Australian universities to compete in touch football, basketball, netball and volleyball. With support from Squadron Energy as Official Team Sponsor, UOW fielded two teams.

The annual event celebrates the rich sporting culture of Indigenous Australia and acknowledges the heritage and history of the participants.

The **artwork for the 2024 Indigenous Nationals** was created by Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal graphic designer and UOW graduate **Brittney Angus**. The design featured meeting place symbols reflecting communities from every corner of Australia, with journey lines depicting collective travels to UOW, and dots representing Australia's vast landscape connecting present to past.

While focusing on community celebration and networking, the games promoted unity, health, fitness and wellbeing, creating new communication networks and reinforcing identity through positive role models.

CASE STUDY

iAccelerate RISE program powers regional innovation

iAccelerate – UOW's business incubator – expanded its regional entrepreneur program in 2024 with five regional education programs targeting key industry sectors: fisheries and aquaculture, advanced manufacturing, circularity, ecotourism, and high-quality food production.

Through each eight-week program, **RISE** provided regional entrepreneurs with the knowledge and tools to pursue new innovations and develop the necessary skills to bring their ideas to life. Leveraging UOW's regional presence across the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands campuses, the new programs brought together pre-accelerator facilitators, UOW academics and industry experts to help regional entrepreneurs tackle sustainability challenges and meet local community needs.

Since launching regional programs in 2016, iAccelerate has supported 56 regional startups in bushfire-affected areas, creating 300 new jobs. The expanded RISE program demonstrates UOW's commitment to addressing sustainability challenges whilst fostering regional economic development and innovation capacity.

Responsible operations and governance

The University of Wollongong is dedicated to fostering a sustainable future and has been working to improve the responsibility of its operations. In 2024, we continued to implement initiatives and actions to reduce our environmental impact and embed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into more areas of university life. We are committed to empowering students, staff and communities to innovate and collaborate in addressing the world's most pressing challenges, from climate action and biodiversity conservation to social equity and health.

As UOW marks its 50th year, we reaffirm our commitment to embedding sustainability at the heart of our University's mission. We will continue to innovate, collaborate and lead with purpose, inspiring our community to build a more just, healthy and sustainable future.

=36th
in the world

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025 – Governance

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Internationalisation

QS Stars, August 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Research

QS Stars, August 2025

5 stars
Specialist Criteria: Facilities

QS Stars, August 2025

Sustainable operations in numbers

EV CHARGING STATIONS INSTALLED IN 2024

2x 360 kW
super-fast chargers with dual CCS2 plugs

1x 184 kW
charger with CCS2/CHAdeMO plugs

2x 22 kW
AC charging ports

924 kW
total public charging capacity

100%
renewable energy supply for 360kW and 184kW chargers

BATTERY STORAGE

$2.5M
Arena Battery grant awarded to UOW in 2024 for future installation of 10 medium-scale batteries with a combined capacity of 2.2MW/5.42MWh

ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPGRADES IN 2024

11
buildings and outdoor areas received LED lighting upgrades

1.2M kWH
reduction in annual electricity consumption expected

10
energy-efficient electric heat pump systems installed

Two
buildings installed with HVAC demand response equipment

41%
of electricity consumed in 2024 came from low carbon sources

INITIATIVE

LED lighting upgrades reduce campus energy consumption

The University of Wollongong has completed comprehensive LED lighting upgrades across 11 buildings and outdoor areas on its Wollongong and Innovation campuses, utilising government subsidies through the NSW Energy Savings Scheme. The project is expected to reduce annual electricity consumption by 1.2 million kilowatt hours, delivering approximately $370,000 in operational savings each year.

Additional LED replacements are being implemented at Campus East accommodation, where outdated lighting systems required updating due to discontinued replacement components. The comprehensive lighting upgrade program demonstrates UOW's commitment to reducing energy consumption while improving campus lighting quality and reducing maintenance requirements.

INITIATIVE

Heat pump systems deliver hot water efficiency gains

Ten electric hot water systems across UOW campuses have been replaced with energy-efficient heat pump systems, supported by NSW Energy Savings Scheme subsidies. The heat pump technology significantly reduces electricity consumption compared to traditional electric hot water systems while maintaining reliable hot water supply.

This upgrade contributes to UOW's carbon neutrality commitments while reducing ongoing energy costs.

INITIATIVE

Smart building technology pilots demand response capabilities

The University of Wollongong has installed demand response equipment in two campus buildings to trial innovative grid management technologies during peak electricity demand periods. The pilot program tests how building heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems can automatically adjust operations during high grid loading events, typically occurring on extremely hot or cold days.

The demand response trial aims to reduce energy costs, align HVAC operations with solar energy generation patterns, and manage demand spikes through virtual power plant technologies. This smart building approach supports campus energy management innovation while contributing to electricity grid stability.

INITIATIVE

Renewable energy powers campus microgrid innovation

In 2024, UOW accelerated its transition to renewable energy by installing an onsite solar photovoltaic system at the Innovation Campus. The solar PV systems, which are now operational across the UOW Wollongong, Innovation and Southern Highlands campuses, are designed to maximise local consumption of solar energy to reduce reliance on grid electricity and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, UOW was successfully awarded a $2.5 million **Australian Renewable Energy Agency** (ARENA) battery grant to fund the installation of 10 medium-scale batteries. The batteries will have a combined capacity of 2.2MW / 5.42MWh, with work scheduled to commence in 2025.

At the Wollongong campus, two 360kW super-fast **EV charging stations** were installed in 2024, as well as one 184kW EV charging station and one 22kW charging station, with support from the Drive Electric NSW Electric Vehicle fast charging grants (Round 2). This grant positions UOW as a crucial player in the state's efforts to create an EV "super-highway" and boosts the region's transition to zero-emission vehicles.

A major milestone was the development of the **Clean Energy Living Laboratory** at the Innovation Campus, where a precinct-based microgrid enables real-time research on distributed electricity generation, storage, demand management and control technologies. Led by UOW's **Australian Power Quality Research Centre** (APQRC), the project is set to be Australia's first mixed-use, precinct-based microgrid. The project has received $1.1 million from the NSW Government to drive the development of microgrid technology and help communities and precincts reduce their carbon footprint.

The University of Wollongong's 2024 renewables commitment extended beyond infrastructure, with the University renewing its electricity contract in 2024 with the intent to deliver 75 per cent renewable energy, alongside a Virtual Energy Network to trade excess solar power between campus accounts. The University fleet continued transitioning to electric vehicles, and the new charging infrastructure was supported by a staff EV subscription partnership with Origin EV 360, lowering barriers to cleaner transport.

These integrated initiatives support regional clean energy innovation and provide scalable models for other institutions while advancing UOW's carbon neutrality goals.

INITIATIVE

Electric buses drive sustainable transport forward

In June 2024, UOW introduced two zero-emissions electric buses on its Wollongong campus, operating on the popular North Gong Shuttle routes. The vehicles are the first fully electric buses to operate in the Illawarra region, replacing the previous hybrid fleet.

More than 25 per cent of UOW students, staff and visitors use the free shuttle bus services, making this transition a key component of the University's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. The buses are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower noise pollution and improve air quality on campus, while continuing to reduce reliance on private vehicles.

This initiative highlights UOW's leadership in environmental responsibility and commitment to practical, community-focused climate action. The electric bus rollout also serves as a model for other institutions seeking to reduce their carbon footprint through innovative and sustainable transport solutions.

INITIATIVE

Energy Futures Skills Centre gets off the ground

In 2024, work commenced on the Energy Futures Skills Centre, a state-of-the-art learning environment to support the education, training and engagement needs for the workforce of the future. The centre is funded by a $10 million grant from the Australian Government, helping unlock Australia's renewable energy potential by supporting local communities and industries to create sustainable jobs.

The funding will be used to establish new training laboratories, a Community Engagement Centre for Energy Futures within the existing **Science Space** at Innovation Campus, and create programs to help people change careers and upskill in clean energy jobs. The courses, jointly designed by UOW and TAFE NSW, will focus on all disciplines needed to service the renewables industry, training everyone from engineers to tradespeople for clean energy careers.

Sustainable Futures Committee

In 2024, the Sustainable Futures Committee (SFC) oversaw the University's pursuit and delivery of its sustainability objectives in line with UOW's Strategic Plan. This included the integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and UOW's sustainability initiatives and targets across all appropriate aspects of University activities.

Responsibilities of the SFC include guiding the development and implementation of a UOW sustainability framework and carbon neutral targets. The committee also provided high-level direction on environmental, social and economic sustainability across the University, including developing advice on matters of policy, strategy and planning, to achieve sustainable outcomes for UOW and the broader community.

The SFC committed to meeting a minimum of four times per year to assess and advise on matters including energy reduction projects, embedding SDGs into the curriculum, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement by identifying and supporting emerging best practices in sustainable development.

Carbon Management and Climate Adaptation and Resilience Action Plan

The Carbon Management and Climate Adaptation and Resilience Action Plan 2022-2024 was developed to establish priorities and tasks to be actioned by UOW's Environment Unit, specific to the management of energy and carbon emissions and climate impacts at UOW campuses and facilities.

The Environment Unit's focus is on the environmental sustainability of UOW operations and the implementation of initiatives and actions to reduce impacts and address relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2024, the Environment Unit worked with the Sustainable Futures Committee to achieve common objectives, including monitoring and reducing energy intensity, maximising onsite renewable energy generation, and reducing carbon footprint. The plan was also developed to identify and manage climate risks to campus infrastructure, while educating the UOW campus community about energy conservation and carbon and climate adaptation and resilience.

Actions addressing carbon management and reducing UOW's carbon footprint in 2024 can also be found within the **Transport and Access Action Plan 2022-2024**, as well as the **Waste Management Action Plan 2022-2024**.

Environmental Awareness and Engagement Action Plan 2022-2024

The University of Wollongong is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of its operations. The Environmental Awareness and Engagement Action Plan 2022-2024 was developed to support the UOW community to reduce the environmental impacts of their practices and behaviours while undertaking work or study at the University and while living on campus facilities.

Achievement of these goals and aspirations relies on organisational action, as well as individual (staff and student) action to change practices and behaviours. To support change by individuals, the action plan focused on improving knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, while building capacity and engagement with staff and students to enable participation and support change.

The Environmental Awareness and Engagement Action Plan provided a framework to achieve these objectives using communication, education and training, infrastructure and technological improvements, development of policies, guidelines and resources, and establishing a purposeful community network to share ideas and experiences.

Learn more

We invite all members of the UOW community and our partners worldwide to engage with this report, celebrate our achievements and contribute to the ongoing journey towards sustainability.

EXPLORE UOW'S SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES AND SDG ENGAGEMENT AT:

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