True to our values: University of Tasmania to become certified carbon neutral

The University of Tasmania today announced its intention to become certified carbon neutral.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the move was the culmination of a sustained program of improvement in the carbon footprint of the institution, had been strongly guided by the student body and would appeal to prospective students.

By investing in carbon reduction measures such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and transport, the University had avoided emissions of about 10% at a time of significant growth for the institution.

“We are internationally recognised for our research endeavours across a range of fields including ocean and Antarctic studies, marine biodiversity, planning and agriculture,” Professor Rathjen said.

“It’s only fitting that we ourselves as a University strive to provide leadership and innovation in addressing the principles of sustainability in a direct and impactful way.”

Student Rachel Hay, part of a group which convened a forum to discuss carbon neutrality in early August, said the step was an important milestone.

“On behalf of hundreds of individuals, along with many groups and societies who have been part of sustainability conversations, I’d like to congratulate Professor Rathjen, the University Council and the Sustainability Team on committing to making our university a sustainable leader,” she said.

“We, as students, are proud to attend a university which supports sustainable goals on which our future livelihoods and global community depends.”

The intended certification – via the Australian Government’s Department of the Environment and Energy’s Carbon Neutral Program - contributes to sustainability best practice and has been enabled through a number of initiatives which have encompassed and been led by the entire University community including staff, students and alumni.
University Sustainability Manager Corey Peterson said: “The University of Tasmania is committed to minimising its carbon footprint and has taken a proactive approach to driving improvements in its approach to sustainability.

“Our efforts speak directly to our values where as a University community we strive towards a sustainable society in being agents of change and transformation through a collective approach.”

Some of the key energy and greenhouse gas-saving initiatives undertaken by the University in recent years include:

- Substantial focus on reducing transport emissions through improved support for active and public transport modes
- Significant investment in ‘virtual travel’ support through videoconferencing improvements
- Adding electric and hybrid cars to its vehicle fleet
- Installation of photovoltaic (solar electric) and solar hot water systems
- Undertaking energy audits of buildings leading to energy efficiency improvements such as upgrading lighting systems to LED and heating systems to more efficient technologies
- LPG and diesel fuel source replacements with natural gas
- Ensuring all new major building projects achieve Green Star rating certification and evaluate refurbishments using the same framework.
- Conducting energy challenges and competitions

In recent years the University has been recognised with numerous accolades and commendations in the annual Green Gown Australasia awards, which recognise institutions that are championing sustainability.

Information released by:
University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office
Phone: Jason Purdie, 0455 838 945
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au