Themes from Whakatō Kākano stage 1 Sustainable University workstream



Working group

Role Name	Title	Faculty/service division	
Lead			
Adrienne Cleland	Deputy VC (Operations) & Registrar	Vice-Chancellor's Office	
Section leads			
Andrew Creahan	Director	Organisational Performance & Improvement (OPI)	
Peter Gudsell	Chief Financial Officer	Financial Services	
John Pye	Director, Digital Strategy & Architecture (DSA)	Digital Services	
Simon Neale	Director	Property Services	
Members			
Professor John Fraser	Dean	Medical & Health Sciences	
Associate Professor	Dean	Education & Social Work	
Mark Barrow			
Professor Gillian Lewis	Associate Dean (Sustainability),	Science	
Associate Professor Carla Houkamau	Associate Dean (Māori)	Business & Economics	
Dr Jemaima Tiatia- Seath	Head of School, Te Wānanga o Waipapa	Arts	
Ian Olan	Chief Operating Officer	UniServices	
George Barton	Treasurer-Secretary	Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA)	
Katherine Rive	Programme Change Lead	OPI	
jeff kennedy	Enterprise Architecture Manager (DSA)	Digital Services	

Number of submissions: 191 (a breakdown of submissions is available at the end of this document)

Method

- All submissions received were distributed to the workstream lead and to the analysts.
- All submissions were assessed by the workstream lead, and all submissions were read and evaluated in detail by the analysts and categorised into emerging themes. Relevant quotes were harvested and reflected to the workstream lead and to the section leads from 132 (69%) of the submissions received.
- Substantive, significant, dissonant, and otherwise noteworthy submissions were referred in full to each of the workstream section leads for their detailed reading and assessment.
- Emerging themes were shared between the analysts of each workstream, who met weekly to discuss and synthesise their work, reporting back to the workstream leads and working group members for their consideration.
- The Sustainable University working group on eight occasions between 17 June and 1 October 2020, with many other meetings between the analysts and the workstream lead, the section leads, and two sub-working-groups.
- In addition to processing submissions received, workstream members participated directly in more than a dozen consultation sessions, including the Academic Heads Advisory Group, the Māori Staff Strategy Hui, the Pacific Staff Strategy Fono, all of the All-Staff Strategy Workshops, and the Professional Services Senior Leaders Forum.
- On advice from workstream members the DVC (Operations) & Registrar confirmed themes for submission to University Executive to inform Strategic Plan development.

Introduction

The following is a thematic synthesis of submissions to the Sustainable University workstream derived via the above process. It is structured as follows:

- Theme: A characterisation of main themes raised in submissions.
- **Quotable quotes:** To give depth and nuance, where possible, themes are complemented by direct quotes from submissions.
- Implications: Many submissions foreshadowed implications that will need to be considered during detailed drafting of the strategic plan or subsequently during implementation.

All submissions have been retained in their entirety for further reference. They will be used to inform final drafting of the strategic plan and to guide detailed implementation planning.

Theme Flourishing People, Thriving Ecosystem	Quotable quotes	Implications
The University stands at a major junction, needing to recognise the pressing opportunity to envision different ways of consuming and working and a future as a truly sustainable University. As critic and conscience of society, the University has a duty to lead the creation of a value system that recognises our place within and our effects upon the environment. The ecosystem the University is part of is thriving, as are the research, education, and service activities it holds and sustains. The highest standards of sustainable practice must be embedded in the University Strategic Plan and throughout all University activities. In considering sustainability we must recognise, value, and respect both Māori and Pacific cultures and understandings and reconcile them with the scientific viewpoint: how we bring these together is crucial. Achieving true sustainability that creates flourishing people and a thriving ecosystem requires connected collaboration and connected action. Adjusting the existing strategic narrative to emphasise being sustainable and sustaining enables us to become the best university for our world.	"In order for the University to live up to its role as critic and conscience of society, and maintain the University's impact ranking, we believe the Strategic Plan should include climate change and climate justice as defining issues and grand, urgent challenges of our time." "Make a bold statement about the University's COLLECTIVE environmental ethics, te ao Māori and Kaitiakitanga. Develop programmes that empower ethical behaviour and are on par with sustainability policy principles." "how and why [are] retailers permitted to trade on Campus, when their offerings [including vending machines] are creating behemoth amounts of waste?" "Workplace practices that exemplify sustainability across all aspects of the University's endeavours, including leadership, research, teaching, operations and services, are encouraged, supported, communicated, recognised and celebrated. A requirement to contribute to sustainability is included in all position descriptions." "Adopt the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework that embraces and link together education, research, and impact through innovation and community engagement."	 Net-Zero Carbon Future: The University should commit to becoming net-zero carbon within the life of the Strategic Plan. This commitment is important in its own right, and also signals the institution's authenticity and capability as a global leader in sustainability. Executive Leadership: Explicit and visible executive leadership of and commitment to the sustainability imperative is essential. High-level accountability and responsibility for sustainability needs to be established with linkages to the wider University, including our students. Our sustainability goals require strengthened professional support and an enabled, well-structured network with allocated time and resources. Sustainable Practices Everywhere: As a world leader in sustainability, the University must enable its people and ensure exemplary sustainable practices are applied to all University activities, including leadership, research, education, administration, and engagement. Air Travel: A more-considered and equitable approach must be applied to University-related air travel, with clear understanding of the benefits that justify its use. The carbon and sustainability costs of air travel need to be factored into our planning and international partnerships.

Theme Living our best future	Quotable quotes	Implications
The University has a moral responsibility to demonstrate its leadership and engage in partnerships that influence sustainable futures at local, national, and global levels. The effectiveness of our leadership and influence contributes directly to the aspiration	"Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) should absolutely be in the Graduate profiles. The students we send out into the world determine the University's reputation and achievement. What kind of global citizens are we creating?" "Demonstrate consistency between sustainability	Sustainability Learning Outcomes: Sustainability should be a component of the graduate profile and become a visible and required part of the University's learning and teaching, including external-facing programmes.
of the University becoming the best university for our world. This role extends to working with our communities and providing sound evidence-based knowledge and accurate information that guides their contributions to make sustainable societies.	as a research and teaching enterprise and our practices as individuals and as a university. Essential for our own sense of cohesion and integrity and also essential for our reputation as 'really meaning it' with outside agencies." "Sustainability research across disciplines [must	 Sustainability Research Outcomes: Sustainability should be enhanced as a domain of research activity, and aspects of sustainability should be incorporated into internal research processes for funding allocation and prioritisation.
An external-engagement and partnership lens is required to advance the University's goal to be sustainable <i>and</i> sustaining. We must embed and make visible the transferrable sustainability knowledge and practices realised by the core missions of research, learning and teaching, and engagement.	be] catalogued, and opportunities for collaboration and funding are elevated. All research and commercialisation activities [should] incentivise and align to reflect sustainable research practices and the Sustainable Development Goals. Research that contributes to the SDGs [needs to be] made more visible to the	 Focused Engagement: How the University presents and extends its leadership and engages in strategic partnerships will require new focus and new coordination in order to be coherent and effective. Focused Leadership: Through engagement
For reputational credibility, the University must also walk the talk by ensuring that its sustainability practices and optimisation of resource use are sector-leading and effective.	public." "the advancement of climate denial and public misunderstandings about fundamental matters related to sustainability [underscores] our role as exemplars and leaders through our own policies and practices that protect the planet and its	and material leadership, the University should be leading actively and contributing to the development and extension of industry sustainability goals and standards, such as New Zealand's Green Building Council.
	inhabitants, our university can communicate with the broader general public in ways that deliver sound understandings of science, politics, and policy."	 Sustainable Development Goals: Embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework to help us understand our aspirations and measure our achievements and contributions, and thereby position ourselves as the best university for our world.

Theme Digital Connections, Digital	Quotable quotes	Implications
OpportunitiesDigital practices and technologies are now intertwined inextricably with how we live, engage with others, work, learn, teach, and research. For the University, connections and opportunities extended by digital approaches enable profound, beneficial changes in how we offer our communities optimised, relevant services.The University is not replacing physical delivery with digital delivery: it is creating a suite of digital services that complement its built environment and physical service delivery to create compelling and valued experiences for all constituents.As digital adoption further expands, new and emerging technologies will foster the creation of innovative experiences, and enable the University to:• Augment and enrich the experiences people have of its physical estate• Provide real choices to people in how, when, and where they engage with the University• Craft personalised student experiences that strengthen learning outcomes• improve discovery and curation processes and transform laboratory practices to maximise research outcomes and research impact• Forge new engagement channels that help create and sustain meaningful lifelong relationships with alumni, communities, and external partners.	 "The shared connectedness, he waka eke noa – we are all in this together, assuming we are all able to be on both [physical and digital]. Hence raises digital equity into spotlight, and then we all have the same positive and inclusive nature of being online." "We need to create a fully holistic learning experience for all students (part online, part oncampus - note this is different to "blended"). This will support the acquisition of digital skills, complementing a student's on campus experience." "Promoting digital rich learning environments will also require the application of exceptional teaching capabilities across new modes of delivery and we must continue to accelerate the broadening of digital capabilities amongst our teaching staff." "Data, analytics, and Artificial Intelligence will be vital capabilities to personalise and enhance experience. Making data much more widely available across the University will be an accelerator to creating a much more capable organisation. How data centric are we?" "As we move forward and seek to gain benefit from Al and other efficiencies, we need to recognise and ensure the humanity of dealing and working with people." 	 Digital Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusiveness: The digital divide is very real, affecting our students and our staff. Addressing this divide is crucial for the University to serve and partner with its core communities. Understanding and bridging the digital divide requires broad-ranging activities that extend far beyond shipping laptops to students. Without addressing issues of digital equity, accessibility, and inclusiveness the divide will widen as the University and the world around us becomes increasingly digital. The University's service- design principles will be mana-enhancing and ensure face-to-face interactions remain available. Education and Student Experience: The adoption of digital practices to augment and enhance learning and teaching and to enrich student experience requires deliberate planning and implementation throughout the entire student lifecycle. How the University delivers content and collaboration requires consideration of what is appropriate in the split between digital and physical, and requires genuine understanding of what our students need and expect. Providing students with choice and flexibility of how they engage with learning activities fosters student success.

Everything the University undertakes in the digital realm must consider experience as paramount, must recognise and respond comprehensively to ensure digital equity, accessibility, and inclusiveness, and must navigate ethical dilemmas openly, transparently, and in line with its values.	 Digital Dexterity: The ambition and ability of our people to apply digital practices successfully is constrained by their digital skills and capabilities. A significant uplift in digital skills and capabilities is required. The value and effectiveness of digitally-enabled services depends upon increased digital dexterity across all activities in which our staff and students participate. An organisation-wide approach that includes students is needed to achieve this, with a focus far broader than "how to" training for specific pieces of software.
	 Data Culture: Digital approaches require a new approach to sourcing, curating, and managing data so that useful information products can be created. A change in data culture is needed to raise the data fluency of all our people, to empower our people with greater access to core data, and to bolster the data-handling, data-management, and data-interpretation skills throughout the University. Only by treating and caring for data as a valuable asset will the University realise improved decision-making and realise the benefits of digital adoption.
	 Digital Ethics: With the increased use of personal and sensitive data and new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence comes increased ethical responsibility. The University must provide exemplary transparency of how it uses data, how its decision-making practices are augmented by algorithms, and how ethical dilemmas will be navigated through open consultation with its constituents and its communities.

Theme The Distinctive Campus Environment	Quotable quotes	Implications
The University of Auckland has its own values, heritage, and culture, all of which need to be reflected by distinctive campus environments that reflect our place in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa, and the Pacific. Visiting the University should provide a rich and unmistakable sense of place, a sense of being at this University. Substantial changes in how, where, and when we work, study, teach, and research demand substantial changes in the nature and number of physical spaces available to the University. Contemporary collaborative and transdisciplinary research practices and teaching pedagogies drive needs for more- capable spaces that are also more flexible in the range of activities they can support. Increasingly, physical spaces must also be equipped with digital technologies that enable people at other locations to participate fully. Through its physical estate, the University offers, in conjunction with its people and its resources, many highly-valuable distinctive capabilities, including a commercialisation capability and an innovation ecosystem. The campus of the future must announce and effect the accessibility and readiness of the University to leverage these capabilities. With a more-porous University that invites and welcomes a flow of innovative business and industry partnerships, incubators, start- ups, and entrepreneurial activities to be co- hosted within our exciting and collaborative environment, we will be highly-relevant and central to growing the economies for Auckland and for New Zealand.	 "Recognising the history and location of the University in Tāmaki Makaurau and in Aotearoa through maintaining and enhancing the indigenous Māori elements of the spaces and structures on the various campuses and improving its relationship with mana whenua [and] recognising the place of the University within the Pacific region and maintaining and enhancing the Pasifika elements of its spaces and structures." "My bus stops at the University of Auckland Newmarket campus. As I hop off with my children, I look around and see the green spaces, benches with people chatting, others playing morning frisbee, and smiles. There is always such a buzz when I get to the campus. It's a vibrant place with lots of professional, social and sporting activities, bringing university staff and students together with the many and varied members of their local and visiting communities. There is always something happening and so many different people coming and going." "Activate Innovation & Entrepreneurship by developing additional flexible and distinctive physical hubs to bring Innovation & Entrepreneurship close to all across campus including Tai Tokerau and Tai Tonga. These could include living labs, industry specific incubators, mini-maker spaces, co-working space etc. – new spaces designed to meet the needs of the context it is housed in, and spaces to encourage and enable creativity and experimentation." 	 Distinctive Experience: The campus should be a celebration of our heritage, our distinctiveness, our differences, and the unique value of our location. In consultative partnership with Māori and with Pasifika the University should be made visibly more inclusive and more welcoming. Innovation-Enhancing Precincts, Gateways, and Touchpoints: Establishing new innovation spaces and strategically-aligned purpose-intensive precincts and touchpoints using our available property will create vibrant, welcoming gateways into the physical University. These fit-for-purpose spaces will welcome and enable innovative business and industry partners into collaboration and colocation relationships that leverage and enhance University expertise and capability to contribute to the aspirations of Auckland City and to national and international goals. Quality Spaces: Spaces must be capable, flexible, accessible, safe, and provisioned with intuitive, effective teaching spaces that actively promote integrated learning, enhance curiosity and intellectual development. In some cases, flexibility may yield to specific needs, such as dedicated student spaces, student experience, and ensuring accessibility and equity.

Overemphasis upon the City Campus is limiting the presence and accessibility of the University to its communities. Stronger community engagement and partnership requires the University to have stronger presence in the community, both through expanded and alternative physical presence and through the complementary use of digital techniques. Through stronger presence, partnership, and accessibility, the University will be better able to create meaningful community outreach to deepen research impact and engage with learners at all levels and stages, providing individual engagement with positive futures.

Aligned with its mission of sustainability, the physical estate must also showcase, model, and enhance biodiversity, green spaces, resource optimisation, and sustainable practices. The configuration and operation of our physical estate will position our sustainable University as a leading example nationally and throughout the global higher education and research community. "Opportunities exist to repurpose space across the University if new methods of working and blended teaching can release space to be reinvested in student facing facilities, study spaces, and hubs for collaboration across faculties and disciplines [and] we do not want to lose these opportunities to start using our space in new ways and thus changing our physical campus without necessarily increasing our footprint."

"The provision of dedicated space for Pasifika students is uneven across the campus. At one end of the scale there are dedicated spaces in Culture Space, Fale Pasifika and Pasifika Success: at the other end, many parts of the University have none. As we add or redesign learning and student spaces these needs need to be accounted for. There was a very strong sense of the importance of these dedicated spaces, and the work they do for the University."

"The greenspaces around campus should maximise biodiversity (align to NZ Biodiversity Strategy), and all new plantings should be native species to align with the Auckland Ngahere (Forest) Strategy. Native species have cultural significance for Māori and could also be used to create culturally inclusive spaces, and weaving, rongoa gardens." Community Presence, Community Access: Explore initiatives that improve access for our communities to the University, including expansion of our physical estate beyond the City Campus and into our adjacent communities. Welcoming spaces for discovery, debate, performance, and exhibition are needed to help enrich our communities, and opportunities also exist to strengthen community presence, partnership, and accessibility by creating a rich, integrated digital campus. Crucially, further enhancement of Tai Tokerau and Tai Tonga is required to facilitate genuine engagement at all levels and stages of learning, and to provide our researchers with outstanding spaces to engage with their communities.

- Changing Practices, New Opportunities: Substantial changes in working, learning, teaching, and research practices have implications for our physical estate. The University can be efficient with its use of resources, including the spaces we occupy, and being able to identify opportunities to divest space that is no longer needed. The corresponding efficiencies of reducing (or avoiding increasing) the footprint of our estate creates opportunities to relinquish, rehabilitate, or repurpose poorer-quality spaces and consolidate into higher-quality spaces.
- Sustainable Spaces: The visible manifestation of sustainable practices extends well beyond ensuring that our buildings are as technically efficient and lowfootprint as possible. We must be considering the green spaces, biodiversity, and active schemes such as food gardens, composting, and recycling.

Theme Enabled Environment, Sustainable Success	Quotable quotes	Implications
The University Strategy sets broad parameters for its service environment and operating model to enable the accelerated delivery of strategic outcomes in sustaining and sustainable fashion. It is the enabling environment that will bridge the gap between strategy, planning, execution, and delivery. Providing mana-enhancing services that delight people is core to achieving these outcomes. It is essential that people and the experiences they have are placed at the centre of service-design and decision-making. The University has established robust foundation capabilities for effective and efficient service delivery that releases effort and frees up time, enabling people to apply their specialised skills and knowledge to create valuable innovations in their local discipline- and pedagogy-specific contexts. These innovations can enhance the University's nimbleness, improving our ability to change and adapt services and offerings quickly in response to external events and new opportunities. Every decision we make has implications for the financial sustainability of the University. Strong financial planning and analysis capabilities can guide decision-making, while recognising the University is a large-scale and long-standing institution operating on very narrow margins. Taking a raw growth-based approach is unsuited to the special character of research-intensive civic institutions, which operate with constrained funding that is essentially decreasing year on year.	Build on identified Pacific values of tautua (leadership through service), vā (sustainable relationships, spaces & reciprocity), and faka'apa'apa (respectful & ethical engagements & principles)." "Many students now use services from across the University and enrol in courses across multiple faculties and as a result can experience different service models in each faculty/service division, which can be confusing and create disappointment due to inconsistencies [and] the University should ensure that services are designed with consistency, transparency and accessibility as key features of its service culture and delivery, and also focus on improving efforts to ensure that students don't have to go to multiple sources for resolution of problems." "Delays in decision making often result because the delegated decision maker is unavailable, yet clear business rules or sub-delegations could enable decisions to be made at a lower level of the organisation, with only exceptional cases escalated. This would be more efficient and provide an improved experience for students. In cases where decisions can be made by professional staff it can also free up academic time for core activities in teaching and research." "Remove the layers of bureaucracy and simplify our day-to-day processes. We need to be nimble in our daily transactions and reduce the bureaucracy and change the policies that hinder the growth of sustainable policies and practices."	 It is People: University services must be universally mana-enhancing, respectful, and inclusive in how they fulfil requests, provide advice, and offer nudges, reminders, and alerts. Placing people at the heart of our decision-making will require stronger and fully-adopted service-design principles, some examination of our policy environment, and adoption of approaches including co-design. Encouraging and Supporting Innovation: Better identification and communication of where standardisation is optimal and where local adaptation and flexibility is needed will help strike the right balance between efficient but rigid standardised processes and complex but flexible locally-adapted processes. Deliberate support structures that enable and incentivise staff innovation and increase digital dexterity need to be established and sustained. Service-Design Principles: The creation and communication of human-centric service- design principles will ensure University services and processes are optimised operationally and meet the needs of the people they serve. Consistency and standardisation of services and processes should be applied where doing so creates value, reduces cost, or improves constituent experience.

Ensuring our financial resources are prioritised based on strategy, and that choices made around which activities and initiatives to invest in are also based upon strategy, requires more-focused governance and a sustainability mindset. In the context of assets that have a long life, against the backdrop of a rapidly-changing world, the investments we make must realise adaptable and future-proof outcomes for the University.	"innovative local variations are encouraged where they differentiate and advance discipline- specific pedagogical and research practices. To achieve this meaningfully, the University needs a supportive and enabling culture of innovation and experimentation. Staff need stronger digital dexterity, data analytics, and collaboration skills and capabilities." "Have much stronger and more focused strategy management capabilities from the executive level downwards. Stop trying to run so many different projects with so many different business outcomes and projects are competing for limited human resources. The business priorities are not described in a level of detail that lets people know where to focus their effort. Business priorities should describe what needs to change, how to measure that change."	 High-Trust University Culture: The future University requires a high-trust organisational culture, a culture that demonstrates trust in its people make the right decisions, provides appropriate delegations of authority, and provides access to data and functionality that support effective and timely decision-making. The service-design principles must assume a higher-trust model when processes are designed, and prefer simple controls and exception-detection mechanisms over manual approvals. Reaching this state will require changes to how the University arranges its capabilities, and to embracing a higher-trust culture in which people have increased agency and clarity of decision- making rights. <i>Financial Planning & Analysis</i>: The disciplines responsible for modelling, planning, and analysing the financial position and future of the University should be communicated and understood more widely and openly across the University community, and applied consistently in making decisions. <i>Strategic Governance</i>: More rigour is required to match our financial resources to initiatives and activities that are aligned to strategy and deserving of prioritisation. This governance enables the University to advance those focused activities and disciplines we want to be great at, and to consider reducing investment in other activities and disciplines. While still moving quickly, a greater degree of cost-benefit assessment and broader range of investment choices and outcome scenarios need to be considered before committing fully to a proposed course of action.
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Breakdown of submissions

Submissions made on behalf of faculties/LSRIs: 21

Submissions made on behalf of a school: 13

Submissions made on behalf of a department: 7

Submissions made on behalf of an institute: 11

Submissions made by or on behalf of students: 7

Submissions made on behalf of a service division (or directorate): 23

Submissions made on behalf of groups: 20

Submissions made on behalf of other entities: 3

Submissions made by a sole staff member: 76