

**ENVIRONMENTAL,  
SOCIAL AND  
GOVERNANCE  
STATEMENT**  
2021-2025





MONASH UNIVERSITY  
RECOGNISES THAT ITS  
AUSTRALIAN CAMPUSES  
ARE LOCATED ON THE  
UNCEDED LANDS OF THE  
KULIN NATIONS PEOPLES,  
AND PAYS ITS RESPECTS  
TO THEIR ELDERS, PAST,  
PRESENT AND EMERGING.



## FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT & VICE CHANCELLOR, MONASH UNIVERSITY

Contributing to the sustainability of our communities is a vital part of the University's purpose. We have a responsibility as an institution to do so through our education and research, and as an organisation to conduct ourselves in ways consistent with what we learn and profess.

By conducting research and education, by the scale of their operations, and by engaging with partners and community, universities are singularly capable of addressing environmental, social and governance (ESG) concerns.

Monash University has a record for doing so successfully – as a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Global Compact and International Universities Climate Alliance, through the creation of knowledge and the dissemination of it through education and practice, and as host for organisations and centres that mobilise adoption of sustainable practice.

The University has made excellent progress against its environmental, social and governance commitments since our first ESG Statement was launched in 2016. The University's commitment to Net Zero Emissions by 2030 is also on track to be achieved. Public understanding of the significance of those commitments has matured and will grow further in coming years, as challenges posed by climate change, geopolitical security and sustaining thriving communities become more pressing. This second ESG Statement has expanded to reflect this understanding.

To maintain our commitment to sustainability, Monash University must have the right instruments in place. This ESG Statement provides Monash a clear position on the principles underpinning its actions that is consistent with the ethics and values of the University. My thanks to the ESG Working Group for preparing this ESG Statement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Professor Margaret Gardner AC  
President and Vice-Chancellor



## BACKGROUND

Monash University's inaugural Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement was launched in December 2016. The outcome of extensive discussion with stakeholders across the Monash community, the ESG Statement articulated the principles underpinning utilisation of funds for the University's investment portfolio consistent with the ethics and values of Monash, as well as areas for the University to lead by influencing outcomes through its education and research resources, and through coordinating and collaborating with external institutions and organisations.

In 2020 the President and Vice-Chancellor established a new Council Working Group to review and renew Monash University's ESG commitments with a second guiding statement.

The Working Group met 13 times and heard from a diverse array of stakeholders across the Monash community, including senior academics and Deans, senior professional staff, representatives of the Monash Student Association and heads of the Research and Education portfolios.

In researching and preparing this new guiding statement, the Working Group has considered a diverse array of University operations. These have included assessing the University's performance against the first ESG Statement; reviewing current standards and best-practices in ESG Statement structure and content, and developing an updated set of objectives to include renewed environment, social and governance goals that align with the strategic directions and strengths of Monash University.

In conducting its inquiry, the Working Group has also canvassed researchers and educators, students and operational leads, and tested its recommendations with key individuals who have worked at the forefront of ESG.

Meeting our environmental obligations is one of the most urgent challenges facing communities worldwide. Monash has an international reputation for delivering impact in this area, and is making similar contributions in positive social transformations relevant to global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those relevant to gender and social equality. To manage those transformations successfully, the University must ensure it has the right governance settings in place. These considerations have been core to deliberation behind development of this second ESG Statement.

### ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group included the following members:

- THE HONOURABLE SIMON CREAN (Chair)
  - » Deputy Chancellor
  - » Member, Estates Committee
  - » Member, Resources and Finance Committee
- MR MARK CUBIT
  - » Chair, Investment Advisory Committee
- MS JULIE LIGETI
  - » Member, Monash University Council
- PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE MARILYN WARREN AC QC
  - » Vice-Chancellor's Professorial Fellow
- PROFESSOR TONY CAPON
  - » Director, Monash Sustainable Development Institute
- MR PAUL BARTON
  - » Director, Business Support, Buildings and Property
- MR FELIX GEDYE (secretariat)
  - » Principal Advisor, Office of the Provost and Senior Vice-President



## GOALS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

*The Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Statement will guide Monash University in relation to the diverse and complex nature of environmental, social and governance issues and strategies.*

Leveraging the full scope of its research, teaching, engagement and operational capabilities, Monash will continue to advance a proactive, multi-dimensional approach to meet its environmental, social and governance obligations. The University's goals in meeting these obligations include:

- Utilising its research and teaching capacity to mobilise scientific and technical expertise in support of Sustainable Development Goals and problem solving
- Leading in campus sustainability practice
- Leading in organisational gender equity, diversity, inclusion and mobilising expertise in support of positive social transformations
- Leading in governance practices, including screening of University investments and influencing investment managers through active engagement on environmental, social and governance issues; and
- Transparent monitoring and reporting.

This second ESG statement (2021-2025) for the University builds on the actions and initiatives achieved under the first statement and places emphasis for the future in the following areas:

- Strong links to and reporting under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals framework
- A renewed focus and effort to lead progress on the social issues of gender equity and inclusion, advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and addressing modern slavery
- Establishing a decarbonisation target for University investments
- Develop a 'deep immersion' approach to the inclusion of ESG into the teaching program
- Continued academic leadership in ESG and sustainable development through research
- A commitment to utilising engagement to mobilise communities, industry and support government initiatives to support ESG
- A commitment to a circular economy approach to campus operations and resource use.

Success in achieving the ESG goals outlined in this statement will require a coordinated and whole of organisation response in which the themes and priorities outlined in the statement are embedded into the University's strategic and operational planning and reporting.







# PRIORITIES

## RESEARCH

*The University will grow its leadership in social and environmental sustainability fields including research in clean and renewable energy, and improve how it captures, measures and reports discoveries that advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals.*

Monash has world class expertise in clean energy domains spanning production and utilisation, storage and transport, AI-based design of future energy systems, market design, policy development and advocacy to enable a clean energy economy to flourish. The University will bring this expertise together to accelerate discoveries and transformation in energy innovation across the nation and worldwide.

The priorities are:

- The University will develop and refine a living plan for clean energy transitions to become the exemplar Australian university for energy innovation research and practice enabling a net zero future.
- By leveraging and reporting against the Sustainable Development Goals to frame advances in environmental and social transformation, the University will increase the significance of its research to the public and strengthen how it coordinates interdisciplinary collaboration across its diverse research profile.
- Monash will establish as a priority a central portal or digest of ESG-relevant research activity being conducted across all its faculties and affiliated bodies, to be made available to the Monash community. The University will ensure all of its external departments, centres and affiliates are included in the capture of this information.

## TEACHING

*The challenges of the age are environmental and social challenges. Monash students must be able to lead efforts to solve them. The University will respond to this demand by growing student engagement in learning opportunities in ESG themes. Monash will leverage the advantages provided by its international campuses, partnerships with other universities and its Indo-Pacific footprint for doing so.*

The priorities are:

- In view of the benefits sustainability and social-themed learning abroad experiences have on academic performance and retention, Monash will commit to the extension of the Global Immersion Guarantee (GIG) as an elective for all first year students enrolled in undergraduate degree.
- Monash will engage with the Australian Government to expand funding under the New Colombo Plan to include broader cohorts where possible, in particular the Indo-Pacific.
- Some degrees, for example double degrees and degrees offering professional accreditation, set mandatory areas of study or otherwise constrain the scope of electives for study. Within those constraints, the University will commit to the extension of ESG and SDG awareness and engagement across all degrees while continuing to meet professional qualification requirements and satisfying relevant professional bodies. For example, Monash will pursue development of cross-disciplinary micro-credentials that offer environmental sustainability and social themes for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Monash will compile and publish annually its ESG teaching programs and activities to be available both internally and externally on the University website.



## CAMPUS

*The University will continue to transition towards net zero emissions and develop a Circular Economy Framework for its campus operations.*

The University has taken first steps to integrate circular economy principles into its operational sustainability strategy, but a comprehensive organisational shift is essential for complete success.

Circular economy principles will inform the adjustments required to operational systems and policies to improve resource utilisation up and down Monash supply chains, maximise value of resources used and minimise waste creation. The University's research and teaching capabilities will also be utilised to develop its campuses as exemplars of the circular economy in practice.

Partnerships with government and industry to influence and support a transition to the circular economy beyond our operational boundaries will also be core to our commitment.

The priorities are:

- Establish a five-year circular economy plan to minimise waste to landfill and transition from co-mingled recycling to “close the loop” on valuable materials through a range of better business practices and infrastructure investment.
- Eliminate single-use retail plastics across all its Australian campuses by 2023.
- Implement a food organic waste program to divert organic waste from landfill.



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

*Through our teaching, research and community engagement, the University will continue to make a substantial and ongoing contribution to Indigenous advancement by fostering mutually-beneficial partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities.*

The University will improve its recruitment, support and retention of Indigenous students and staff, and advance research, knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, cultures and issues. The priorities are:

- Monash will continue to implement the pillars articulated in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework 2019–2030* across all of the University's operations, and be responsive to ongoing commitments established through governments, and Indigenous community priorities.

As part of its commitment to self-determination as the guiding principle in Aboriginal affairs, Victoria is the first Australian state to progress Treaty discussions, establishing the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria to be the voice for Aboriginal communities and represent them in the next phase of the Treaty process. The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for a First Nations Voice to Parliament to be enshrined in the Constitution, empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with greater say in law and policy affecting them.

- Monash University will contribute to Treaty conversations and support the Victorian Government's establishment of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission.
- At the Commonwealth level, Monash University will support and contribute to the First Nations Voice to Parliament co-design process.

## GENDER EQUALITY

*The University will foster an inclusive organisational culture in which staff of all genders, of diverse cultural backgrounds, faiths and heritages participate equally and are recognised equally at all levels, notably senior levels. The University will intensify focus to eliminate the systemic barriers to professional advancement in order to achieve parity in senior professorial, senior academic and senior professional roles, as well as salary parity across the University.*

Monash University aspires to be the international higher education leader in gender equity. Notwithstanding progress to date, disparity in representation and remuneration continues to persist especially in senior academic and professorial roles and other areas where women's participation at Monash has historically been low. The priorities are:

- The University will actively support recognition, retention and career advancement of women. Renewed focus will be on fields where both their potential and leadership is underrepresented. The University will strive to remove systemic barriers generated by (for example) caregiving responsibilities, and work to reduce unconscious bias in decision-making.
- The University will advance on the leadership set through its Respect. Now. Always. programs to ensure HR and harassment policies continue to develop and improve consistent with modern best practices, and with consideration given to the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's *Respect@Work Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report (2020)*.
- Where relevant, the University will also expand the scope of its gender equity goals and efforts to outreach programs and the student population under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality.
- In view of the priority in which it views gender equality, by the end of 2021 the University will identify and formalise the mechanisms and expedited timelines for achieving parity in senior roles and other areas where women's participation at Monash is low.



## MODERN SLAVERY

Monash University supports all efforts to eliminate modern slavery and is committed to delivering a robust, meaningful response to the Modern Slavery Act.

The priorities are:

- The University will leverage its procurement and supply chain operations, its investments and fund managers, as well as research and teaching activities to identify and eliminate slavery risks for its own supply chain as well as leveraging University research to inform governments and civil society strategies to address human slavery globally.
- A comprehensive, multi-year program will be implemented to identify and manage modern slavery risks throughout Monash University's extensive global networks, focusing on high-risk areas, risk reviews, training and awareness, and supporting Monash partners to understand their supply chains.
- A comprehensive structure, including executive oversight committee and working group to leverage deep academic expertise, will be established to support the University's modern slavery program. The program will be dynamic and respond to the changing environment in which Monash operates, reporting annually on steps to:
  - » identify slavery risks as they relate to particular activities of the University;
  - » understand the specific causal factors which lead to the practices;
  - » develop an action plan to remediate (noting the imperative to work with the affected area); and
  - » measure the effectiveness of the University's response and actions.
- Monash will utilise its research expertise to develop impact measures that enable the assessment and development of efforts to counter modern slavery and to improve and target these efforts.
- The University will share and communicate research findings that can inform regional and global efforts to eliminate modern slavery. This work is an essential component of the efforts focused on the reduction and eradication of exploitation in all its forms.

## GOVERNANCE

The University will explore opportunities to improve its capture and reporting of environmental, social and governance advances.

Monash University makes transformative contributions to some of the most important environmental and social initiatives of our age: as a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Global Compact and International Universities Climate Alliance; as host institute for organisations like ClimateWorks, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia, NZ and Pacific Hub and other centres that mobilise adoption of sustainable practice; through pioneering world class research, and through education programs such as the Global Immersion Guarantee and the Master of Environment and Sustainability. It is time for the University to introduce a more coordinated approach that provides greater transparency of our activities and commitments in these areas, their alignment within the broad mission of the University and how we can continue to improve in them.

The University should seek to introduce a more coordinated approach to the capture and reporting of ESG and SDG advances, capable of providing greater transparency and celebration of our activities and our commitments in these areas, as well as how they fit within the broad mission of the University and how we can continue to improve in them. Enhanced capture and reporting will rely on an increased understanding of the SDG framework with the Monash community. The priorities are:

- Monash will fold ESG monitoring and implementation into the University's business as usual planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.
- The University will find ways to amplify its SDG reporting, for example by a regular report on the impact of its SDG activities, and integrate this with the University's other reporting processes.
- ESG progress and monitoring will be the subject of further consideration by the University Council.

The University will finalise its approach to these steps by the end of 2021.



## INVESTMENT

The University will continue to transition its investment portfolio towards carbon neutrality.

Fund managers are increasingly allocating resources to develop products and capture interest in climate aligned and social outcome orientated investments. Monash aims to lead Australian universities in this endeavour, building on its earlier progress to embed responsible investment action and low carbon investment strategies into its investment practices. The University will also recognise and satisfy its corporate responsibilities to manage its finances responsibly and sustainably at all times. The priorities are:

- As a sustainability and social justice pioneer, Monash will work with fund managers to define the pathways that enable it to achieve carbon neutrality across its externally managed investments by 2050. This approach supports the broader University's Net Zero aspirations, while satisfying its fiduciary responsibilities.
- Monash will report annually on its progress to improve the climate alignment of its investments as part of the University's broader responsible investment and sustainable development goals (SDG) reporting processes.



## ENGAGEMENT

*Building a sustainable future is the most pressing challenge confronting communities globally. Governments and industry worldwide are searching for answers to help them meet this challenge. The University will mobilise governments, industry and communities to adopt sustainable practice.*

Monash is committed to better leveraging the nexus between the University, industry, government and community to enhance the collective impact. The University will utilise this model to build its international reputation for initiating and accelerating action in areas where it is already established leader, as well as in emerging priorities areas such waste management, waste to energy and the transition to hydrogen.

The priorities are:

- The University will leverage its position as a critical mass of research, education and innovation to attract investment to the Monash Technology Precinct.
- Building on relationships with key stakeholders such as Greater South East Melbourne, the University will establish a participatory process to engage key stakeholders to drive adoption of environmental and social principles in South East Melbourne and further progress collaborative development of local water, waste and energy solutions.
- Momentum is growing for stronger partnerships between Australia and its Pacific neighbours and this is anchored around many priorities that align with ESG. The University will develop a Pacific engagement plan to coordinate its regional efforts to promote action on sustainable practice, social justice and good governance.





