

une

University of
New England

Annual Report 2020



Letter of submission

University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
30 April 2020

The Honourable Geoff Lee MP
Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education
c/o Higher Education
Level 5, 2-10 Wentworth Street
Parramatta 2150

Dear Minister Lee,

In accordance with the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, and the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the University of New England Council presents to you the annual report of the proceedings of the University and its audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.



Mr James Harris
Chancellor



Brigid Heywood
Vice-Chancellor and CEO



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR | 2 |
| MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR | 3 |
| 2020 – A DRAMATIC AND DEFINING YEAR | 4 |
| ABOUT UNE | 6 |
| STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020: <i>TOGETHER, WE CAN DO THIS</i> | 8 |
| OPERATIONAL REPORT | 9 |
| GOVERNANCE | 20 |
| PEOPLE AND CULTURE | 31 |
| FINANCE | 38 |
| ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS | 43 |
| FINANCIAL REPORTS | 47 |



Message from the Chancellor

↑ Mr James Harris
Chancellor
UNE

It is my great pleasure to commend to you the 2020 Annual Report of the University of New England (UNE).

2020 was a year of transformation for UNE, its communities and the environment within which it operates. Familiar daily activities changed, some irrevocably, and new technologies such as Zoom quickly became indispensable to ensuring the continuation of University business across a distributed workforce and student community.

The global pandemic pushed UNE to embrace a predominantly online teaching model whilst simultaneously offering opportunities to showcase our leadership and strengths in distance education. New pedagogies supporting online remotely-proctored examinations and enabling online synchronous tutoring were a key feature of these transitions.

Early in the year, UNE introduced a range of initiatives to support on-campus students who were unable to return home, including offering financial assistance, emergency food parcels and additional help through wellbeing and social support services. Given many of these students were displaced international candidates and far from their families, UNE is proud to have maintained a strong humanitarian focus.

Communication with and the involvement of students in governance was strengthened through the

establishment of a Student Consultative Committee. Regular meetings have commenced and reports indicate elected students are enthusiastic and engaged.

In the latter half of the year, the University implemented *Time for Change*. This initiative mapped out the work UNE needed to do to resolve critical financial sustainability issues and create new organisational structures of relevance to our future needs. *Time for Change* was also designed as an instrument to support new investment in the academy and campus of the future, and profiled the need to adopt and develop new systems to support UNE business operations and facilitate opportunities for growth.

In November 2020, UNE welcomed a commitment of \$26.7 million by the New South Wales Government, as part of the Restart NSW program, towards the development of our UNE Tamworth model. The funds will support the planned expansion of UNE's presence in Tamworth, where we will offer a new range of place-based courses in partnership with industry. Developments in Sydney, Moree, Taree, and across our regional study centres progressed, despite the constraints of the pandemic.

And, while the ongoing provision of research services, development of collaborations and genesis of outputs was tested by drought, bushfires and COVID-imposed restrictions, the formation and quick response of the Research Response

Team ensured continued productivity and funding success, and guaranteed UNE maintained appropriate governance around major projects, including successful competition for a range of government and industry grants.

I am very pleased with how both staff and students responded to the various challenges throughout the year and commend them for embracing change, displaying remarkable resilience and looking out for one another during trying times. The collegiality and engagement of our community remains a hallmark of the year.

I extend my thanks to the Council and its committees, the Executive Management team, staff, and the wider University community, whose persistent hard work has contributed to the achievements outlined in this report. Our meeting schedule was greatly amplified because of the various governance and assurance demands of this disrupted academic year.

This tumultuous year concluded with the publication of UNE's new 10-year strategic plan, *Future Fit*, after an extensive community-focused consultation process over an extended period across 2020. I look forward to working with the Vice-Chancellor and CEO, Professor Brigid Heywood, and the broader University community to realising the goals and opportunities it outlines.



Message from the Vice-Chancellor

↑ **Professor Brigid Heywood**
Vice-Chancellor and CEO
UNE

The year under review was defined by environmental conditions that created unprecedented challenges. Nevertheless, the University of New England community proved its enduring resilience and responded well.

Drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic each created distinct issues for UNE but, with almost 70 years' experience in distance education provision, the University was well equipped to support all our students through the adoption of an enhanced online model to complement our existing provision.

Sadly, a number of research projects were disrupted, likely affecting longer-term outputs, and the recruitment of Higher Degree Research students was adversely impacted by ongoing COVID-19 constraints. However, despite these challenges, overall research performance was maintained and critical partnerships continue to flourish.

Despite the many trials of a modern global pandemic, UNE again secured the highest possible *Good Universities Guide* rating for the quality of our student experience¹ for the fifteenth consecutive year. The University ranked equally highly for graduate employment outcomes, while graduating approximately 3,720 students in the period under review. And, UNE ranked

27th out of 39 Australian universities in the rankings secured from the published report of the Higher Education 2018 Research Data Collection (HERDC).

While acknowledging the great success of the majority of our students, retention and progression metrics remain a challenge. UNE has reprofiled innovation investment to focus on these issues within the context of our unique student demographics. These support efforts were further strengthened through the targeted allocation of Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program (HEPPP) funds and the release of new funding through the Commonwealth Government's Job-Ready Graduates package.

In the latter half of 2020, UNE announced *Time for Change* – a forward-looking program of significant systemic change across the entire institution. It addressed the work required to protect the University from the financial burdens imposed by drought, bushfires and then COVID-19 in quick succession, as well as certain longer-term structural issues. It also laid out the foundation for vital organisational redesign to ensure that UNE, as an institution, continues to meet the evolving demands of student success, digital transformation, knowledge partnerships, and our future place-based engagement.

The University devoted significant effort to progress the UNE Tamworth campus plans, promote UNE Metro and enhance its connections with Moree and Taree as part of our commitment to remote, rural and regional educational provision. The early-stage consultations that will support the regeneration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related infrastructure at UNE Armidale were also part of the 2020 agenda.

Simultaneously with *Time for Change*, UNE started a conversation about the future direction of the University. Titled *UNE 21+*, it represented the biggest online consultation process in UNE's history, with over 3,000 submissions received from staff, students and external stakeholders. The findings shaped the structure and content of UNE's new decadal strategic plan, *Future Fit*, which redefines UNE as a leading regional university and reasserts our commitment to UNE's place in a changing world through transformative partnerships and the innovative delivery of education and research.

I commend staff, students and alumni for their resilience, hard work and commitment over the past year and look forward to working with our community and making a positive difference in 2021 and beyond.

¹ 2020 Good Universities Guide

2020 – A Dramatic and Defining Year

During this most difficult of years, the UNE community achieved much to be collectively proud of. Staff and students met unprecedented local, national and global challenges with a focus on generosity, innovation and inclusivity. Significant advances made during these crises have tested our resilience, strengthened our resolve and provoked us into new working models across the breadth and depth of our teaching and research.

From many examples, some outstanding achievements for the year included:

- Co-ordinating a timely and effective crisis management response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, including daily briefings, through the newly-formed Special Incident Group.
- Transitioning UNE's extensive full-time and casual workforce to remote distributed working arrangements within days of a national lockdown being imposed, to minimise disruption to students.
- Developing innovative online learning tools to maintain and enhance student engagement, including new virtual platforms for laboratory experiments, field excursions, intensive schools and practicals.
- Transitioning all students seamlessly to the delivery of online remotely-proctored examinations, 40,000 of which were administered as UNE staff deployed their international expertise in exam-based eAssessment.
- Maintaining the welfare of all animals and livestock on UNE's extensive rural campuses during a period of dramatic workforce disruption, while also celebrating 50 years of the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI), a UNE-based corporate recognised as an international provider of innovative agribusiness products, services, and technology solutions.
- Prioritising staff mental health and wellbeing, and offering confidential counselling services as well as promoting an after-hours crisis support line.
- Supporting some 250 international students across UNE campuses throughout the pandemic by providing over 5,600 meals, food packages and hampers. Overall, more than \$672,000 in financial assistance was provided to students through bursaries, loans and the Student Emergency Assistance Fund.
- Collaborating with the Tamworth community and its stakeholders to develop UNE's presence in the regional city, sufficient to deliver the first suite of courses in 2021 and securing \$26.7 million in NSW Government funding for UNE Tamworth developments.
- Developing UNE's voice as a leading regional university through pre-budget submissions to State and Federal governments and through several Senate committee inquiries.
- Conducting the largest corporate online engagement process in the University's history, the 10-week *UNE 21+* process of engagement, which included more than 1,100 participants and generated over 3,500 comments, ideas and survey submissions. This extensive consultation informed the drafting of UNE's decadal strategic plan, *Future Fit*.
- Partnering in a multi-million-dollar collaborative research project that will help drive the rate and value of genetic progress in individual beef cattle herds and the beef industry as a whole and underpin the development of multi-breed BREEDPLAN Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) in Australia for select breeds, as well as enhancing the ability of the breeds involved to exploit genomic technologies to accelerate valuable genetic improvement.
- Collaborating with the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre to deliver the first national snapshot of disaster resilience, in the form of an interactive website that provides a nationally standardised index of resilience in the form of navigable maps of regions across the country.
- Deploying the New England Virtual Hospital's Joint Virtual Care Centre (JVCC) and using artificial intelligence technologies to support the delivery of in-home care for rural and regional patients across the New England North West.
- Delivering an inaugural reflective Reconciliation Action Plan that outlines UNE's vision for reconciliation and an action plan for partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and community members to create equitable opportunities in higher education, regardless of location and circumstance.



↑ Academic campus,
University of New England,
Armidale NSW.

About UNE

UNE is Australia's oldest and one of its leading regional universities. Operating from a main base in the New England, the University has multiple campus-based facilities located across NSW.

UNE continues to meet its founding mission to provide accessible, quality university courses to students located across regional Australia, while also reaching the world through the use of online technologies and contemporary educational offerings.

Whether on campus or online, more than 23,000 students each year enjoy student-centric teaching and access to a range of comprehensive support services to help them excel in their studies and achieve their career goals. Our commitment to personalised support and development is acknowledged year after year with unsurpassed top ratings for student experience in the *Good Universities Guide*.

UNE students have access to a comprehensive portfolio of more than 160 courses. Delivered through three faculties and nine academic schools, we offer courses at undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and Higher Degree levels. Students are encouraged to pursue their passion for learning and research, and to engage with business, industry and the community through a rich educational experience.

Where UNE once pioneered and delivered learning by correspondence to rural and remote students, today we ensure our learning is accessible to all via an outstanding online education platform supported by a range of

digital technologies. Many of our courses are offered fully online, with specially curated opportunities for student engagement, collaboration and networking that enables UNE students to meet their study and career goals while balancing life and work commitments. UNE remains committed to a flexible, adaptive study model that allows students to gain advantage and opportunity from as much or as little education as they can accommodate.

UNE continues to develop a strong reputation for research with impact. Our researchers collaborate with an ever-growing network of research partners drawn from industry, government, other tertiary institutions, Cooperative Research Centres and institutes. Together, we deliver new insights, innovations and improvements in agriculture, environmental sciences, mental health, education, local government, business, law, social sciences, the arts, medicine and productivity to communities throughout rural and regional Australia and around the world.

UNE is actively engaged as a community leader in the New England and North West regions of NSW. Our contributions range across sports, music, creative arts and cultural outreach, as well as engagement with schools, community centres and local groups supporting social development goals, citizenship and welfare. UNE is also deeply involved in enabling the success of migrant and refugee communities now domiciled in NSW.

The University of New England has **three Faculties** and **nine Schools**:

The Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education (HASSE), comprising:

- School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS); and
- School of Education.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health, comprising:

- School of Health;
- School of Psychology; and
- School of Rural Medicine.

The Faculty of Science, Agriculture, Business and Law (SABL), comprising:

- School of Environmental and Rural Science (ERS);
- School of Law;
- School of Science and Technology (S&T); and
- UNE Business School (UNEBS).

The *Good Universities Guide* 2020 edition awarded UNE five stars for:



Student Numbers

Table 1: Top 10 countries for international students based on enrolments.

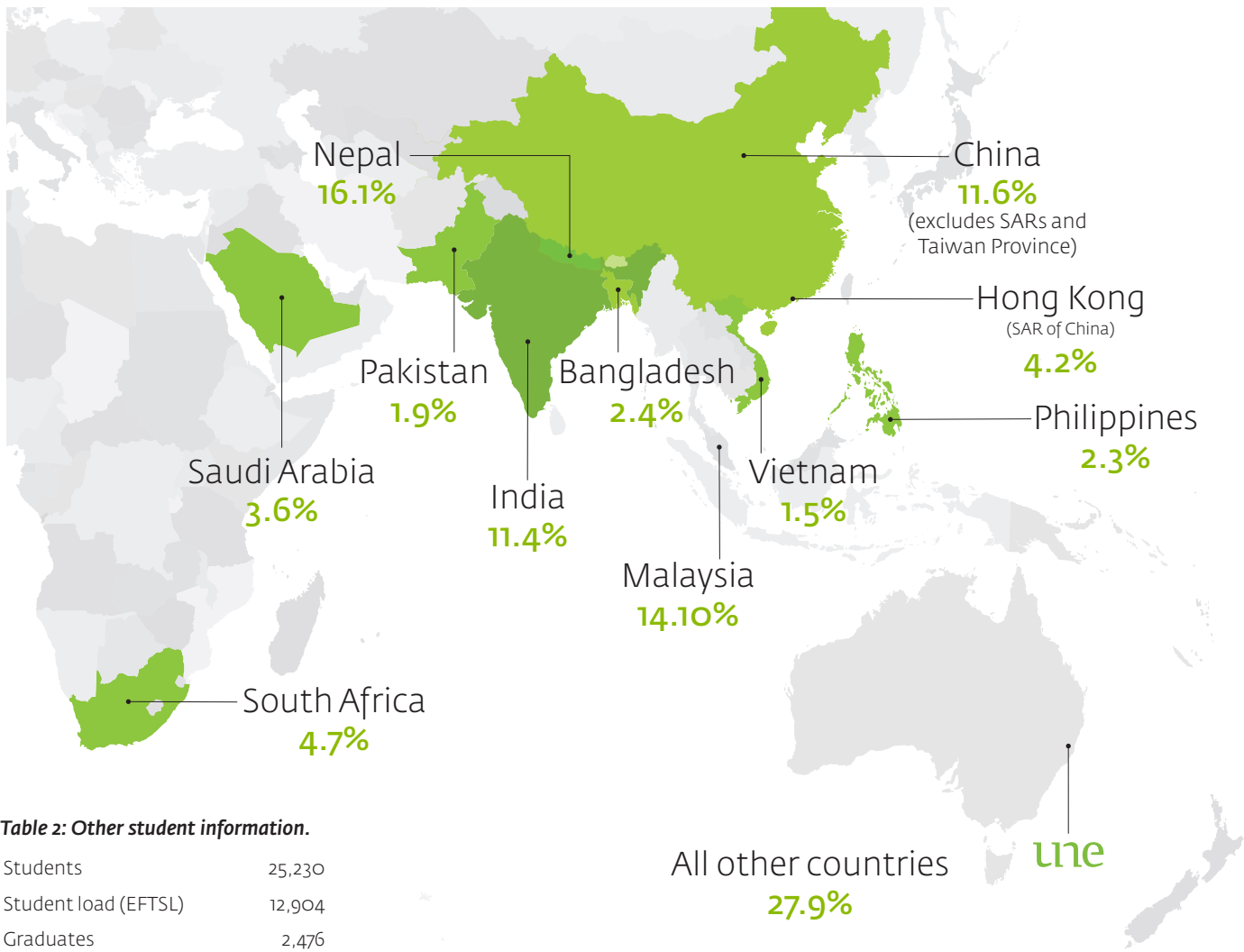
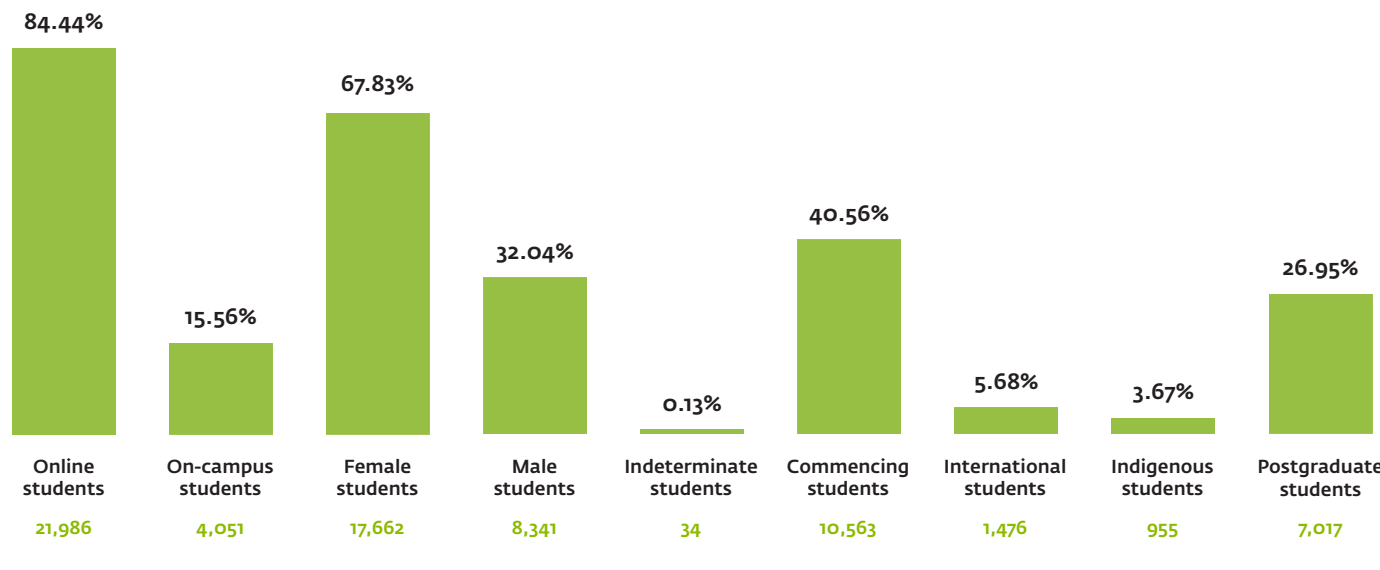


Table 2: Other student information.

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Students | 25,230 |
| Student load (EFTSL) | 12,904 |
| Graduates | 2,476 |
| International HDR students | 234 |

Table 3: 2020 student enrolment demographics.



Strategic Plan 2016-2020:

Together, we can do this

In 2016, UNE developed and implemented its bold and innovative strategic plan 2016-2020: *Together, we can do this* to guide the University through an increasingly challenging higher education landscape. The plan set out our aspiration, purpose and strategy, and defined the values that underpin our endeavours.

Aspiration

By 2020, we will be the 'University of Choice' for students and researchers who desire to transform lives and help build resilient communities.

Purpose

To be active in developing individual aspirations, potential and capability, and to enhance the future of our communities through quality research, fostering innovation and delivering a formative educational experience. The magnitude of UNE's research and student participation is global. UNE will connect with our students for life. UNE will succeed by building enduring, global partnerships with industry, professions, business and government.

Values

- Creative, innovative, willing to change and take calculated risks;
- Respectful, approachable and helpful;
- Sustainable, robust and dependable; and
- Ethical, honest, accountable and authentic.

Together, we can do this will conclude in 2020. While the themes and strategic priorities articulated in the plan remain relevant, we are reviewing our institutional strategy in the context of environmental and regulatory changes, and the evolving nature of student, community and institutional expectations.

The *UNE 21+* consultation process was approved by Council in mid-2020. It consisted of the University's broadest ever series of stakeholder engagements to develop a shared understanding of strategic priorities. The result is a bold and innovative decadal strategic plan, *Future Fit*, which is closely aligned with the aspirations and needs of staff, students and communities. *Future Fit* was approved by Council in November 2020 and launched in February 2021.

↓ Northern Campus
University of New England,
Armidale NSW. Circa 1960's.





↑ UNE's Boilerhouse project site.

Operational Report

In 2020, UNE achieved a number of significant objectives in support of the strategic plan 2016-2020: *Together, we can do this.*

Strategic Priority 1: Deliver excellent research with high impact

We will achieve international distinction in research in our chosen fields, which will positively impact and strengthen our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant economic and social disruption throughout 2020, challenging University research objectives. UNE researchers and research support staff were impacted in their ability to maintain collaborations, manage productivity goals and ensure a pipeline of quality outputs. Both staff and students had to accommodate physical-distancing requirements in order to ensure the governance and assurance of research in a COVID-constrained environment, including working on or off-site throughout the height of the pandemic. For example, all interviews for Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval were transferred online and substantial HREC application variations were managed to ensure that research could be performed to the appropriate ethical standard given the changed circumstances.

A significant number of 'extenuating circumstances' scholarships were granted to Higher Degree Research (HDR) students, largely driven by the COVID-19 disruption.

Despite these measures, UNE's HDR student program was significantly disrupted because of a loss of field work opportunities and shifts around provision of supervision, resulting in decreased completion rates and a lower number of new enrolments. The University had invested an additional \$9.2 million in new HDR scholarships over the last three years to stimulate HDR growth, build capacity and address demand in key fields of research.

As part of UNE's COVID-19 response, Research Services coordinated the management of the COVID Research Response Team. The Associate Deans Research of the three faculties, the Chairs of Human Research and Animal Ethics Committees and the Director of the Centre of Animal Research and Teaching (CART) helped apply NSW Government prescribed conditions and health orders to research and HDR activity. Chaired by the Director, Research Services, this group provided rapid advice to researchers and HDR candidates on how their work could be sustained and what changes would be required to comply with all published NSW health orders.

Despite the various operational limitations, satisfying progress was made towards the establishment of the New England Graduate School, to meet the rapidly transitioning needs of a future regional workforce. The new School aims to improve HDR recruitment, retention and completion rates through a greater emphasis on the development of new research programs and is expected to commence during the latter part of 2021. A strong focus on quality, innovation and the nurturing of industry-ready graduates was central to the planning process.

UNE continued with the implementation of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018) and introduced new measures to improve the overall integrity of UNE's research practices. Procedures for investigating research conduct breaches or related complaints were strengthened to facilitate a rigorous assessment of complaints in a manner that is procedurally fair, transparent and confidential. The Research Integrity Office received a number of new complaints in the 2019 to 2020 period, 12 of which progressed to the stage of a Preliminary Assessment. Complaints that have not progressed to a Preliminary Assessment were either dismissed or referred for consideration through other UNE processes, in line with the approved requirements. Information gathered from Preliminary Assessments will be used to inform the progression of specialised training in research integrity in 2021.

Despite COVID-19 constraints, the Research Services Office processed 279 new Category 1 to 4 grant applications worth \$96,235,000 in 2020. UNE has enjoyed continued success in the most competitive funding schemes and is currently involved with seven projects that have attracted \$3.4 million in new Australian Research Council (ARC) funding, along with three ARC Linkage projects worth over \$900,000. Most notable is UNE's success in achieving a range of applied health research grants, awarded through a variety of funding bodies, including the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), NSW Ministry of Health, and Commonwealth Department of Health. Many of these grants address the major challenges facing UNE's communities as a result of the impact of drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. A particular focus is the development of knowledge and practice around the associated mental health issues. In total, over \$28 million worth of research projects commenced at UNE in 2020, with some of the largest projects funded by major Rural Research and Development Corporations.

UNE contributed to building the nation's future research workforce through the UNE Post-Doctoral Fellowship Scheme (UNE-PDF), which has supported 48 UNE-PDFs since 2014. The final UNE-PDF round was conducted in 2019, with six newly awarded post-doctorates commencing in 2020. The UNE-PDF's scheme attracted an additional \$19,142,194 in external funds to support research at the University. From this pool of developing researchers, 12 UNE-PDFs gained significant awards, including Fulbright, Australian Academy of Science, Chinese Academy of Science and European Union Marie Curie fellowships

Even though some research activity was limited across 2020, UNE's researchers celebrated the publication of some 966 publications, a small increase on the 958 published in 2019. While the disruptive effects of COVID-19 are likely to have flow-on effects for UNE's future outputs in 2021/22, our publishing profile remains robust, with 16% of research outputs being rated among the top 10% of most cited publications worldwide. This improvement (relative to the 14.8% in 2019) reflects an ongoing advance in the quality and relevance of UNE research data. In 2020, 62% of UNE authored journal articles were published in top quartile journals, according to *CiteScore metrics*. Two UNE researchers, Professor Yihong Du and Professor Annette Cowie, once again ranked among the top 1,000 most cited researchers worldwide. UNE's most prolific research subject areas continue to be the

Biological and Environmental Sciences, Medical and Health Sciences, Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, and Education and Historical Studies. Knowledge creation continues at UNE at the highest levels of quality and achievement, and outputs appear in the most respected scientific publications. In 2020, UNE research was published in *Nature*, the world's most prestigious scientific journal. The paper '*Last appearance of Homo erectus at Ngandong, Java, 117,000-108,000 years ago*' co-authored by Dr Mark Moore in the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

International Research Projects

In addition to a strong focus on impactful research within a domestic, regional setting, UNE also contributes much to the international research and development forum. For example, **The Nauru Teacher Education Project** co-funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia in 2013, is an international partnership with the Nauru Government. It aims to provide culturally responsive teacher education to increase the number of local teachers, and through this, enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Nauru. Using qualitative data collection and analysis, the UNE research team is investigating a model for university studies, contextualised for the remote regions of the Pacific. The goal is to combine online, face-to-face and community engagement strategies to enable the co-design of place-relevant education. Collaboratively, UNE has partnered with the Nauru Government to develop a national mathematics curriculum a national creative arts curriculum, and a policy for implementing inclusive education practice. Since 2019, the UNE Pacific Education and Development Team has also implemented a Nauru Inclusive Education Project (co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand) that targets community beliefs, change, and a preparedness to meet the needs of Nauruan school-age children through inclusive education practices. This has involved a targeted professional learning strategy, across all sectors of the Nauruan education community, accompanied by an analysis of change within the education community. UNE parented similar education research projects in partnership with the Government of Tuvalu, particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy, science and assessment. Discussions about future engagement with Tuvalu will resume when COVID-19 travel restrictions are lifted.

The **UNE-hosted SiMERR National Research Centre**² continued its applied strategic research in the Philippines, working in partnership with the Philippine Normal University (the Philippine Government designated National Centre for Teacher Education) and the Philippine National Centre for Teacher Quality (RCTQ) – established by SiMERR – the transformational work continued at scale and pace. Of the many innovations in 2020 completed by SiMERR-RCTQ in collaboration with the Philippine Department of Education, the most significant resulted in the development, national validation and signing into law of both the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (Principals) and the Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors. In a world first, these sets of professional standards are based around four developmental career stages designed to support students as they progress to be senior tutors and supervisors in their country.

² The National Centre of Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR).

UNE is the co-lead on **two large dairy cattle genetics programs, in East Africa (2016-2022) and India (2016-2021)**, thanks to the support of some \$32 million funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). Building off original research led by UNE from 2010 to 2015, these programs are developing the methods, tools and processes to deliver genetic and management improvements to some 30 million smallholder farmers. The programs harness the latest genetic and genomic tools for livestock, in which UNE is a world leader, to leapfrog the development process for poor farmers in the developing world. This research program has delivered a series of world-firsts that are being applied in country including: successful genetic evaluation in data-poor crossbred dairy cattle systems; the development of small, cost-effective genomic assays for breed composition; in-situ estimation of breed composition effects; the largest assessment of Indian indigenous (*Bos indicus*) cattle genetic diversity; assessment of African cattle genetic diversity; demonstration of imputation in crossbred (indigenous *Bos taurus*) cattle; application of ancestral haplotype tracking to improve estimates of breed composition effects; and genome-wide association mapping. Discussions are currently underway with BMGF to continue and expand both programs.

Indigenous Advancement

Developing the capacity of Indigenous scholars at UNE remains a critical strategic goal. UNE currently offers three scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander postgraduate candidates, which amounts to direct investment of over \$80,000 per annum. Each scholar is supported to build a program of relevance to Indigenous knowledge development.

Below are examples of the outstanding work that has already been completed by three of our Indigenous PhD students:

Michael Brogan is an Indigenous Early Career Fellow whose doctoral studies focus on the role of ethnographic film-making in the relationship between anthropology, government policy and the assimilation of Aboriginal Peoples through education. Australian governments have actively supported this narrative by generating an institutional corpus of anthropological and ethnographic films portraying “*Aboriginal and Torres Strait culture as having remained Stone Age.*”

Amy Hammond is a Gamilaroi woman and community member working to reclaim Gamilaroi weaving knowledge and to pass these stories and cultural practices onto the next generation. Amy is also an Indigenous Early Career Fellow at UNE and has undertaken many overseas research trips to museums to identify Gamilaroi weaving in their collections. Her research has revealed the existence of Gamilaroi weavings in collections around the world.

Brooke Kennedy is an Indigenous PhD researcher at UNE who became a zoologist to help conserve Australian wildlife. In the third year of her doctoral studies Brooke was offered the chance to be part of a not-for-profit project that facilitated dog health on the Tiwi Islands.

In 2019 and 2020 UNE had 32 Indigenous Masters and PhD students, 28 of whom received scholarships. Of these students, two completed their degrees in 2019 and one in 2020.

UNE also fosters an Indigenous Leadership Program that provides current Aboriginal PhD candidates with a pathway to academic positions. This strategy provides a means for offering professional development opportunities to Indigenous HDR student researchers who are part of the University, in whom the UNE has already invested academic skills and training, and who have a place in the community. Since 2017, four candidates have benefitted from this scheme.

Table 4: Indigenous Masters or PhD students: 2019-2020.

| Year | MPhil | MSci | PhD | Total Students | Receiving Scholarships | Scholarship value/year |
|------|-------|------|-----|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 2019 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 12 | \$35,900 |
| 2020 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 18 | 16 | \$36,520 |

↓ NAIDOC Week
2020



Table 5: Examples of research success at UNE in 2020.

| Project | Principal Researcher | Faculty/School | Funding Body | Amount |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------|--|-------------|
| Delivering resource populations for multi-breed genomic evaluation in beef cattle | A/Prof. Samuel Clark | SABL/ERS | NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment | \$6,618,086 |
| Building and delivering effective genomic selection for northern Australian cattle | A/Prof. David Johnston | AGBU | Meat & Livestock Australia | \$3,834,479 |
| Development of genomic multi-breed eating quality trait estimates using shared global data | A/Prof. Peter McGilchrist | SABL/ERS | Meat & Livestock Australia | \$3,046,164 |
| Novel autonomous robotic weed control to maximise agricultural productivity (Ag Kelpie) | Dr Edmund Sadgrove | SABL/S&T | Department of Industry, Innovation and Science – CRC-Partnership grant | \$2,960,786 |
| The origin of cumulative culture in human evolution | A/Prof. Mark Moore | HASSE/HASS | Australian Research Council – Future Fellowship | \$998,395 |
| Enhancing social and emotional wellbeing healing through arts-based storytelling for Aboriginal communities of Northern Inland NSW bushfire-affected areas | Prof. Kim Usher | M&H/Health | Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Research Grant | \$624,022 |
| Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Australians' preventative health behaviours: A mixed methods study | Prof. Kim Usher | M&H/Health | NSW Ministry of Health – COVID-19 Research Program | \$335,680 |
| Driving social inclusion through physical activity: the Armidale newly-arrived migrant, refugee and friends regional sport network | Dr Kristy O'Neill | HASSE/Education | Australian Government Department of Health –Driving Social Inclusion through Sport and Physical Activity grant | \$224,677 |
| NSW Post-Suicide Support | Prof. Myfanwy Maple | M&H/Health | NSW Department of Health | \$150,000 |
| Nature vs. Nurture: Evaluating physical and genetic variability in modern and pre-Contact dingoes | Dr Melanie Fillios | HASSE/HASS | Australia and Pacific Science Foundation | \$41,000 |

UNE's Superstars of STEM

As part of UNE's commitment to the development of STEM skills in the regional workforce, the University has actively engaged with the nurturing of STEM champions. In 2020 they included:

Debbie Bower, a herpetologist lecturing in Ecosystem Rehabilitation affiliated with the School of Environmental and Rural Science, who is researching the management of invasive species and conservation of threatened reptiles and amphibians. Debbie recently won an ARC Linkage grant valued at \$601,024.

Mary McMillan, a Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Science in the School of Science and Technology, who wants to understand how our DNA impacts on our mental health.

Marissa Betts, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Environmental and Rural Science and a palaeontologist, who is researching some of the world's oldest skeletons.

UNE is increasingly gaining recognition for the outstanding women who are making a name for themselves as Early Career Researchers. Our list of exceptional women researchers includes: Dr Amy Moss, Dr Deborah Bower, Dr Marissa Betts, Dr Katinka Van de Ven, Dr Angela Lees, Dr Isabelle Ruhnke, Dr Jennifer Hamilton, Dr Priscilla Freitas Gerber, Dr Valentina Gosetti and Dr Manu Saunders.

Strategic Priority 2: Deliver an outstanding student experience

As well as high-quality education, we will provide a formative experience that enhances our students' lives and enables them to excel personally and professionally, nationally and internationally.

Teaching and Learning

UNE's support for students and their individual goals depends on the contributions of all UNE staff. Equally important is the scholarship, quality assurance and expertise that teams of educators and individual academic staff bring to bear in supporting both institutional effort and wider sector needs. In February, three UNE teaching staff, Professor Debra Dunstan, Mr Brent Gregory and Mrs Lisa Harris, were honoured with Australian University Sector recognition for their outstanding work in teaching innovation.

UNE's Academic Board and the Vice-Chancellor approved a new Course Design Framework (CDF v1.5) in 2020. This instrument forms part of a cohesive, principles-based Academic Framework created to underpin a University-wide renewal of the UNE curricula and was eagerly embraced by schools and disciplines. It comprises a set of principles that identify grounded approaches to course design, and offers a meaningful and flexible scaffolding onto which course design leaders can anchor all ongoing design processes. Outcomes are focused on course design profiles that support student success and progression, and result in improved workload models for staff that also recognise and reward achievement. As noted earlier, UNE continues to innovate in the application of technology-enabled learning, and online examinations were escalated to deliver some 40,000 exams to UNE students across 2020 as a component of our pandemic response.

In addition to the above, UNE hosted two major education community events in 2020:

- The ASCILITE (Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education) 2020 conference was hosted virtually in November 2020. It featured an international line-up of presenters and some 400 virtual attendees engaged in discussions around the latest developments in topics such as learning analytics, learning design, and innovations in assessment.
- Five hundred and eighty mathematicians and teachers from across Australia and internationally participated in the 64th Annual Meeting of the Australian Mathematical Society (AusMS) hosted online by UNE in December 2020 to overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Scholarships and Prizes

The UNE Foundation Trust provides for many of UNE's scholarships and prizes dedicated to supporting commencing, continuing and Indigenous students. During 2020 the UNE Foundation (UNEF) paid out some \$1.6m, consequently benefitting 365 students through 47 different scholarships and 128 prizes. As referenced earlier, the awards included three competitive scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in undergraduate and enabling programs.

The UNE Foundation responded to the needs of those students studying online by introducing a new UNEF Online Student Scholarship and a UNEF Online Student Textbook Bursary, assisting an additional 52 remote/distance learning students with the costs of study.

Through the Vice-Chancellor's High Achievement Prize, UNEF was able to provide \$96,000 in financial support to 48 high school leavers to assist with their transition to university study. These prizes were in addition to the resources made available in late 2020 through the new Commonwealth Job Ready Graduate funding reforms, which now include Tertiary Access Payments to assist regional students.

UNE also participated in government-funded programs such as the Destination Australia Program, which awarded 59 students scholarships of \$15,000 per annum in 2020, and the Indigenous Student Success Program, which provided \$78,000 in scholarships to 55 students in 2020, as well as prizes across every School.

Partnerships and Support

UNE is working in partnership with the Tamworth University Steering Group to extend tertiary education, and specifically UNE's presence in the city, to facilitate and stimulate growth in the city and the wider area, strengthen educational outcomes, and deliver on Tamworth's ambitious *Blueprint 100* strategy for the region. The project entered an exciting new phase with the launch of the UNE vision for an innovative University offering in the city after extensive consultations with industry, government and the community. UNE Tamworth will be rolled out in stages over the next decade, starting with new undergraduate certificates that will be offered in 2021 and including new teaching facilities as well as industry-linked research offerings. As part of our commitment to flexible personalised learning, a mixture of online and face-to-face courses will be offered, including work-integrated learning in areas such as community services, education, sports management, sports science, business and entertainment management.

UNE partnerships extend from regional Australia to other regional communities in a global context. A new program to strengthen the leadership and management skills of women working in agricultural research for development in the Indo-Pacific was launched in February 2020. The Meryl Williams Fellowship is an initiative of the Australian Government's agricultural research for development agency, with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and is delivered in partnership with UNE. Under the Fellowship program, groups of women with established careers in agriculture-related research agencies across the Indo-Pacific will undertake immersive training at UNE in management, workplace relations, career development and leadership. The participants will receive ongoing professional development through a structured international mentoring program and work placements.

A new capacity-building partnership between the Country University Centre (CUC) North West and UNE formally extended UNE's foundational commitment to improving educational outcomes in remote, rural and regional Australia. Through this partnership, UNE provides training and guidance for CUC staff in student and academic support, streamlined access to UNE specialist staff, and access to UNE resources for students.

Additionally, a partnership with the new Taree Universities Campus gives Mid Coast students access to supported online courses in areas such as agritech, agribusiness and the arts. Both partnerships extend UNE's commitment to place-based education and the provision of strong academic support for students who, for various reasons, would not normally have ready access to university education.

With a similar focus on resolving the tyranny of distance, UNE also launched two new music-teaching partnerships designed to enable students to study music online with the University, whilst also receiving professional face-to-face expert tuition close to home. These arrangements with the Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music and the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music build on the success of previous partnerships and supplement UNE's online music offerings to regional students.

Student Retention

More than 80% of UNE's students are mature-aged, already active in the workforce, and motivated to study to progress their careers. UNE's bridging pathways provide opportunities to those with the ability to study but not the necessary university entry qualifications and several pathway courses are available for students. UNE's expanded Personal Retention and Engagement Program (PREP) was designed to assist students with study and its demands through their first semester.

UNE's English Language Centre (ELC), which leads the rankings on the Australian English Language Barometer, annually assists 200 international students take their English to an academic level, while UNE's O-orala Aboriginal Centre provides support and assistance to students from our First Nations communities. The Oorala model is a UNE success story and currently supports over 800 students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds in their learning journey.

The University worked across a number of areas to deliver academic, financial (including scholarships) and enhanced pastoral support to students impacted by the events which unfolded across the latter half of 2019 and 2020. Building on its longstanding experience in online teaching, the University seamlessly converted its on-campus offerings to an online modality at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. Approximately 90% of our Chinese students, who were not in Australia when travel bans came into effect, were also successfully converted to online study and they maintained strong levels of engagement throughout the year. While overall student numbers and load for T1, 2020 were lower than initially forecast – largely because of the overlapping effects of first drought and then bushfires – aggregate student load rebounded in T2/2020 and tracked only slightly below forecasts.

Student Experience

UNE rated highly in the *Good Universities Guide*, as determined by the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) data, retaining its top rating of five stars for overall student experience for the fifteenth consecutive year. UNE scored an 85.1% positive rating from students, compared to the sector average of 80.9%, and was also awarded the top ranking of five stars in several other significant categories, including Student Support, Teaching Quality and, for the first time, Learner Engagement.

In addition, UNE also performed well in the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Graduate Outcomes

Survey, ranking fourth in the sector for full-time employment outcomes for undergraduate study. Full-time undergraduate employment outcomes improved slightly, rising from the 79.1% reported in 2019 to 81.1% in 2020.

Many UNE student cohorts were also successful in their own right. For example, UNE science students won Australia's premier soil judging competition against formidable opposition from nine other universities. PhD candidate Apsara Amarasinghe also won the individual soil judging event, while the UNE team won the Bennison Trophy for the Best University Overall.

Strategic Priority 3: Diversify and grow income

We will have a diverse funding base in order to guarantee excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation.

In common with many, UNE's financial position required ongoing attention throughout 2020. In-year cashflow issues and control of year-on-year operational costs were challenging. Like many institutions, UNE focused on the ongoing need to reshape the budget structure and to diversify income sources to better serve the University's strategic priorities and secure a sustainable financial position. Midway through the year, the University announced the *Time for Change* program. The key objective of this program was to recalibrate UNE's workforce establishment cost and achieve a managed payroll reduction of some \$20 million.

A higher than expected teaching, research and dividend revenue offset the pandemic-related impacts on core residential and investment income. Tight control around discretionary non payroll expenditure further helped to offset the increasing establishment burden, as well as the increased costs attributable to the UNE pandemic response.

UNE Tamworth

UNE is working in partnership with Tamworth stakeholders to extend and grow the University's presence to support the city's ambitious growth plans, strengthen educational outcomes across the region, and align UNE's ambitions with Tamworth's ambitious *Blueprint 100* strategy.

In November 2020, the NSW Government announced a commitment of \$26.7 million, as part of its Restart NSW program, towards the development of UNE Tamworth. Coupled with UNE's agreed commitments, this will enable the University to now seek Federal Government support to bring the vision for a Tamworth university campus to life.

Time for Change

Through the *Time for Change* program UNE rationalised its core workforce and agreed on a new organisational structure. This program was designed to address financial sustainability issues and resulted in 165 voluntary redundancies and agreement to develop new, more effective models of working better suited to UNE's new strategic goals for growth.

Undergraduate Certificate in Professional Development

The Undergraduate Certificate in Professional Development (UCPD) is one of UNE's responses to the Federal Government's Job Ready Graduates Package of reforms to higher education. The certificate is designed to rapidly upskill people who might not have considered tertiary education opportunities,

and offers prospective students, including non-traditional students, the opportunity to progress their careers, enter a new career pathway or progress with further study. The areas of specialisation, developed in consultation with industry, local government and community stakeholders, are aligned to and support local economic and community education growth goals. Enrolments commenced in February 2021.

Academic Workload Framework

The endorsement, in March 2020, of the *UNE Academic and English Language Centre Teaching Staff Academic Enterprise Agreement 2020-2022*, facilitated vital work to develop a new operational framework for UNE academic activities, with a new hours-based academic workload model providing a key part of the architecture.

The new workload model aims to provide a fair, equitable and transparent means for deciding how academic work is determined and then allocated. It will operate alongside the new Course Design Framework and UNE's Assessment Policy to deliver a sustainable scaffold for teaching. Other design critical artefacts will include the development of new teaching-focused roles, the publication of a new scholarship strategy and a reshaping of the academic promotion criteria. The Academic Framework is also intended as a key enabler for future success under UNE's new strategic plan, and will underpin the new strategies for research, teaching and learning, as well as course reviews, future curriculum development and an offering of new academic credentials.

Extensive consultation took place across the University to understand academic workload and associated obligations, and trial implementation of the new model commenced in March 2021. It is only one aspect of ongoing work across a wide range of areas to ensure all parts of the University's systems, policies and practices work together to enable academics to undertake high-quality work in a well-supported work environment.

Strategic Priority 4: Digital dominance

We will be a global leader in the delivery of high-quality and innovative teaching and learning, with digital and online education accessible 24/7 throughout the world.

Online orientation

Significant adjustments to UNE's education delivery model were required in 2020. The UNE Student Success team produced a wholly online orientation process via UNE's Learning Management System, Moodle. Referred to as UNE101, it involved a variety of different media formats to increase engagement and ensure all students could access it. Nearly 1,000 students from across Australia and internationally joined 11 webinars over five days for sessions on student support, university basics, technology and academic skills.

Online teaching

Online innovations UNE introduced during the height of the coronavirus lockdowns resulted in new virtual platforms for laboratory experiments, field excursions, intensive schools and practicals. Examples of the teaching methods introduced to students are listed below.

- The use of three-dimensional imaging software in archaeology workshops enabled students to study and identify human and animal bones virtually, without physically handling (or destroying) a single bone, and to develop basic forensic skills.
- Virtual field trips to UNE's Kirby SMART Farm allowed students to study soil, crop and grazing management or conduct animal autopsies in the laboratory.
- Explorations of a simulated island – known as *Australis 4 Learning*, UNE's Second Life space – gave students the opportunity to enjoy virtual tours and excursions, and to role-play activities in a school classroom or playground.
- Online, on-demand exams for accounting students, supported by a progression pipeline that enabled them to accelerate their learning.

↓ SportUNE,
Swimming Pool Upgrade.



Online invigilation

During the global pandemic, the University successfully shifted to the universal provision of online examinations (OLX) as the only mode of delivery. The successful transition required deep faculty-wide engagement and the combined support of academic and professional staff, building on a pilot project that had commenced in 2017.

A concerted effort was made to manage privacy and quality concerns of students during accelerated implementation over the past 12 months. Four virtual workshops were held for academic and professional staff to increase their understanding of assessment design concepts and their use of OLX, to help realise the benefits of this platform. Staff also underwent extensive on-the-job training to support students and measures were introduced for ProctorU, the service provider delivering the online invigilation, to escalate student issues in real time. Both the UNE Cyber Security team and the Privacy Office conducted assessments of the ProctorU platform to support students with information about data collection, privacy policies and options.

To date, over 40,000 online examinations have been successfully administered, with UNE staff recognised as sector leaders in exam-based eAssessment. Other innovative forms of assessment, such as interactive group work and peer review, ensued. Faculties and Schools were also deeply engaged in a learning and teaching policy suite renewal approved, and actively monitored, by UNE's Academic Board in order to support such new assessment models.

A new ePortfolio platform was implemented to promote continuous reflection and the reflexive presentation of academic achievement and skills development. This suite is available to all students and staff at UNE, opening up the visibility of excellent scholarship and learning to both internal and external audiences.

Strategic Priority 5: Improve operational resilience

We will ensure our long-term resilience by improving flexibility, responsiveness, efficiency and reliability, and through adopting best practice in all things we do.

Time for Change

In July 2020, UNE announced the *Time for Change* program. While the COVID-19 pandemic did not solely drive this restructuring process, the global crisis did bring longstanding organisational pressures into sharp focus and highlighted the need for a refresh.

The *Time for Change* program sought to restructure the organisational design of the University and reduce the workforce. A target saving of some \$20 million per annum in payroll costs was identified in order to secure ongoing sustainability and release funds for investment in new UNE faculty, research and critical infrastructure.

Organisational redesign was also considered vital for the delivery of outcomes outlined in UNE's new strategic plan, *Future Fit*, including enhanced student success, digital transformation, knowledge partnerships and place-based engagement.

The *Time for Change* program also prioritised the restructuring of UNE's finances, to ensure that liquidity concerns were addressed and that all critical financial viability ratios were improved to ensure longer-term financial sustainability.

Cyber Security

Following extensive cyber training of staff and students in 2019, the University entered a partnership with the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) to further bolster its cyber defence in 2020. This partnership offers threat intelligence and situational awareness, resilience-building activities and other collaboration opportunities, such as direct communication with a national network of ACSC partners.

Throughout 2020 UNE utilised the services of a pan-university Special Incident Group (SIG) to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational delivery, research and appropriate outreach and engagement activities. The SIG managed various Work, Health and Safety (WHS) requirements and their impact through distributed working and the redesign of campus operations. UNE staff and students were paroled from lockdown as part of a progressive process and new hybrid modes of engagement introduced in the latter half of the year.

Adaptive Responses to COVID

Virtual graduations were offered to celebrate student achievements, and a range of virtual meeting landscapes were used to host all staff events, conferences and community engagement processes and to support all governance processes.

Substantial staffing changes took place in the English Language Centre, moving from a highly casualised workforce to ongoing staff. Several school reviews were completed and recommendations are now being implemented.

UNE strengthened several of its cyber security practices and controls, including enterprise security architecture, vulnerability management, security awareness, IT service continuity planning, security governance and incident management. The review will continue in 2021, with a focus on protecting priority information assets. The University also began to build cloud-hosted data centres in Sydney to provide capacity and scalability for future business processes and is rolling out a new, contemporary Identity and Access Management system to manage access to information resources.

Dixon Library recently joined JUSP, a Journal Usage Statistics Portal service, to facilitate the collection of data about the use of e-books and e-journals at UNE, enable analysis of usage trends over time and allow benchmarking against other Australian universities.

Strategic Priority 6: Create a bold and innovative culture

We will foster a constructive and engaged culture, where creative ideas and innovation thrive, and where staff flourish.

NEViHN and the Joint Virtual Care Centre

Accelerated by the global pandemic, UNE launched the New England Virtual Health Network (NEViHN) and Joint Virtual Care Centre (JVCC) in 2020 in partnership with the Hunter New England Local Health District and Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network.

NEViHN is an innovative education and healthcare model that supports the delivery of in-place treatment for patients and in-place learning for all future UNE medicine and health students in the New England North West region. The digitally-enabled JVCC

network similarly provides educational access across dispersed locations and between students, practitioners and local health services. It is housed in UNE's Tablelands Clinical School and uses artificial intelligence technology to support the delivery of in-home health care. The centre links patients with doctors and specialists using a "caretaker" internet-enabled monitoring system, thus avoiding long-distance travel to a major hospital.

UNE Boilerhouse Discovery Space

UNE's vision for an innovative, multi-functional space to foster educational aspirations among our nation's youngest learners continued to take shape in 2020. The UNE Boilerhouse Discovery Space will be the first children's museum of its kind in regional NSW, and award-winning firms Architectus and James Cubitt Architects (JCA) have been appointed to lead an impressive multi-disciplinary team to bring new life and visitors to the former Boilerhouse building. Architectus and JCA will design the transformation of the building and its experiences, which are expected to include indoor spaces dedicated to music and performance, space and the universe, ecosystems, geology and archaeology, patterns and numbers, agriculture, energy, brain building and construction.

Reconciliation Action Plan

UNE's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in July 2020. This 'Reflect' RAP outlines actions and deliverables that support UNE's commitment to equitable access to higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students regardless of circumstances. In addition to outlining UNE's vision for reconciliation, the RAP sets out how the University will continue to work side-by-side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and community members to advance reconciliation.

Systems and processes

UNE's systems and processes are reviewed and refined on a regular basis. The following changes were made in 2020:

- The flow and timeliness of information to executive and senior management was boosted by the development and introduction of a Power BI Executive Reporting Dashboard that allows for real-time monitoring and reporting of several business critical functions (e.g. student load, leave liability and infrastructure operations).
- UNE introduced a new, simplified way of lodging complaints, grievances or compliments as part of its commitment to a culture that values open reporting and finding effective resolutions. Through the *Grapevine* portal, staff and students can lodge anonymous complaints and grievances 24/7.
- The University introduced a new, fully online service portal, *Heather*. This portal was designed to enhance privacy management and reduce the manual processing prevalent in Human Resources functions.
- Two enterprise agreements were successfully concluded in 2020 after two years of negotiation. The *Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2019-2022* came into effect on 3 June, 2020 and sets out the terms and conditions of employment for professional staff. The *Academic & ELC Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020-2022* came into effect on 25 May, 2020 and provides assurances for academic staff around remuneration, promotion, leave arrangements and workload design.

A new strategic direction

The development of UNE's new strategic plan followed the largest corporate online engagement process in the University's history. *UNE 21+* was a 10-week process of engagement with more than 1,100 participants, and generated over 3,500 comments, ideas and survey submissions to help understand UNE's unique institutional identity and to articulate its future direction.

The resulting *Future Fit*, a decadal strategic plan launched in February 2021, reasserts UNE's founding goal to be a leading regional university and positions this ambition within a modern context. It informs all UNE engagement, with objectives that ensure sustainability, resilience, prosperity and meaning. Over the next decade, UNE will focus on personalised learning journeys, empowering communities and building resilience.

As part of the University's transition to *Future Fit*, a new performance planning template was developed and introduced to staff. The new template ensures closer alignment between individual and organisational goals by breaking them down into four aspects, namely 'now', 'future', 'personal' and 'professional'. The template will become operational in 2021.

Financial Considerations

Following NSW Government health directives surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the University introduced a distributed model of working in March 2020. This model remained in place until July, when a staged, multi-phased return of staff to all campuses began. From September 2020, UNE has operated with some 60% of staff on site and the remaining staff working from approved places of safety. All non-essential campus operations (e.g. sports facilities, social events and residential colleges) were suspended and alternate provision offered where required using new COVID-compliant methods of engagement and delivery.

UNE business revenue was impacted adversely by the necessary closure of key facilities, such as colleges, catering outlets, the cinema and sports complex. The COVID-19 management response also incurred higher costs – namely for increased information technology mobility, increased hygiene, the transition to online examinations, development of alternative units to support intensives, and the provision of emergency student support.

Significant cost-saving measures were introduced to all operations to address these budgetary pressures, including a freeze on recruitment, travel and discretionary spending, and on the remuneration of senior staff groups. UNE's capital works program was also reduced to critical actions only.

In June, major funding reforms were announced as part of the Federal Government's Job-ready Graduates Package. This package provides more support for disciplines in which UNE has high enrolments and a strong track record, including agriculture, teaching, nursing, the sciences, psychology and languages. However, the University also has a proud tradition of attracting students into the Humanities, which has seen significant fee increases. UNE has begun a review of its scholarship programs in light of these announcements to ensure equal opportunity.

Both internal (Council) and external Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) stakeholders monitor key financial ratios as an indication of financial viability. In order to ensure that UNE is able to meet liquidity needs for operational and strategic investment, UNE negotiated a \$40m unsecured loan during 2020. This has ensured that UNE has protected its liquidity and other ratios, underpinning stronger financial sustainability outcomes.

Sustainability Initiatives at UNE

In November 2020, UNE officially switched on its solar farm, which is capable of meeting up to 50% of the academic campus' power needs. The farm is part of UNE's wider commitment to the use of renewables, and will reduce carbon emissions by up to 5,000 tonnes per year. Delivered by established commercial solar systems provider Solgen Energy, the \$6.3 million, 3.2-megawatt solar farm's 8,700 fixed, ground-mounted photovoltaic solar modules are installed on UNE land adjacent to the campus' northern boundary. In 2020, the solar farm generated 1.2MWh, or 12% of UNE's annual electricity, resulting in a saving of approximately \$250,000.

A second key sustainability project was the installation of a modern geothermal system to heat the newly refurbished SportUNE indoor pool. The new system is expected to reduce annual CO₂ emissions by approximately 200 tonnes, which is equivalent to the CO₂ absorbed by 8,000 trees.

In 2020, UNE conducted its first staff and student environmental sustainability survey. All new staff also completed an online environmental induction unit. Across campus, new waste management initiatives were trialled as part of ongoing plans to reduce waste. Reduced plastics usage, the collection of food waste for transfer to worm farms and the provision of personal mini-bins in staff offices contributed to initial savings of some \$70,000 in waste management costs.

Travel controls, combined with remote work arrangements, saw a huge shift in UNE's operations in 2020. As a result, the University enjoyed many indirect environmental benefits relating to reduced resource consumption. These included:

- Air travel reduced by 83%, equivalent to over 3,600 tonnes of carbon emissions. Similarly, fuel usage dropped by 45% as local and interstate travel became restricted. Compared to 2019, electricity usage declined significantly, which was further offset by the commissioning of the UNE Solar Farm.
- Gas consumption, used for heating buildings and hot-water systems, reduced by 14%, despite approximately 90% of students and staff working remotely for part or most of the year. This demonstrates the issues associated with UNE's ageing infrastructure and its inability to efficiently isolate vacant areas.
- Upgrades to the hot-water systems at Wright Village reduced electricity consumption by 13%, with occupancy 1% lower than baseline year. The hot-water systems also reduced the need for Simulated Natural Gas, resulting in further savings of approximately \$30,000.
- Water consumption was already significantly lower than in 2019, and this trend continued during the campus shutdown, with savings of over 120,000,000 litres compared to 2019.
- Waste and recycling rates significantly declined, down by 20% on 2019, most likely due to the impact of online teaching and working models.
- Reduced foot traffic after the drought broke enabled UNE's Armidale campus grounds to recover to pre-drought conditions.
- The volume of office paper procured last year was down by 64%, indicating that COVID-driven behavioural changes led to the development of digital/online solutions for previously paper-based procedures, such as examinations.
- Extensive upgrades to Dixon Library resulted in a 70% reduction in electricity used for lighting.
- Consolidation of campus buildings as a result of COVID-19 restrictions led to reductions in gas and electricity costs of some \$1 million.

↓ UNE Solar Farm Project



Key 2020 Sustainability Achievements



4.8 tonnes of
e-waste recycled



Additional 682,000L of storage
capacity in rainwater tanks
installed on Armidale campus



1.5 MWh generated
by Stage 1 of the
Solar Farm



200 tonnes of carbon avoided
from the use of geothermal
heating at UNE Aquatic Centre



750,000 MJ gas avoided
through adoption of green
technology for water heating



70% reduction in electricity
for lighting from Dixon
Library upgrades



22ha of conservation
zones implemented
on Armidale campus



Environmental
Sustainability induction
provided to all new
staff members



Over 1,600 Aboriginal
artefacts recorded
and registered on
UNE properties



Lake Zot remediation complete,
providing an irrigation source
for SportUNE and a valuable
teaching resource



Governance

The University of New England (UNE) was formed under the University of New England Act, 1993 (NSW) (hereafter 'the Act') and its by-laws. In accordance with the Act, the Body of the University comprises the UNE Council, Convocation, the University's graduates and students, as well as full-time members of staff as the by-laws may prescribe. The objective of the University, as outlined within the Act, is the promotion (within the limits of the University's resources) of scholarship, research, free inquiry, the interaction of research and teaching, and academic excellence.

During 2020, to support strong oversight and effective decision-making in a rapidly changing environment, particularly in terms of UNE's COVID-19 response and the health and wellbeing of UNE staff, students and broader community, additional Governance meetings were scheduled and more frequent out-of-session communication updates were provided to UNE's governing members, including those on Council and the Academic Board and their respective committees.

Council

The UNE Council is the University's governing authority and has functions conferred upon it by the Act. Under its powers of delegation, the Council establishes committees that are responsible for the analysis, review and endorsement of recommendations from the University's management, as well as for the identification of organisational risk and opportunities.

The aim of the University Council and its committees is to oversee the operation of UNE for the benefit of students, staff, the academic community and wider community as a whole. The Council may make rules in relation to any activity or function of the University, provided they are consistent with the Act and the University's by-laws.

The Council seeks to make decisions that contribute to the learning environment and interests of the University's stakeholders in a positive and transparent manner.

Voluntary Code of Best Practice

UNE complied with the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities in 2020. The next three-yearly review of the Council is scheduled to take place in 2021.

← Booloominbah,
University of New England,
Armidale NSW.

Academic Board

The Academic Board oversees academic governance at the University, reports to the Council, and advises Council and the Vice-Chancellor on all developments and initiatives in relation to and affecting the University's teaching and research activities and educational programs.

A key role of the Academic Board is to monitor the quality and integrity of the University's academic programs. The Board reviews and has oversight of the governance frameworks and policy instruments that guide the scholastic activities of the University. It provides a link between the University's internal quality assurance arrangements and the accountability of the Council for the quality of higher education the University offers. It is also responsible for the University meeting the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework.

During 2020, the Academic Board and its Committees:

- Considered significant course proposals and changes to UNE's future academic calendar;
- Continued to develop processes to support student participation in University decision-making and participation in governing bodies, including by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students;

- Monitored reports on student progress, learning outcomes and grievances, and discussed areas of focus for future change;
- Monitored and advised on ongoing work in progress, areas of academic risk, academic quality, Academic Freedom, institutional benchmarks, the rationalisation of academic policies, and executed reviews of Terms of Reference, with the aim of improving Committee effectiveness;
- Hosted a successful Academic Governance Summit for key UNE stakeholders; and
- Oversaw rapid amendments to the University's courses and related matters in response to COVID-19 and consideration of opportunities these changes presented for broader reviews of assessment and course delivery.

Members of Council

Table 6: Members of Council, their qualifications and term of appointment.

| Appointment | Council members | Date elected ³ | Expiry date | Qualifications |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|-------------|---|
| Official | Chancellor, Mr James Harris | 20/11/2019 | 19/11/2024 | HonDUniv (UNE), FRSN |
| | Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brigid Heywood | 15/7/2019 | n/a | BSc (Hons) (Manchester), PhD (Liverpool) |
| | Chair Academic Board, Professor Mark Perry | 18/06/2018 | 22/02/2021 | LLB (Hons) (Victoria, Manchester), DipSA (NCC UK), DipCompSci (Auckland), MJur (Dist) (Auckland), Barrister and Solicitor (LSUC) |
| Minister | Ms Meredith Symons | 17/08/2019 | 16/08/2023 | BFA (UNE), FCA |
| | Mr David van Aanholt | 17/08/2018 | 16/08/2022 | B.Bus (Land Economy) (WS), GradDipMgt, MBA (UNE), FAPI |
| UNE Council | Deputy Chancellor, Ms Jan McClelland AM | 01/01/2018 | 31/12/2021 | BA (Hons) (Syd), BLegS (Macq), FACEL, FAIM, FAICD |
| | Mr Russell Evans | 17/08/2018 | 16/08/2022 | BBus (Charles Sturt), MBA (UNE), GAICD |
| | Ms Anne Myers | 01/12/2019 | 30/11/2023 | MBA (AGSM), GAICD |
| | Ms Rosemary Leamon | 17/08/2019 | 16/08/2023 | BFA (UNE), CA, GAICD |
| | Mr Robert Finch | 01/01/2019 | 24/11/2020 | ACA, FLGAA |
| | Mr Phil Hess | 25/11/2020 | 24/11/2023 | BALaw (Hons) (UNE), LLM Cantab, DipEd (UNE) FGAI |
| Academic | Dr Melanie Fillios | 21/08/2020 | 20/08/2022 | BA (BSU), MA, PhD (UMN) |
| | Associate Professor Richard Scully | 21/08/2018 | 20/08/2020 | BA (Hons) (Monash), PhD (Monash) |
| Non-Academic | Mrs Jane Schmude | 21/08/2020 | 20/08/2022 | BA (USyd), GradDipEd, GradDipCounselling(UNE) |
| | Mr Charles Hebblewhite | 21/08/2018 | 20/08/2020 | BEc BSc (ANU), BTh (MTC), GDipCompSci (UoN) |
| Student | Ms Emma Wellham | 12/10/2020 | 11/10/2022 | undertaking BMSMD |
| | Ms Louisa Quiddington | 12/10/2018 | 11/10/2020 | undertaking BPsych(Hons) |

Council Committees

The UNE Council is supported in the execution of its duties by the:

- Audit and Risk Committee;
- Finance and Infrastructure Committee;
- Honorary Degrees, Titles and Tributes Committee;
- Innovation and Development Committee;
- Nominations Committee;
- Remuneration Committee;
- Standing Committee of Council;
- Investment Sub-Committee; and
- Education Australia Limited (EAL) Committee.

³ Council members may have served for previous terms or may be re-elected. The election date and term shown is the current term.

Honorary Degrees

Council bestowed the following honorary awards in 2020:

- Professor Howard Brasted, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Professor Jeremy Bruhl, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Professor Annabelle Duncan, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Professor David Kent, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Professor James Rowe, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Professor Alison Sheridan, Emeritus Professor of the University of New England;
- Dr David Ellyard, Honorary Doctor of Science *honoris causa* (HonDSci);
- Dr Don Stammer, Honorary Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* (HonDLitt);
- Mr Douglas Daft AC, Honorary Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* (HonDLitt);
- Mr Bernie Shakeshaft, Honorary Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* (HonDLitt);
- Mr Don Walker, Honorary Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* (HonDLitt); and
- Ms Linda McGarry, Distinguished Service Medal.

Student Consultative Committee (SCC)

In 2020, a group of students and staff formed the Student Consultative Committee Working Group and came together to establish a Student Representative Committee for UNE. Elections were held in Trimester 2, 2020, and 16 students were elected to the inaugural committee. The group authored a draft constitution, which is set to be endorsed by Executive Management and approved by the UNE Council in 2021. The SCC is now a functioning body of the University, as well as the main student representative body through which students and staff work collaboratively to better the University.

Leadership

The Vice-Chancellor is the University's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and is responsible for the management of the University and the implementation of the University's strategic plan.

The role of Vice-Chancellor and its functions is determined by the Act and includes official membership of the University's Council. The Vice-Chancellor has charge of UNE's administrative and financial activities, and manages the direction of the University's corporate planning, budget activities and policy implementation.

The Vice-Chancellor reports directly to the Chancellor and the University Council. The Vice-Chancellor provides supervision to and receives support from a team of senior executives who provide strategic, policy and operational advice relating to their individual portfolios.

Senior Executive Team

Vice-Chancellor and CEO

Professor Brigid Heywood

Biological Sciences, BSc Hons (Manchester), PhD (Liverpool)

Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Professor Todd Walker⁴

BMedBiotech (Hons) (CSU), Grad Cert GCULM (CSU) PhD (CSU), GAICD

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research

Professor Heiko Daniel

BSc, MSc (Hannover), PhD (UWA)

Chief Operating Officer

Professor Peter Creamer

BSc (Aston), PhD (Nott), CEng, FIMechE, MCMI

Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Innovation

Professor Jonathan Powles⁵

BMus (Sydney), DPhil (Oxford)

Professor Steven Warburton⁶

BSc. (Hons) (Bangor), PhD (Nottingham)

Pro Vice-Chancellor External Relations

Professor Mingan Choct

BSc (Inner Mongolia), MSc (UNSW), PhD (Sydney), Grad.Dip. Company Director (AICD)

Chief Legal and Governance Officer

Mr Brendan Peet⁷

LLB (QUT), Grad Dip ACG, AGIA, ACIS, MAICD

Director Governance and University Secretary (acting)

Mrs Gabrielle Price⁸

B.Comm (Griffith), GradDipAppFin, GAICD

Chief Financial Officer

Ms Sandra Mathews⁹

BBus (Swinburne), CPA Australia

Ms Anita Taylor¹⁰

BCom (UNSW), BSCI (USQ), CA, GAICD, PRIMed

⁴ Until 4 December 2020

⁵ Until 22 May 2020

⁶ From 24 August 2020

⁷ Until 31 May 2020

⁸ From 1 June 2020

⁹ Until 31 January 2020

¹⁰ From 3 February 2020

Table 7: Senior Management Remuneration.¹¹

| Band | Salary package band | Count and gender | Average remuneration |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Above band 3 | >\$487,050 | 1 female | 629,568.00 |
| Band 3 | \$345,551 to \$487,050 | 1 male ¹² | 407,786.00 |
| Band 2 | \$274,701 to \$345,550 | 6 males and 1 female ¹³ | 330,972.64 |
| Band 1 | \$192,600 to \$274,700 | 1 female ¹⁴ | 234,759.30 |

↓ Cattle Genetics Announcement.



¹¹ Public Service Sector Senior Executive bands, as determined by the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Tribunal under the Statutory and Other Officers Remuneration Act 1975.
¹² Until 4 December 2020
¹³ From 3 February 2020
¹⁴ From 1 June 2020

Organisational Structure



Ombudsman Recommendations

The University did not receive any recommendations from the NSW Ombudsman concerning the University or its Council in the reporting period.

Auditor General Recommendations

| Audit | Date of Letter/Report | Total Recommendations | Closed Recommendations | Outstanding/ In progress |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Financial Statements Audit | | | | |
| 2019 Management letter | April 2020 | 5 (1 repeat issue) | Number of 2018 issues closed off in 2019: 2 | In progress but outstanding at 31 December 2019: 1 |
| 2020 Management letter | April 2021 | 3 (1 partial repeat issue) 1 recommendation not accepted | 2019 recommendations closed off in 2020: 4 2020 recommendations not accepted: 1 | In progress but outstanding at 31 December 2020 3 (all due to be completed in 2021) |
| Information Systems Audit | | | | |
| 2020 Management Letter | February 2021 / April 2021 | 8 (6 repeat issues, 1 partial repeat issue) | 0 | 6 (all due to be actioned in 2021) 2 issues completed in 2021 |

Note: NSW Audit Office recommendations are normally only closed when the NSW Audit Office reviews the previous year's audit recommendations as part of the current year's external audit. Therefore any completed 2019 and 2020 audit recommendations above would normally only be closed following the receipt of the 2020 management letter in April 2021.

Privacy

UNE has adopted a new Privacy Management Plan and privacy toolkit to help promote and support a positive privacy culture. Communications and engagement with the new Privacy Management Plan, a proactive approach to privacy impact assessments during procurement and systems/contract review, and the application of privacy principles as part of UNE's operational response to COVID-19 health directives has helped to increase the UNE community's awareness and interaction with privacy matters during 2020.

In 2020, the Privacy Officer provided advice on more than 60 matters that progressed beyond simple inquiries. This advice incorporated privacy impact assessments, reviews of current practices, updates to existing and the publishing of new collection notices, consent forms, review of the storage of personal information in distributed systems, review of agreements that may incorporate the storage or transfer of information outside of NSW, and feedback regarding the University's commitment to complaint management relating to issues of personal information. In addition, individual staff and students raised concerns with the Privacy Officer in relation to privacy matters on approximately 48 occasions. These concerns related to the collection and management of personal information during the conduct of UNE units of study and employment activities.

There was no mandatory or voluntary notification of data breaches to the NSW Information and Privacy Commission or the Office of the Australian Information Commission. Increased

awareness resulted in the internal reporting of approximately six incidents involving the disclosure of personal information, which may have escalated to breach status had mitigation measures not been implemented. These incidents prompted ongoing awareness and training with frontline staff, including sessions with the UNE Privacy Officer and distribution of hard-copy supporting materials.

In 2020, the UNE Privacy Officer joined the University's Technical Architecture Group to support an improved focus on privacy in enterprise system architecture design.

The UNE Privacy Officer further collaborated extensively with UNE's Information Security Team and Audit and Risk Directorate to review current processes and to formalise a Data Breach Management process with supporting documentation, including privacy harm identification and risk tables, personal information risk categories and a Data Breach Investigation Checklist. The documents were published in February 2021.

Risk Management

UNE's Risk Management Framework is consistent with ISO 31000.

Work to embed risk management in everyday activities and to build a risk-conscious culture throughout the University is ongoing. UNE is in the process of developing tools to assist in the recording and reporting of strategic, key operational and project risks, including implementing an enterprise risk management system in 2021.

Internal Audit and Risk Management Attestation Statement for the 2020 Financial Year

I, Professor Brigid Heywood, am of the opinion that the University of New England has internal audit and risk management processes in operation that are compliant with the seven (7) Core Requirements set out in the *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the General Government Sector*, specifically:

Note: The Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the General Government Sector is a Treasurer’s Direction issued per section 9 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Section 9(4) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 provides that the Directions issued under section 9 shall not apply to universities.

Core Requirements

Risk Management Framework

1.1 The Accountable Authority is ultimately responsible and accountable for the risk management in the agency.

Compliant.

1.2 The Accountable Authority shall establish and maintain a risk management framework that is appropriate for the agency. The Accountable Authority shall ensure the framework is consistent with AS ISO 31000:2018.

Compliant.

Internal Audit Function

2.1 The Accountable Authority shall establish and maintain an internal audit function that is appropriate for the agency and fit for purpose.

Compliant.

2.2 The Accountable Authority shall ensure the internal audit function operates consistent with the International Standards for Professional Practice for Internal Auditing.

Compliant.

2.3 The Accountable Authority shall ensure the agency has an Internal Audit Charter that is consistent with the content of the ‘model charter’.

Compliant.

Audit and Risk Committee

3.1 The Accountable Authority shall establish and maintain efficient and effective arrangements for independent Audit and Risk Committee oversight, to provide advice and guidance to the Accountable Authority on the agency’s governance processes, risk management and control frameworks, and its external accountability obligations.

Compliant.

3.2 The Accountable Authority shall ensure the Audit and Risk Committee has a charter that is consistent with the content of the ‘model charter’.

Compliant.

Note: The two charter items are in transition due to the replacement of Treasury Direction TPP15-03 by TPP20-08. When each charter is due for review, they will be updated to reflect the new Treasury Direction.

Membership

The independent chair and members of the Audit and Risk Committee are:

- Independent Chair, Jan McClelland, 16 February 2009 – 31 December 2022;
- Independent Member 1, Robert Finch, 16 February 2009 – 24 November 2020;
- Independent Member 2, Anne Myers, 1 December 2015 – 31 March 2021;
- Independent Member 3, Rosemary Leamon, 1 December 2015 – 8 December 2020;
- Independent Member 4, David van Aanholt, 7 December 2016 – 31 December 2022; and
- Independent Member 5, Phil Hess, 25 November 2020 – 31 December 2022.

| | |
|---|--|
|  _____ Professor Brigid Heywood Vice-Chancellor and CEO |  _____ Agency Contact Officer Gabrielle Price A/Director Audit and Risk Directorate |
|---|--|

Cyber Security Policy Attestation

I, Angie Hendrick, am of the opinion that the University of New England has managed cyber security risks in a manner consistent with the Mandatory Requirements set out in the NSW Government Cyber Security Policy.

Governance is in place to manage the cyber security maturity and initiatives of the University of New England while risks to the information and systems of UNE are being assessed in a large, University-wide program of work and, where they are known, they are managed.

There exists a current cyber incident response plan for the University that will be tested during the reporting period. The incident response plan has also been reviewed by an expert external consultant, with suggested improvements incorporated into the current version.

UNE is currently implementing an Information Security Management System (ISMS) that is aligned with the NIST Cyber Security Framework¹⁵, however we are still implementing a UNE Cyber Security Framework, which is a priority in our program of works.

UNE has or is doing the following to continuously improve the management of cyber security governance and resilience:

- Establishing a security council to drive ownership and governance of information security at the senior leadership level;
- Undertaking a cyber-security program of work to improve maturity and resilience in alignment with the NIST cyber security framework;
- Implementing a Security Operations Centre in the first quarter of 2021 to enable UNE to detect and respond to cyber security incidents;
- Established a partnership with Joint Cyber Security Centre (JCSC), an initiative by the Australian Government Signals Directorate, enabling UNE to have a better understanding and awareness of emerging cyber threats faced by similar institutions; and
- Implementing a Multi-Factor Authentication solution in 2021 that will significantly reduce UNE's risk of compromised user accounts, as well as providing secure logons from new user devices or locations.

This attestation covers the following agencies:
University of New England.

Angie Hendrick
Chief Information Officer

Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

Details of the agency’s review under S7(3) of the Act during the year and details of any information made publicly available as a result of the review.

Our agency’s program for the proactive release of information involves monitoring the nature of GIPA applications received and identifying information that may be of interest to the general public. The agency also reviews the relevance and accuracy of the Open Access Information available on its website on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the program was reviewed by identifying and discussing possible new Open Access Information with the Director Student Success and associates. The University is currently working towards making available the list of Graduates and Awards on its website.

Total number of access applications received during the year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications):

UNE received 10 applications in 2020.

Total number of access applications received that agency refused, either wholly or in part, because the application was for disclosure of information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure:

Nil.

Schedule 2: Statistical information about access applications (Clause 7)

Statistical information relating to the number and type of applications decided by the University in 2020, and applications that were subject to internal or external review within the reporting period, is provided in Appendix A.

Public Interest Disclosure

During 2020, UNE, as part of its induction program for new employees, provided training on the UNE Public Interest Disclosure Rule and Public Interest Disclosure Procedure.

Statistical information on the number of Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs) is detailed in the table below.

Table 8: Number of PIDs received and completed.

| Particulars | 1 January– 31 December 2020 |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Number of public officials who made PIDS | 3 |
| Categorisation of PIDs received: | |
| • Corrupt Conduct | 2 |
| • Maladministration | 1 |
| • Serious and substantial waste | 0 |
| • Government information contravention | 0 |
| Number of PIDs finalised | 3 |

¹⁵ NIST Cyber Security Framework – National Institute of Standards and Technology - A framework of standards guidelines and best practices to manage cyber security risk.

Legal Change

Recent legal changes and significant judicial decisions affecting the University include those set out below.

Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020

This Act establishes a legislative framework to deal with arrangements between particular kinds of State and Territory entities (including universities) and particular kinds of foreign entities.

The kinds of foreign entities that are covered by this Act are foreign countries and the national governments, departments and agencies of foreign countries; provinces, states or other political subdivisions of foreign countries and their corresponding governments, departments and agencies; and some other entities.

A State/Territory entity is required to notify the Minister if the entity proposes to enter, or enters, a foreign arrangement. The Minister may make a declaration that a foreign arrangement is invalid and unenforceable, required to be varied or terminated, or not in operation (depending on the nature of the arrangement). Certain conditions need to be satisfied before the Minister can make the declaration.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Act 2020

This Act introduces offences for the provision or advertising of "academic cheating services" directed at providers and advertisers of such services. These offences attract criminal penalties of up to two years imprisonment and/or substantial fines.

"Academic cheating services" means the provision of work to or the undertaking of work for students in circumstances where the work is, or could reasonably be expected to form a substantial part of any assessment task the students are required to personally undertake. The legislation also provides that TEQSA may apply for injunctions against carriage providers and search engines to disable access to such websites or hide online search results.

Whistle-blower protection provisions in the Corporations Act

The Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) amendments to whistle-blower provisions commenced on 1 July 2019. These provisions expand the protections available to whistle-blowers and the liabilities of board members and senior managers of corporations, including the penalties for breaches. The provisions apply to a regulated entity, which includes corporations to which the Commonwealth constitution applies.

Y v The University of Queensland & Anor [2020] QCA 2016

The Queensland Court of Appeal has confirmed that universities have the power to deal with and discipline students that engage in misconduct in accordance with their own statutes, policies and procedures, where that misconduct could amount to a criminal offence if the conduct was separately proven before a court exercising criminal jurisdiction. The Court of Appeal comments suggest that universities will be held to a high standard in ensuring that students in this situation are afforded procedural fairness.

Consumer response

The Student Grievance Unit (SGU) received 520 grievances in the reporting period, including 173 complaints containing more than one issue. This is an increase on the 400 complaints received in 2019. The nature of the complaints is multifaceted and increasingly complex. Of note is the recurrence of concerns relating to assessments and examinations, followed by issues relating to unit content, resources and teaching standards. The marked increase could be attributed to the effects of COVID-19 and the University transitioning to online teaching, exams and intensives in the year under review.

The number of student behavioural conduct matters increased from 85 in 2019 to 106 in 2020. Academic misconduct complaints reported to SGU stand at 148 for 2020, compared to 61 in 2019. The vast majority of reports originated from invigilated exams.

The increase in student conduct matters both behavioural and academic may be attributed to several factors, including enhanced awareness of reporting avenues, increased confidence to report, and active bystander intervention, together with the heightened and evident strain placed upon students and staff by COVID-19 and its associated restrictions and changes. There was also an increase in the reporting of matters relating to sexual assault/harassment under the *Respect. Now. Always. (RNA)* program. This may be attributed to increased confidence in University processes, as well as improved confidentiality, transparency and support in this area. The SGU has observed increased bystander reporting and inquiries around RNA-related matters.

The SGU made several business improvement recommendations across the University in 2020 after identifying disparities within policies and procedures. These recommendations have resulted in amendments to relevant policy documents and business practices. Recommendations included matters inherently linked to the student experience and retention.

Table 9: 2020 Academic Assessment Appeals.

| Academic Assessment Appeals | Total | Number of appeals taken to the next level |
|---|-------|---|
| Appeals related to Unit Assessment | 316 | 39 |
| Appeals related to Assessment of a Practical and/or Professional Work Experience | 6 | 2 |
| Appeals against the Application of School Assessment Policies and Procedures | 22 | 4 |
| Appeals related to Special Assessment Application Outcomes | 21 | 2 |
| Appeals related to Exclusion for Insufficient Course Progress | 18 | 0 |
| Appeals related to Bachelor with Honours Assessment of Dissertations/Theses | 1 | 0 |
| Appeals against Results for Graduate Diploma and Non-Research Master Dissertations and Theses | 1 | 0 |

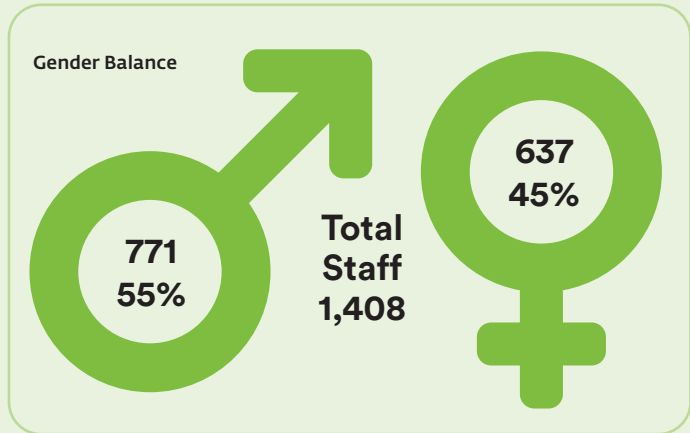
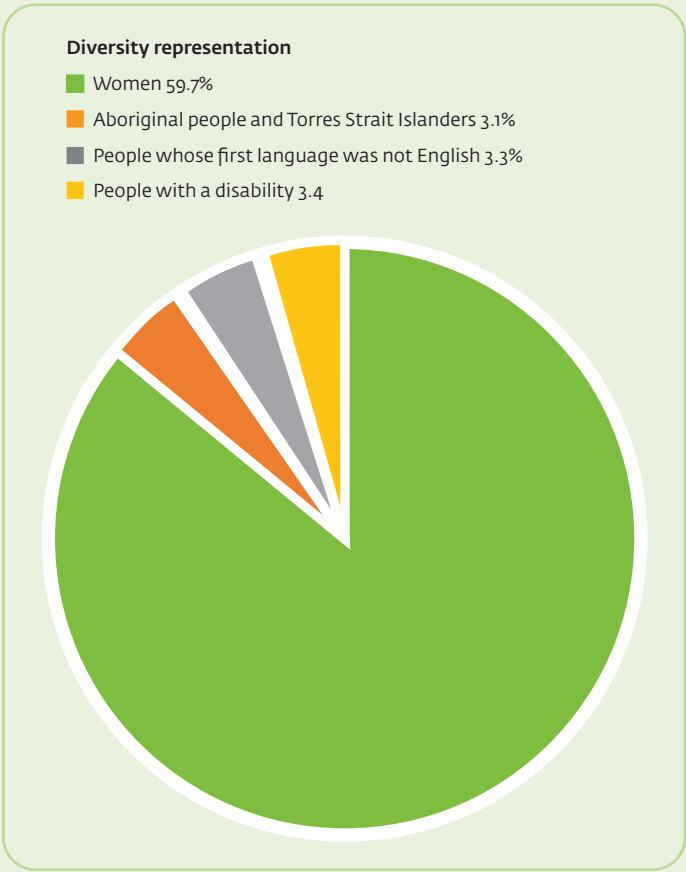
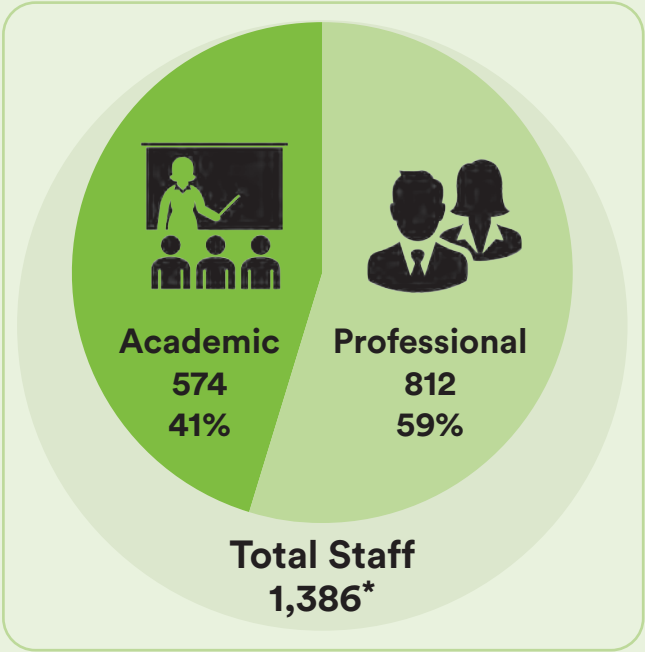
Academic Assessment Appeals regarding Unit Assessment dominated in 2020. To appeal, the student must present a case demonstrating how the original marking was inconsistent with the requirements of the Unit Guide/Outline.

The SGU is not authorised to reject any appeal however, if the appeal did not meet the criteria of an appeal or contained offensive/inappropriate content, students were offered the opportunity to review their appeal prior to processing.

Table 10: 2020 Complaints.

| Complaints | Total |
|---|------------|
| Total number of complaints received | 520 |
| One issue within complaint | 347 |
| Multiple issues within complaint | 173 |
| | 520 |
| Involving: | |
| • International Students | 90 |
| • Domestic Students | 418 |
| • Cross-Institutional Students | 5 |
| • Open Universities Australia Students | 4 |
| • TRACKS tertiary preparation program Students | 1 |
| • Unknown | 2 |
| | 520 |
| Reports on Student Behavioural Misconduct (SBM) | 106 |
| Student Behavioural Misconduct involving: | |
| • RNA concerns | 33 |
| • Sexual harassment | 7 |
| • Sexual assault | 5 |
| • Social media | 8 |
| Complaints involving: | |
| • Academic Related Misconduct (Invigilated exams/Contract Cheating) | 148 |
| • Academic concerns | 155 |

People and Culture



*Does not include 22 UNE staff in controlled entities.

Exceptional movements in wages, salaries or allowances

There were no exceptional movements in 2020. Staff on Common Law contracts did not receive a salary increase during 2020.

Personnel policies and practices

Human Resource policies and practices were reviewed in conjunction with the Policy Business Unit and sent out for appropriate consultation, as required.

Employee relations policies and practices

UNE concluded negotiations and implemented two new Enterprise Agreements during 2020: the *UNE Academic and English Language Teacher Staff Collective Agreement 2020 – 2022* and the *UNE Professional Staff Collective Agreement 2019 – 2022*. These agreements primarily govern the conditions of staff employment.

The Staff Code of Conduct is the primary rule that sets out the expectations of staff employed by UNE. In 2020 we introduced a confidential and anonymous external complaint-handling service called *Grapevine*, for students and staff.

Workforce diversity

UNE complied with the Workplace Gender and Equality Act 2012 in 2020.

COVID-19 created significant disruption to the diversity agenda across UNE. However, a number of University-wide initiatives had positive impacts for staff from diverse backgrounds, including the purchase of an enterprise-wide license to Udemy for Business,

an online learning platform that provides access to over 7,000 courses in leadership, management, wellbeing and information technology to develop staff skills. Additionally, the ratifying of UNE’s Enterprise Agreements (for Professional Staff, Academic and English Language Teacher Staff) by the Fair Work Commissioner improved staff employment conditions, specifically providing for:

- Salary increases for all staff;
- Additional entitlements relating to domestic violence leave;
- Access to 17% super for all fixed term staff;
- An entitlement of seven hours paid leave for casual staff (after 12 months employment) to access learning and development opportunities; and
- A minimum engagement period of two hours for casual academics.

Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, the Diversity and Advisory Committee continued to meet to discuss initiatives and issues faced by staff from diverse backgrounds. Membership of the committee was expanded to increase academic staff representation. The main focus for the committee in 2020 was the issue of web accessibility, resulting in a working group being formed to identify institution-wide strategies, including compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1.

In 2021, the focus of diversity initiatives will be to implement workforce and diversity and inclusion plans to ensure alignment with the UNE 2021+ strategic plan *Future Fit*, following its launch in February 2021.

Table 11: Trends in the representation of EEO groups: academic staff.¹⁶

| EEO group | NSW benchmark or target | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Women | 60% | 42% | 44% | 45% | 46% | 45% | 47% | 47% | 45% | 48% | 47% | 48.3% | 48.5% |
| Aboriginal people & Torres Strait Islanders | 2.63% | 0.5% | 1.1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1.4% | 1.5% |
| People whose first language was not English | 19% | 21% | 20% | 18% | 18% | 18% | 16% | 15% | 16% | 18% | 15% | 14.0% | 14.8% |
| People with disability | N/A | 8% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 2.4% | 3.1% |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase) | by 1.1% (2011) 1.3% (2012) 1.5% (2013) | 2% | 2.3% | 1.8% | 2% | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

¹⁶ All statistics exclude casual staff.

Table 12: Trends in the representation of EEO groups: general staff.

| EEO group | NSW benchmark or target | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Women | 60% | 61% | 61% | 61% | 61% | 63% | 62% | 62% | 61% | 60% | 60% | 60.7% | 59.7% |
| Aboriginal people & Torres Strait Islanders | 2.63% | 2% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% | 3.3% | 3.1% |
| People whose first language was not English | 19% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4.0% | 3.3% |
| People with disability | N/A | 7% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 3.0% | 3.4% |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase) | by 1.1% (2011) 1.3% (2012) 1.5% (2013) | 2% | 2.2% | 2.3% | 3% | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

Table 13: Trends in the distribution¹⁷ of EEO groups: academic staff.

| EEO group | NSW benchmark or target | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Women | 100 | 80 | 81 | 81 | 94 | 95 | 95 | 94 | 96 | 94 | 95 | 94 | 95 |
| Aboriginal people & Torres Strait Islanders | 100 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 84 | 84 | 88 | 87 | 82 | 89 | 88 | 88 |
| People whose first language was not English | 100 | 96 | 99 | 97 | 99 | 100 | 101 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| People with disability | 100 | 93 | 96 | 101 | 103 | 109 | 107 | 106 | 104 | 100 | 110 | 111 | 111 |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase) | 100 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

¹⁷ A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of the distribution of the EEO group across salary levels is equivalent to that of other staff. Values less than 100 mean the EEO group tends to be more concentrated at lower salary levels than is the case for other staff. The more pronounced this tendency is, the lower the index will be. In some cases, the index may be more than 100, indicating the EEO group is less concentrated at lower salary levels.

Table 14: Trends in the distribution of EEO groups: general staff.

| EEO group | NSW benchmark or target | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Women | 100 | 86 | 88 | 87 | 88 | 86 | 88 | 89 | 92 | 93 | 92 | 92 |
| Aboriginal people & Torres Strait Islanders | 100 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 83 | 87 | 87 | 80 | 92 | 84 | 76 | 81 |
| People whose first language was not English | 100 | 107 | 106 | 110 | 112 | 99 | 101 | 103 | 105 | 103 | 108 | 111 |
| People with disability | 100 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 93 | 99 | 94 | 98 | 101 | 105 | 101 | 106 |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase) | 100 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

Multicultural policies and services

The University developed a draft Multicultural Action Plan (MAP) for 2020. It aligns with a range of current student and staff-related strategic documents, plans and legislation, and incorporates the Multicultural Policies and Services Program themes under the University of New England Strategic Priorities to:

- Deliver excellent research with high impact;
- Deliver a high-quality student experience; and
- Create a bold and innovative culture.

A review of our performance against the draft MAP 2019-2020 will take place in 2021. A new MAP will be developed following the launch of UNE's new strategic plan, *Future Fit*. The development of this plan will include consultation with the Diversity Advisory Committee and internal and external stakeholder groups.

The following key activities also took place in 2020:

- Face-to-face leadership development programs traditionally offered through Human Resource Services were put on hold during 2020 due to COVID-19. In the third quarter of 2020, the University purchased an enterprise-wide license to Udemy for Business, an online learning platform that provides access to over 7,000 courses in leadership, management, wellbeing and information technology to develop required skills. Udemy is available to all current staff and those staff impacted by the organisational redesign for six months post UNE employment. It will be made available to all students in Trimester 1, 2021.
- In 2020, the University introduced various measures to support students during the pandemic, including establishing a Student Emergency Assistance Fund that paid out more than \$230,000 to help students who were experiencing hardship. Other support initiatives saw over 5,600 meals, food packages and hampers distributed to predominantly international students across all campuses.

Agreements with Multicultural NSW

The University does not currently have any agreements with Multicultural NSW.

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) team has responsibility for safety, emergency management, business continuity, and health and wellbeing at UNE. It delivers key services comprising:

- Hazard and risk management;
- Regulatory compliance;
- Training and administrative functions;
- Emergency and business continuity planning;
- The management of hazardous substances (biological, chemical and radioactive);
- Plant and equipment safety;
- Workers compensation and injury management; and
- Proactive wellness initiatives.

The focus and scope of WHS activities is guided by the *UNE Work, Health & Safety, Wellbeing and Emergency Management Strategic Plan 2018-2020*, responses to incident and hazard reports, and environmental conditions.

Disruption due to the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in substantial organisational focus on and mitigation of health and safety risks to the UNE community and the psychosocial wellbeing of staff and students.

The University's response to COVID-19 involved:

- Development of COVID-19 risk assessments and safety plans to guide teaching, working and residential activities;
- Management of physical resources in accordance with NSW Health guidelines for physical distancing and hygiene, with guidance sought for room capacity;
- Implementation of Public Health Orders and NSW Health industry guidelines for COVID-safe workplaces;
- Diversion of face-to-face activities to digital delivery, including the development and implementation of digital COVID-19 induction packages for staff, students and contractors/visitors;
- Establishing a dedicated email address and procedures to support a COVID-safe Return to Campus;
- Development of communications and digital resources to support implementation of the COVID-19 safety plan; and
- Responses to potential infection exposure.

Significant initiatives implemented through the *UNE Work, Health & Safety, Wellbeing and Emergency Management Strategic Plan 2018-2020* plan objectives included:

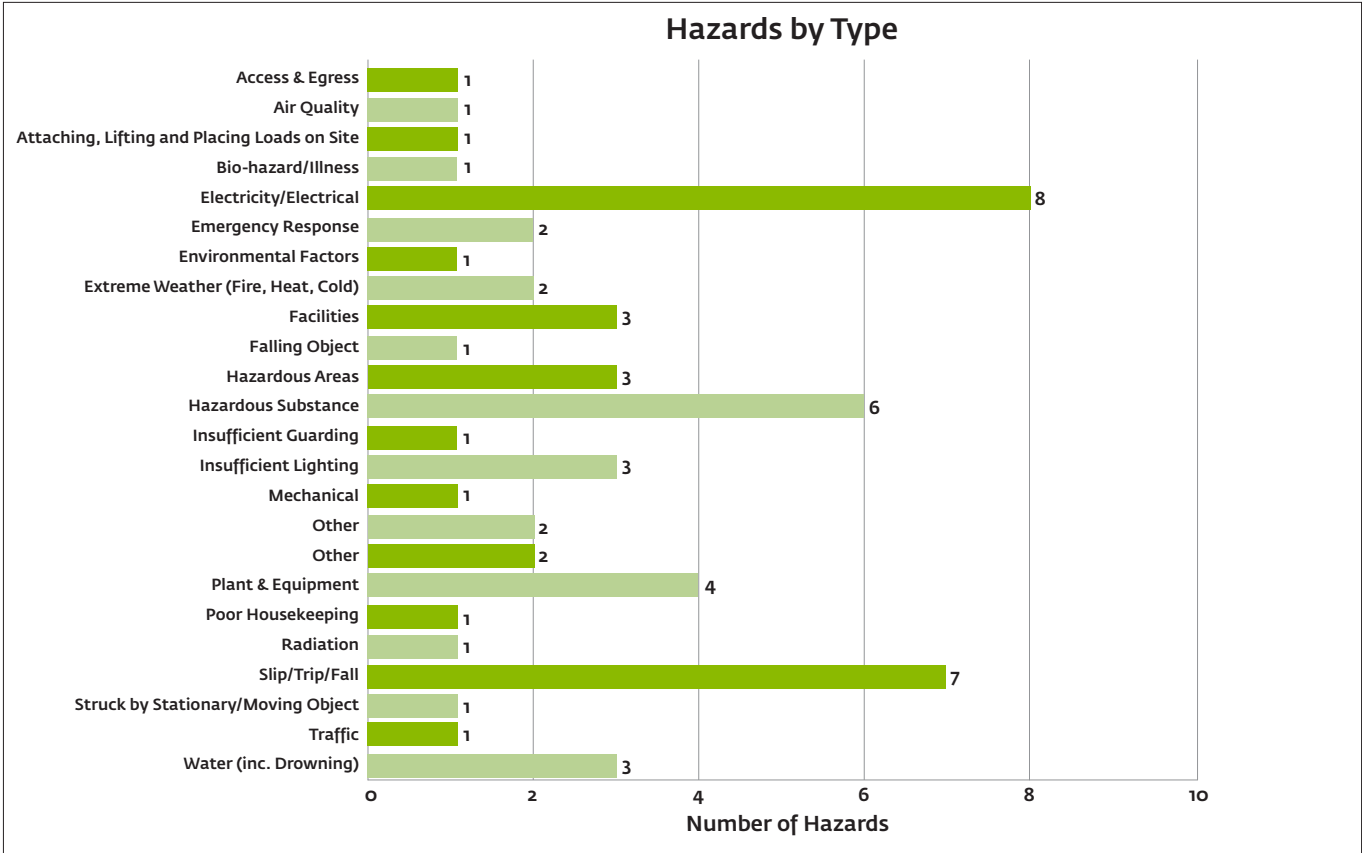
- Restructure of the WHS Work Groups in 2020, facilitation of elections, and training of Health and Safety Representatives in accordance with the Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017;
- Consultation with both the WHS Committee and WHS Management Group during bi-monthly meetings throughout 2020;
- Emergency Warden training and fire drills conducted throughout the Residential Colleges and the Academic campus until COVID-19 restrictions prevented Part B (practical fire drills) from occurring. The online Part A Emergency Warden training continued throughout the year, with 246 staff successfully passing the training in 2020;
- Facilitation of clinics to administer 1,000 flu vaccinations to all eligible staff in April 2020;
- WHS and Wellbeing campaigns that ran during the 2020 reporting period promoted Driver Safety, Wildlife on Campus, Wellbeing at Work, Mobile Phone Safety, Electrical Safety at Work, Asbestos Awareness, and Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigations; and
- UNE celebrated the third year of its *Respect. Now. Always.* campaign in August 2020 with recognition of the work done to adopt and embed new behavioural models in the colleges and foster a culture of safety for all. New policies relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault were also approved.

Work, Health and Safety Performance is captured through incident and hazard reporting using the WHS digital safety management system Skytrust. In 2020, 124 incidents were reported, which is a 37% decrease when compared to 2019. The reduction in incidents may be related to the implementation of remote work arrangements necessitated by COVID-19 Public Health Orders, and the absence of students on campus.

Of the incidents reported, three notifiable incidents were reported to Safework NSW during 2020. Two staff members impacted in two of the incidents have safely returned to work. One incident related to a falling tree branch during an extreme storm event, where a member of the public was fatally injured. The University has adhered to regulatory requirements, Safework NSW has investigated the incident and the matter has been concluded. There have been no prosecutions by Safework NSW in the reporting period.

Hazard reporting has increased by 24% during 2020, with 53 hazards reported. Utilisation of the hazard reporting system is encouraged, to support an improved safety culture and drive continual improvements to the wellbeing and safety of the University community.

Figure 1: Hazard by type, 2020 (Skytrust).



Workers Compensation data for 2020

Workers compensation claim numbers were substantially reduced, from 20 in 2019 to four in 2020. This is consistent with:

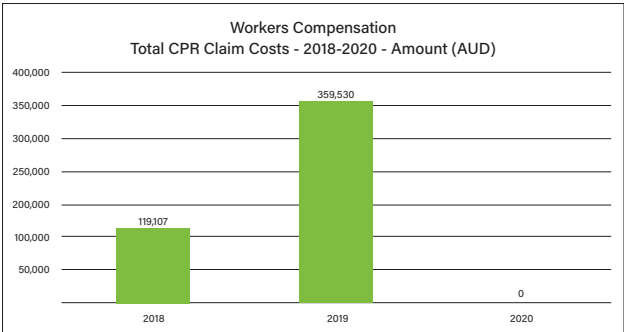
- The remote working model (COVID-19);
- Increased annual leave utilisation; and
- Improved safety performance, including increased hazard reporting and resolution.

Claims cost data, as shown right, is at the time of reporting each year and derived from iCare reports. No claims performance rate (CPR) premium impacting costs were incurred in 2020 from accepted claims.

Data from previous years is subject to change due to the estimated future claim costs for that year, and are adjusted accordingly. Additionally, the cost of claims accrues as they remain open, relative to the year they occurred in. The 2019 reporting period continues to experience accrued costs associated with claims for that period and is an atypical year for the University's claims experience.

1. Total number of claims for 2020: 4
2. Total time loss incurred for 2020: 0 days¹⁸
3. Total claim costs for policy year 2020: \$0.00¹⁹
4. Total claim costs for policy year 2019: \$359,530.06
5. Total claim costs for policy year 2018: \$119,107.23

Figure 2: Total CPR claim costs 2018-2020.



¹⁸ Any payment for time lost is considered equivalent to a day for reporting purposes – source iCare.

¹⁹ CPR Claims costs refer to premium impacting costs of claims, including the wages and whole person impairment costs.

Staff numbers

Table 15: UNE staff numbers as at 31 March 2020.²⁰

| | | Female | Male | Total |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Staff in schools | Professor (E) | 11 | 42 | 53 |
| | Associate Professor (D) | 27 | 43 | 70 |
| | Senior Lecturer (C) | 87 | 78 | 165 |
| | Lecturer (B) | 109 | 81 | 190 |
| | Tutor (A) | 28 | 25 | 53 |
| | Total academics in schools | 262 | 269 | 531 |
| | Executive | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| | Total executive in schools | 7 | 14 | 21 |
| | HEO10+ | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | HEO9 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | HEO8 | 9 | 12 | 21 |
| | HEO7 | 22 | 14 | 36 |
| | HEO6 | 30 | 16 | 46 |
| | HEO5 | 43 | 22 | 65 |
| | HEO4 | 30 | 8 | 38 |
| | HEO3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Total non-academic staff | 138 | 76 | 214 |
| | Total staff in schools | 407 | 359 | 766 |
| Staff in management, administration and centres | Professor (E) and above | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| | Associate Professor (D) | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| | Senior Lecturer (C) | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| | Lecturer (B) | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| | Tutor (A) | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| | Total academic staff | 18 | 25 | 43 |
| | Executive | 23 | 29 | 52 |
| | Total executive in schools | 23 | 29 | 52 |
| | HEO10+ | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| | HEO9 | 23 | 20 | 43 |
| | HEO8 | 42 | 33 | 75 |
| | HEO7 | 48 | 54 | 102 |
| | HEO6 | 80 | 36 | 116 |
| | HEO5 | 78 | 39 | 117 |
| | HEO4 | 25 | 16 | 41 |
| | HEO3 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| | HEO2 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| | HEO1+ | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total non-academic staff | 314 | 211 | 525 |
| | Total staff outside schools | 355 | 265 | 620 |
| | Staff in Controlled Entities | 9 | 16 | 25 |
| | UNE Total at 31 March, 2020 | 771 | 637 | 1,408 |
| | UNE Total at 31 March, 2019 | 742 | 601 | 1,343 |
| | UNE Total at 31 March, 2018 | 716 | 599 | 1,315 |

²⁰ Data provided by Business Intelligence.

Finance

UNE Budget and Structural Surplus

Table 16: Budget and Structural Surplus.

| Comparison to Budget | 2020 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Parent Entity | Budget | Actual | Budget |
| University of New England | \$M | \$M | \$M |
| Teaching income | 243.2 | 240.87 | 238.99 |
| Research & Grant income | 72.2 | 75.47 | 93.53 |
| Other income | 30.7 | 29.94 | 24.74 |
| Total income | 346.2 | 346.28 | 357.26 |
| Employee related expenses | 202.3 | 226.12 | 190.22 |
| Non payroll expenses | 124.6 | 114.27 | 122.24 |
| Underlying result | 19.4 | 5.89 | 44.80 |
| Interest income | 3.1 | 1.64 | 0.01 |
| Interest expense | 0.0 | 0.42 | 1.00 |
| Depreciation & amortisation | 24.4 | 26.10 | 28.24 |
| Operating profit | (2.0) | (19.0) | 15.6 |
| One-off income | 2.0 | 0 | 0 |
| One-off expenditure | 0.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Operating result attributable to members of the University of New England | (0.0) | (19.0) | 15.6 |

| Structural surplus | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Description | 2020 | | |
| | Budget | Actual | Variance |
| Financials | \$M | \$M | \$M |
| Teaching revenue | 243.2 | 240.9 | (2.3) |
| Operating revenue | 103.0 | 105.4 | 2.4 |
| Payroll costs | 202.3 | 226.1 | 23.9 |
| Non-payroll costs | 124.6 | 114.3 | (10.3) |
| Operating surplus | 19.4 | 5.9 | (13.5) |
| Interest income, interest expense & depreciation | 21.4 | 24.9 | 3.5 |
| Underlying surplus/(deficit) | (2.0) | (19.0) | (17.0) |
| Net result | (0.0) | (19.0) | (19.0) |

Payment of accounts

Time for payment of accounts

Figure 3: Performance in paying accounts for each quarter.

| Quarter | Payment Completed (\$M) | | | | | Payment Outstanding (\$M) | | | | | Total |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | Current | 1-30 Days | 31-60 Days | 61-90 Days | Over 90 Days | Total | Current | 1-30 Days | 31-60 Days | 61-90 Days | Over 90 Days |
| 1 | 28 | 9 | 1 | | | 38 | | | | | |
| 2 | 23 | 6 | 1 | | | 30 | | | | | |
| 3 | 20 | 5 | 1 | | | 27 | | | | | |
| 4 | 26 | 7 | - | | | 34 | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Total 2020 | 97 | 27 | 3 | 1 | | 129 | 2 | | | | 2 |

Figure 4: Percentage payments completed and outstanding.

| Payment Completed | | | | | | Payment Outstanding | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-------|---------------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| Current | 1-30 Days | 31-60 Days | 61-90 Days | Over 90 Days | Total | Current | 1-30 Days | 31-60 Days | 61-90 Days | Over 90 Days | Total |
| 74% | 23% | 2% | 0% | 1% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 76% | 20% | 3% | 1% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 74% | 20% | 5% | 0% | 1% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| 72% | 20% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 94% | 0% | 6% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Details of accounts due or paid within each quarter

| | |
|--|--------|
| Number of accounts due for payment | 9,795 |
| Number of accounts paid on time | 9,313 |
| Actual percentage of accounts paid on time, based on number of accounts | 95% |
| Dollar amount of accounts due for payment | \$131M |
| Dollar amounts of accounts paid on time | \$124M |
| Actual percentage of accounts paid on time, based on dollar amount of accounts | 85% |

Number of payments for interest on overdue accounts

This is not applicable. UNE has not had to pay interest on late accounts, or encountered any problems with payment processing that would warrant the implementation of initiatives to improve payment performance.

Overseas travel

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Professor Heiko Daniel, travelled to Indonesia in 2020 for meetings with Indonesian partner universities, ACIAR and Indonesian government agencies.

Consultants

Table 17: Total consultant spend.

| Spend in Excess of \$50,000 | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------|
| Name of Consultant | Total 2020 Spend | Name of Project | Classification |
| Nous Group Pty Ltd | \$976,604 | Major donor proposal review and strategic business case preparation | Management Services |
| Gartner Australasia Pty Ltd | \$428,580 | IT Executive Program | Information Technology |
| Apricot Consulting | \$ 221,976 | Workforce Planning /Executive Analysis | Management Services |
| KPMG | \$ 150,000 | Payroll Advisory Engagement | Management Services |
| ERNST & YOUNG | \$ 93,830 | Rural Integration (Medicine &Health) | Management Services |
| Bevington Group | \$85,534 | Administration Role Review | Management Services |
| Less than \$50,000 | | | |
| Classification | Total 2020 Spend | Number of consultants per category | |
| Environmental | \$42,767 | 2 | |
| Finance | \$63,000 | 3 | |
| Finance and accounting | \$47,313 | 4 | |
| Legal | \$42,739 | 4 | |
| Management Services | \$219,855 | 7 | |
| Grand Total | \$415,674 | 20 | |

Liability Management Performance

In December 2020 UNE obtained a \$40 million loan from Westpac Corporation. The term of the loan is five years.

Insurance

UNE renewed the primary areas of its insurance program through Unimutual Limited, Austbrokers and iCare NSW. These areas included: property protection; general and products liability; professional indemnity; malpractice; environmental liability; management liability (including directors and officers); clinical trials; cyber; contractors' asbestos liability and workers compensation. Other classes of insurance held include, but are not limited to: business travel; student group, personal accident and comprehensive motor vehicle. Premiums rose significantly on most policies compared to 2019 due to the tightening of the insurance market in response to the recent claims experience of insurers and weaker returns on insurers' investment portfolios.

Investment performance

Historically low returns from cash-based investments, together with the strategic need to maintain short-term liquidity, saw the weighted average return of the UNE portfolio for 2020 fall to 1.55%, against the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index return of 0.37%. UNE's ASX-listed shares (\$1m) returned 14.20% and its unlisted shareholding (\$60.7m) returned 30.13%.

The Agricultural Business Research Institute's managed fund portfolio achieved a return of 2.15% against a benchmark of 5.10%. A defensive investment mix against market conditions meant ABRI was unable to meet its target returns.

UNE Foundation's investment portfolio, comprising listed shares and managed funds, achieved a return of 4.22% against a benchmark of 5.10%. In the second half of 2020, the UNE Foundation rebalanced its portfolio to have a higher growth-orientated mix, contributing to an improved performance relative to benchmark.

Land disposal

The University did not dispose of any land during the financial year 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020.

Funds granted to non-governmental community organisations

Table 18: Funds granted to non-government community organisations.

| | <i>Non-Government Community Group</i> | <i>Sponsorship</i> | <i>Event/ Other</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Event Description</i> |
|--------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Students | The University of Queensland, Brisbane QLD 4072 | 3,500.00 | | 3,500.00 | Sponsorship for the 2020 Animal Science Olympics – Virtual Poster Competition Chook Shack Chat Prize |
| | Australasian Veterinary Poultry Association Ltd | 272.73 | | 272.73 | AVPA Sponsor May2020 |
| Research | Australian Eggs Limited | 6,251.51 | | 6,251.51 | Poultry Hub Australia sponsorship contribution |
| | Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza Inc. | 1,818.18 | | 1,818.18 | Sponsorship of Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza 2019 event |
| | Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza Inc. | 2,000.00 | | 2,000.00 | Virtual Junior Judging sponsorship of the 2020 + 2021 Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza |
| | Local Land Services NSW | 5,020.00 | | 5,020.00 | Sponsorship – Schools Property Planning Competition 2020 |
| | Ridley Innovation | 100,000.00 | | 100,000.00 | Ridley Agriproducts Sponsorship Poultry Hub Australia |
| | Australian Eggs Limited | 3,787.88 | | 3,787.88 | Poultry Hub Australia sponsorship contribution |
| | | | | | |
| Sports | Bundarra Sportswear Pty Ltd | 600.00 | 600.00 | | Sports Event Polo for Oorala Ravens |
| | Armidale Triathlon Club Inc | 75.00 | | 75.00 | Sponsorship for Oorala Team for Workplace challenge |
| | Narwan Rugby League & Sporting Club | 2,727.27 | | 2,727.27 | Narwan Eels Sponsorship – Rugby League KO Carnival One-day Event January 2021 |
| | Armidale Rugby Union Club Incorporated | 3,000.00 | | 3,000.00 | Sponsorship for Armidale Blues for Narwan Knockout |
| | | | | | |
| Community | Academy of Management | 1,018.27 | | 1,018.27 | Gender & Diversity in Organisations Division |
| | Armidale & New England Show Society Inc. | 1,500.00 | | 1,500.00 | Sponsorship of the Armidale & New England Show 2020 – Junior Cattle Judging |
| | Armidale & New England Show Society Inc. | 750.00 | | 750.00 | Sponsorship of the Armidale & New England Show 2020 – Jams & Preserves |
| | New England Writers' Centre Inc. | 500.00 | | 500.00 | UNE – HASS 2019 Sponsorship of Thunderbolt Prize Fiction Section |
| | Parramatta City Chamber of Commerce | 3,636.36 | | 3,636.36 | Sponsorship Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence 2020 |
| | Armidale Business Chamber | 10,909.09 | | 10,909.09 | Annual Sponsorship Renewal as per agreement |
| Total | | 147,366.29 | 600 | 146,766.29 | |

Disclosure of Controlled Entities

In addition to our administrative areas, faculties and academic schools, UNE has a number of controlled entities.

Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI)

The ABRI employs agribusiness information specialists, who provide information services to the domestic and international livestock industries. ABRI celebrated 50 years in business in 2020.

UNE Life

UNE Life manages many services and amenities across the University that add value to the student experience and support community engagement with UNE. These include SportUNE, a student bar and nightclub, childcare facilities, restaurant facilities, hairdressers, a post office and newsagent, cinema, graduation, student advocacy and welfare, as well as functions and catering services.

UNE Foundation

The UNE Foundation receives donations from individuals, corporations and public entities to fund scholarships that contribute to the University's teaching and research priorities. An independent Board of Directors, comprising a group of dedicated professionals who volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of UNE and its students, is responsible for managing the Foundation, while the University provides administrative support.

UNE Partnerships

UNE Partnerships is the education and training company of the University. It has designed, developed and delivered customised solutions for organisations and individuals for over 30 years. UNE Partnerships programs suit those who balance life, work and family commitments with study.

Ag360

Ag360 provides farm management decision support software that is unique in its forecasting capability, simplifying the complex relationships between weather, pasture and livestock performance to help livestock producers optimise their operations, reduce unnecessary risk and, as a result, increase profits.

↓ The Centre for Animal Research and Teaching (CART).



Access Arrangements

The UNE website contains a wealth of organisation-specific material and is a key resource for current and prospective staff and students, as well as a reference point for visitors and the media. It can be accessed at: www.une.edu.au.

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Armidale NSW 2351

Appendix

A. Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

Schedule 2: Statistical information about access applications (Clause 7)

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome. ²¹

| | Access granted in full | Access granted in part | Access refused in full | Information not held | Information already available | Refuse to deal with application | Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held | Application withdrawn |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Media | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Members of Parliament | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Private sector business | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Not-for-profit organisations or community groups | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Members of the public (application by legal representative) | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Members of the public (other) | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome.

| | Access granted in full | Access granted in part | Access refused in full | Information not held | Information already available | Refuse to deal with application | Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held | Application withdrawn |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Personal information applications ²² | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Access applications (other than personal information applications) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

²¹ More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

²² A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications.

| Reason for Invalidity | No of applications |
|---|--------------------|
| Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act) | 0 |
| Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act) | 0 |
| Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act) | 0 |
| Total number of invalid applications received | 0 |
| Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications | 0 |

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of Act.

| | Number of times consideration used ²³ |
|---|--|
| Overriding secrecy laws | 0 |
| Cabinet information | 0 |
| Executive Council information | 0 |
| Contempt | 0 |
| Legal professional privilege | 0 |
| Excluded information | 0 |
| Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety | 0 |
| Transport safety | 0 |
| Adoption | 0 |
| Care and protection of children | 0 |
| Ministerial code of conduct | 0 |
| Aboriginal and environmental heritage | 0 |
| Information about complaints to Judicial Commission | 0 |
| Information about authorised transactions under <i>Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015</i> | 0 |
| Information about authorised transaction under <i>Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Act 2016</i> | 0 |

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of Act.

| | Number of occasions when application was not successful |
|--|---|
| Responsible and effective government | 3 |
| Law enforcement and security | 0 |
| Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice | 5 |
| Business interests of agencies and other persons | 0 |
| Environment, culture, economy and general matters | 0 |
| Secrecy provisions | 0 |
| Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation | 0 |

²³ More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.

Table F: Timeliness.

| | Number of occasions when application was not successful |
|--|---|
| Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions) | 8 |
| Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant) | 0 |
| Not decided within time (deemed refusal) | 0 |
| Total | 8 |

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome).

| | Decision varied | Decision upheld | Total |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Internal review | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Review by Information Commissioner ²⁴ | 3 | N/A | 3 |
| Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Review by NCAT | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 2 | 8 |

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant).

| | Number of occasions when application was not successful |
|---|---|
| Applications by access applicants | 3 |
| Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act) | 1 |

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies under Division 2 of Part 4 of the Act (by type of transfer).

| | Number of occasions when application was not successful |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Agency-initiated transfers | 0 |
| Applicant-initiated transfers | 0 |

²⁴ The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

This Annual Report was produced by officers of the University of New England and can be accessed directly from the University website at: **www.une.edu.au**

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