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University of
New England



Annual
Report
2021



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University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351

April 2021

The Honourable Sarah Mitchell, MLC

c/o Sam Toohey, Higher Education
NSW Department of Education
Level 7, 105 Phillip Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, and the Government Sector Finance Act, 2018, the Council of the University of New England has the honour of presenting to you the report of the proceedings of the University and its audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021.



Mr James Harris
Chancellor



Professor Brigid Heywood
Vice-Chancellor and CEO



Message from the Chancellor

In 1954, Sir Robert Madgwick was appointed as the first Vice-Chancellor of the newly autonomous University of New England (UNE). His purpose was to bring education to the regions and make the intellectual resources of a university available to anyone with an enquiring mind.

The 2021 annual report highlights UNE's conscious re-engagement with its roots as a leading regional university promoting equitable access to education, supporting innovation through research excellence and community partnerships.

UNE's decadal strategic plan, Future Fit 2021-2030, was launched in January. It marks the start of a new strategic journey for the University and sets out our goals as a leading online education provider, dedicated community partner and vital regional economic engine.

Guided by Future Fit, new programs in place-based education reflected UNE's work to develop educational offerings in Armidale, Tamworth, Moree and Taree in consultation with industry and community stakeholders to foster stronger, more resilient communities. UNE strengthened its engagement with industry, business and community partners and government agencies during a time when 'normal business' operations were challenged.

UNE's position as a powerhouse in teaching and research remained strong as evidenced by its five-star rating for overall student satisfaction in the Good University Guide for a 16th consecutive year – an attainment unmatched by any other Australian university - and achievements in research funding and output as set out in this report.

While Council meetings were mostly conducted in virtual mode, it did not hamper key work to consider academic freedom and freedom of speech issues and address diversity and inclusion within the context of the University's values and culture, resulting, *inter alia*, in a revised Constitution for the Student Consultative Committee's (SCC) and a positive opportunity for two-way engagement between the student body and the University.

On campus graduation ceremonies again fell victim to COVID-19 restrictions, compelling the institution to connect virtually with graduates and alumni to ensure their

achievements were celebrated. However, with the current easing of restrictions, I look forward to once again hosting the formal ceremonies and celebrations on campus to acknowledge and congratulate past and current graduates in person in 2022.

With the support of the Special Incident Group (SIG) and COVID-19 Academic Response Team (CART), Council was connected into the complex responses of the University to the pandemic and the supercell event of 14 October. UNE is rightly proud of the contributions of our staff and students who served as emergency services volunteers, contributed to community vaccination clinics and supported displaced community members to ensure the safety of many in the aftermath of the storm and during lockdown.

Throughout the year, I championed UNE goals at strategic events across the State and with Commonwealth Government representatives to support higher education in Australia. The Vice-Chancellor and CEO, Professor Brigid Heywood, and I supported the NSW Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors Working Group to lobby for the welcome return on international students to UNE's campuses in 2022.

I extend my thanks to Council, its Committees, UNE's Senior Leadership team, staff and the broader UNE community for their hard work and unwavering dedication throughout another challenging year.

While it's impossible to capture every success story that enriched our year, or indeed the challenges that tested our resilience, the overall message is clear: UNE is embracing its mission to make a positive and powerful difference to our students, communities in the regions, and beyond.

I am incredibly proud of what the UNE community has accomplished in 2021 and I look forward to working with Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the entire University community in realising Future Fit's goals and all the opportunities that 2022 will present.



Mr James Harris
Chancellor



2021 Strategic Focus and Resilience

Given the relatively long timescales over which universities generally plan and deliver quality education and develop research that adds value, it is always difficult to focus on the achievements of one year over another. In 2021, 3818 students graduated from UNE and more than 26,000 enrolled to start (or restart) their higher education experience. UNE now connects with over 120,000 alumni around the world.

Nevertheless, 2021 was distinguished by a number of key events, critical outcomes and major successes.

UNE launched its new strategic plan, Future Fit, and received positive feedback from across the sector and the broad range of stakeholder groups who contributed to the extended consultation process of the UNE21+ program. To advance this decadal plan, work across the four enabling pillars (Digital+, Places+, People+ and Sustainability+) was a priority; tactical initiatives were developed and piloted through appropriate review processes. Investments in the growth agenda, critical business systems and frontline infrastructures to enable place-based education through a distributed delivery model were prioritised. The nurturing of key partnerships with state, industry, business and local government agencies as well as self-organising co-operatives progressed despite ongoing limitations upon travel, communications and engagement due to COVID-19.

UNE Metro and securing new premises in Parramatta was a focus following the compulsory purchase of UNE's established facilities to accommodate the city's light rail developments. Final confirmation of funding options for the new UNE campus in Tamworth aligned with formal agreements for collaborations with the Regional Council and various industry partners. UNE celebrated with some of the first graduates of the new Tamworth programs launched in response to the Commonwealth's Job Ready Graduate reforms. Following an extended engagement process, UNE also confirmed a new partnership with Moree Plains Shire Council to underpin a wider commitment to support the Special Activation Precinct. Another landmark moment was the opening of UNE NOVA, the new base of the UNE SMART Region Incubator, within the refurbished 'Old Library' in the centre of Armidale, signalling the University's commitment to the benefits of 'Town with Gown'. Within this growing framework for collaboration across regional New England North West, UNE launched STEM Q and began the consultation process for the next stage of this novel innovation precinct.

With the organisational change program, Time for Change, moving into its second stage, the focus for 2021 was on executive recruitment, the development of institutional leadership capabilities, progress with the UNE integrated services model, the operational management of new budget control processes and a major review of human resource services. Key deliverables around risk and compliance reporting were progressed and, even with some limitations around human resources, the UNE Security Council resolved a number of issues to progress overall cybersecurity resilience.

Despite the continuing burden of the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic,

UNE delivered a full range of educational offerings to both domestic and international students. Agile business continuity planning allowed for the adoption of responsive course design options to suit the prevailing circumstances as the impact of distributed working and over 80 amendments to NSW public health orders were accommodated. Throughout this period UNE continued to develop new education delivery strategies through innovations in pedagogy and practice for this institution's students and others. UNE was acknowledged nationally by sector partners and agencies involved in tertiary education for the sharing of good practice in online delivery of STEM subjects and the third-party proctoring of assessment. UNE's engagement with Academic Transformation also advanced with major work on course design, assessment, learning and teaching strategies and the underlying quality assurance processes which define program course and unit reviews.

UNE also maintained a productive research portfolio with major successes recorded for both individual and collaborative research in competitive funding programs and signalled through national metrics of performance such as Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC). UNE now ranks 17th nationally under adjusted data when assessed on the basis of competitive research funding as a proxy for excellence. Under the new competitive Commonwealth Regional Research Program, a collaborative proposal headed by UNE, will see regional mental health needs brought to the fore. UNE was also awarded unique 'node' status as part of the National Drought Resilience Program. Throughout the year, the application of a risk-based approach to resource planning allowed for the continued duty of care over UNE research farms and related specialist facilities (that support both research and teaching) during the extended application of restrictive public health orders.

With the majority of normal community activities either cancelled, deferred or moved to virtual platforms, the social landscape of UNE's main operational campus at Armidale was significantly affected. Flow-on consequences for both the University and wider NENW community supported by this regional facility can be measured in terms of millions of dollars of lost revenue for both UNE and for the wider community. Yet again graduation ceremonies and major on-campus programs were cancelled and the hosting of major regional sporting events was restricted for most of the year. A similar story played out in Sydney, where UNE is an active member of the Western Sydney social and business outreach agenda and in Tamworth where UNE normally partners across a range of social and community events ranging from music to astronomy.

Amidst all these restrictions, UNE stood up as the lead partner for regional structures developed to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations. UNE Life forged an alliance with several Local Health Districts and medical practitioners to offer mass drop-in clinics for remote and rural communities across the region thus ensuring equity when other options were limited.

UNE staff also stepped-in in the aftermath of the disaster,

Building for the Future: Highlights

2021 was a year that focused on review and planning for the future. Numerous strategic projects commenced throughout the year. For example:

STEM Q

STEM Q, the New England North West STEM Quarter, was launched after an extensive economic impact assessment. It provides a blueprint for regional partnerships built around collaborative knowledge sharing to boost innovation and workforce development. The key goal being an improvement in the economic prosperity of the region;



UNE negotiated with the NSW Government and the Commonwealth Government for funding to continue the development of UNE Tamworth with a new city centre facility to be established;

NOVA

The NOVA co-working space was opened as a base for the UNE Smart Region Incubator (SRI). In addition to being a stimulator for regional entrepreneurship and innovation, NOVA will offer programs and opportunities that support entrepreneurs in areas such as agriculture, creative industries, environment, renewable energy, food processing and health;



The University has also advanced work on a project to define what it means to be a 'leading regional university' and is working with both domestic and international partners to develop a benchmarking framework and methodology to assess the specific and singular benefits which can emerge from distributed regional universities partnering both locally and globally;



Co-designed with industry to developed new academic programs for placed-based education; and



Completed major works around water utilisation and future drought resilience to confirm UNE Armidale as a sustainable campus with respect to water access and management.

UNE continued to convene Special Incident Group (SIG) meetings involving the senior leadership and middle management of the University on a needs basis, as well as COVID-19 Academic Response Team (CART) meetings. Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) were established to manage the local impacts of NSW Health orders on operations and to account for the direct impact of COVID-19 on staff and students. 33 BCPs were put in place for UNE schools and directorates. These plans underwent continual review throughout 2021, guided by frequent SIG and CART meetings – particularly as NSW transitioned to 70%, 80% and 95% vaccination targets. The Omicron variant did not significantly disrupt UNE operations in 2021, with regional

areas experiencing secondary impacts relative to metropolitan NSW. UNE continues to operate in a safety-first mode and has invested considerable effort in calibrating location-specific ventilation and developing new place-based hygiene practices. Full vaccination remains a priority for all staff, students and visitors, with UNE investing in on-site rapid antigen testing in support of critical business functions.

Through UNE Life, UNE rolled out vaccination clinics across the New England North West, vaccinating over 7,000 people. The University also contributed to the NSW Government's Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) in 2021.



Supercell 83-2122, that struck in October, joining the NSW Resilience Working Group and supporting a range of other emergency service responses. This environmental catastrophe wreaked severe damage on major parts of Armidale, the wider region and the University campus. Around a third of the campus was impacted, including many key buildings and mature, wooded conservation areas, and some 24% of core buildings sustained medium to long-term damage (including many that were unsalvageable). The impact of this cannot be understated and the implications are both immediate and far reaching.

After drought, bushfires, a pandemic and tornado, the Armidale campus has only closed its entirety for two business days in the past 24 months. UNE's now well-honed skills in business resilience have come to the fore on each occasion. Not only did the University respond quickly and proactively to its own business continuity issues, but it opened its doors to those in need, providing emergency accommodation and services in the immediate aftermath of each event and serving as an active member of the Armidale Recovery Committee.

Despite the many and varied challenges, the 2021 outlook remained positive with progress at many levels. The financial reports for the year signal key improvements; they highlight the success of our approach to business continuity and planning and provide assurance that UNE's planned investment in Future Fit can be supported. This is an outcome that reflects the determination of UNE's Council, Executive, staff and students to succeed, as well as signalling both ambition and engagement with the constructive possibilities for the future. UNE staff and students proved themselves to be resilient and productive; they were open in their approach to the various academic challenges that emerged as the pandemic continued. The ready adoption of new ways of working proved the commitment of all who form part of the UNE community to be enquiring around practice, and exemplary in addressing process. Throughout the year, UNE's capacity to make a difference formed the core of this institution's response and was the foundation for meaningful participation at every level.

Brigid Heywood

Vice-Chancellor & CEO
Professor Brigid Heywood

Storm Damage Overview



Damage to the Armidale Academic Campus:

17.6
Hectares impacted*

Campus area impacted

175,645.8
Square metres impacted



*area of Academic Campus 134 Hectares



Tree Damage:

250 required removal

150 of these were native

74 Koala habitat and food source trees required removal

120 artificial habitats will be installed



Business Impact:

Estimated considerable loss from lost productivity, building damage, business interruption and interruption to commercial activities

'Impaired area' management approach in place – high risk areas restricted from access



2 days emergency closure to all staff and students

472 staff displaced by building damage

2 weeks of intensive teaching cancelled or postponed

Waste removed from campus



700+ tonnes
of green waste

28+ tonnes
of building waste

NOTE: detailed analysis of business impact pending

About UNE

UNE: Australia's oldest regional university, delivering flexible education nationally

With a history dating back to the 1930s, UNE has a well-earned reputation as one of Australia's great multi-modal teaching, training and research universities. Through its leading role in the provision of distance education, UNE has contributed to the nation's development over more than half a century — while enhancing the lives of thousands of people who would otherwise have been unable to pursue university studies.

Future Fit (2021-2030) is the University of New England's new decadal strategic plan which reasserts UNE's founding goal to be a leading regional university and captures that legacy in a modern context.

Central to Future Fit is a redefinition of UNE's existing strong focus on student access and success, and support for partnerships. Underpinning these focus areas is an emphasis on 'place' that includes multi-mode educational provision encompassing physical campus-based as well as online and distance education options.

By working with people and groups within and across both virtual and traditional communities, UNE tackles challenges and create opportunities through contextualised teaching, research and engagement.



Our Places



Virtual

As the pioneer of flexible learning, UNE's virtual learning campus is central to all our students regardless of their place of study. Approximately 80% of UNE's students choose to study fully online as external candidates and make use of the expanding virtual campus. On-campus students are able to tailor their learning experience by accessing virtual and face-to-face delivery as their personal learning needs change from trimester to trimester.



Armidale

UNE's home campus is in Armidale, New England, NSW where on-campus students have been hosted in the University colleges since 1938. The UNE Armidale offering is designed to meet the needs of students from the New England North West who wish to study locally and those city-dwellers and international students seeking a more personalised university experience.



Tamworth

Home to Australia's first regional micro-campus, bringing together community, industry and the University to meet the specific needs of Tamworth and surrounds. It comprises a central, campus-style 'anchor' connected to embedded industry hubs, enabling co-designed and delivered education, research and innovation.

UNE's footprint is extended by a city-based campus and network of regional study centres.



UNE Metro

Established in Paramatta, Sydney, in 2013, UNE Metro is an accredited UNE campus open seven days a week to meet the learning needs of predominately part-time, online, city-based learners and international students.



UNE in the Community

Community study centres are based in Coonabarabran, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Guyra, Inverell, Moree, Narrabri, Taree and Tenterfield, supporting our online students in the region, along with community outreach and locally-based innovation through regional incubator hubs and research activities.

Fast Facts

4 Operational Divisions

- > Education Futures - Academic Leadership
- > Knowledge Creation - Research and Research Services
- > Integrated Services and Operational Intelligence
- > Finance and Business Intelligence

3 Faculties

- > Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences & Education
- > Medicine & Health
- > Science, Agriculture, Business & Law

9 Schools

- > Education
- > Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
- > Health
- > Psychology
- > Rural Medicine
- > Environmental and Rural Science
- > Law
- > Science and Technology
- > UNE Business School

10 Research Centres and Institutes

- > Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit (AGBU)
- > The Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law (AgLaw)
- > Centre for Agribusiness
- > Centre for Local Government
- > Centre for Rural Criminology
- > Cotton Hub
- > New England Institute of Healthcare Research (NEIHR)
- > Palaeoscience Research Centre
- > PoultryHub Australia
- > The National Centre of Science, Information and Communication Technology, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR)

4 CRCs with direct UNE involvement

- > [Natural Hazards Research Australia](#)
- > [Centre for Innovation in Regional Health](#)
- > [Centre for Invasive Species Solutions](#)
- > [Future Food Systems](#)

6 Residential Colleges & one independent college

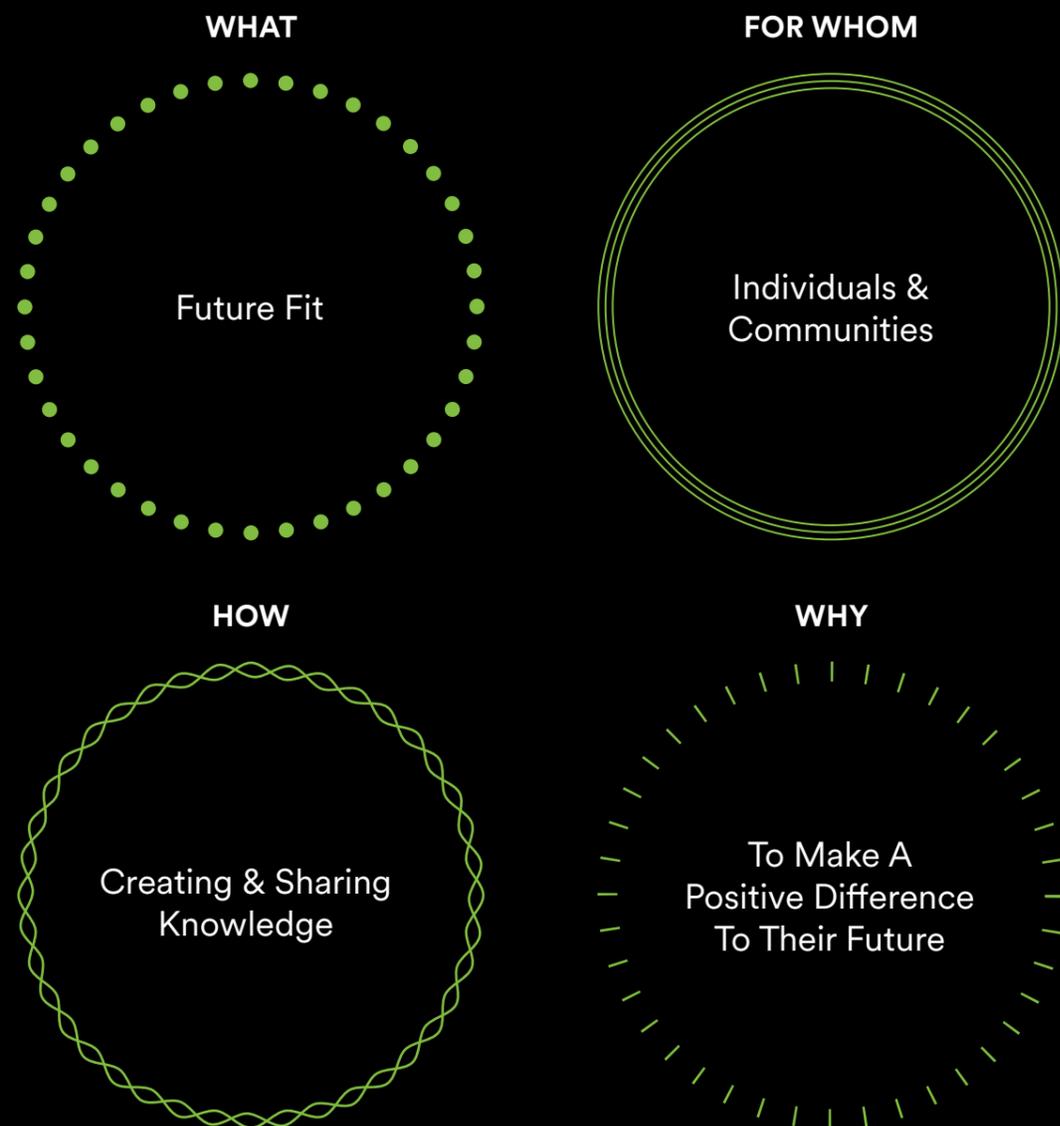
- > [Austin College](#)
- > [Earle Page College](#)
- > [Duval College](#)
- > [Mary White College](#)
- > [Robb College](#)
- > [Wright College & Village](#)
- > [St Albert's College¹](#)

4 Controlled Entities

- > [Agricultural Business Research Institute \(ABRI\)](#)
- > [UNE Life](#)
- > [UNE Foundation](#)
- > [UNE Partnerships](#)

¹ St Albert's College operates under the guidance of the Armidale Catholic Diocese.

What We Do



Our Values

Our values determine what UNE stands for and defines our responsibilities as a university and as individuals. UNE staff and students are supported to:

Be Open

We build our relationships on the principles of openness, transparency, sincerity and inclusivity.

Be Enquiring

We have the curiosity, foresight, flexibility, creativity, courage, and perseverance to spur positive change.

Be Exceptional

We know that integrity, ambition and a commitment to continuous improvement are key to excellence as a university.

Make A Difference

We strive to create positive change for individuals and communities.



Living Our Values

Be Open

We build our relationships on the principles of openness, transparency, sincerity and inclusivity.



Engagement Australia Excellence Award in Student Engagement

UNE's Social Workers in Schools Team



Best Employer Brand on LinkedIn

Australia & New Zealand – Academic and Government Category



Victorian Department of Education and Training High Ability Toolkit

UNE is partnering with the department to train teachers to support high ability students.



A rolling series of consultation and engagement with community groups, industry and alumni in Armidale, Tamworth, Moree and Taree to inform our nascent place-based strategy and to address key community knowledge and skill deficits.

Be Enquiring

We have the curiosity, foresight, flexibility, creativity, courage, and perseverance to spur positive change.



Helen Newton Turner Medal

Professor Julius Van Der Werf, Animal Breeding and Genetics.



Helen Newton Turner Bright Futures Award

Associate Professor Sam Clark, Animal Genetics.



Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

Dr Piers Kelly – Message Sticks: how Aboriginal people communicate over vast distances.



ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

Dr Marissa Betts – visualising this planet half a billion years ago.



Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science

Professor Yihong Du (Mathematics).



National Library of Australia Fellowship

Dr Gwyn McClelland (Japanese Studies).



UNE Rising Star Alumni Award

Dr Mary McMillan for exemplary leadership in molecular biology, molecular genetics and the biological basis of mental health disorders.



UNE Alumni Community Award

Associate Professor Stuart Wark for his commitment to ensuring that people with intellectual disability living in rural Australia have access to the same support and services as their metropolitan counterparts.



Commissioning Deloitte Economic Impact Assessment to verify need for investment in establishing a science and innovation precinct in the New England North West with a focus on agribusiness, health and wellbeing, digital infrastructure and STEM infrastructure.



Commissioning NOUS report to define and measure what it means to be a leading regional university, to inform internal and external benchmarking and key result areas.



ARC Discovery Grant

Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stuart to examine the ways in which biological and socioeconomic heritage can shape vulnerabilities to disease.



ARC Discovery Grant

Professor Yihong Du to develop mathematical equations that make sense of phenomena such as the spread of infectious diseases.

Be Exceptional

We know that integrity, ambition and a commitment to continuous improvement are key to excellence as a university.



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Overall Experience (Undergraduate & Postgraduate)



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Teaching Quality (Undergraduate & Postgraduate)



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Learning Resources (Undergraduate & Postgraduate)



Engagement Australia

Outstanding contribution to improving student engagement on campus, with industry and/or in community.



Tall Poppy Award, Australian Institute of Policy and Science (AIPS)

Dr Marissa Betts, for work in documenting the geological history of Earth, specifically the early Cambrian period.



A.H. Voisey Medal, Geological Society of Australia (NSW Division)

Dr Marissa Betts, for her significant contribution to the field despite having only completed her PhD in the past five years.

Make A Difference

We strive to create positive change for individuals and communities.



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - First Generation (Undergraduate)



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Employment (Undergraduate)



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Salary (Undergraduate)



Good Universities Guide 2022

Five Stars - Student Support (Undergraduate & Postgraduate)



Canstar Blue Award

Best NSW University for Student Satisfaction



National Health and Medical Research Council Ideas Grant

Professor Natkunam Ketheesan to develop a test that can diagnose rheumatic heart disease.



Australian Awards for University Teaching citation

Dr Jonathan Moss for increasing the reliability of quantitative methods units through a personalised approach with impact close to home and further afield.



2021 Science and Innovation Awards

Jarrold Lees won the Meat and Livestock Australia award.



UNE's Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre

Winner Australian Macadamia Society Innovation award

Winner Maxar Technologies award for Best Organisation in Imagery Application

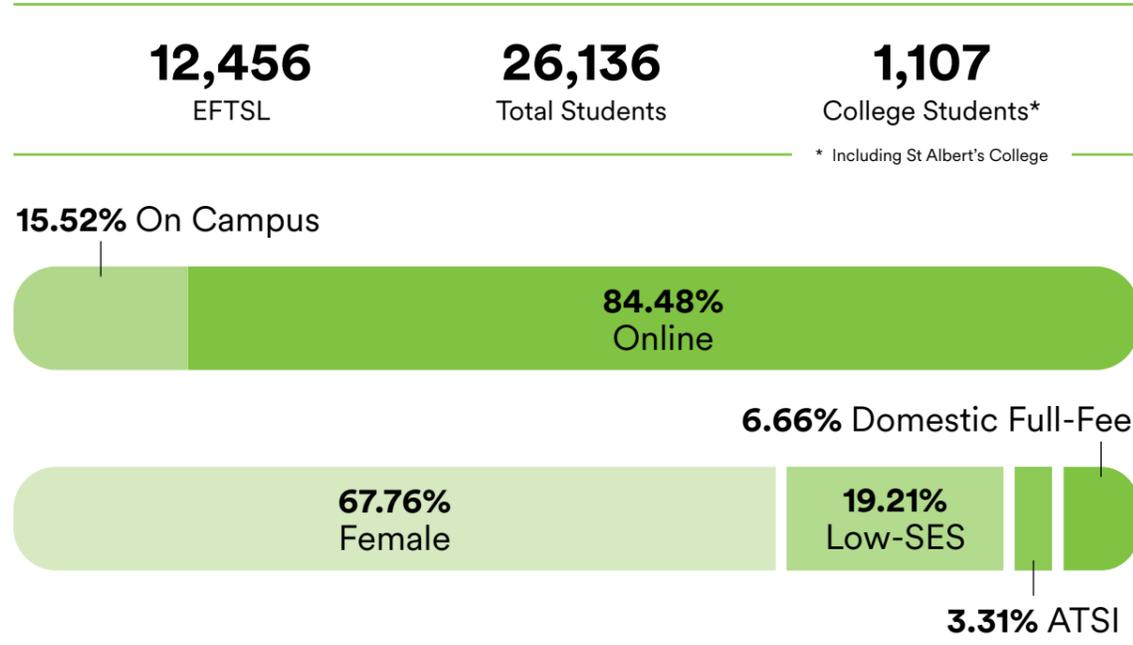
First place at global ERSI User Conference for Australian Tree Crop Dashboard application

Finalist in the Engagement Australia Excellence in Industry Engagement Awards 2021

Finalist in the Hort Connections National Awards for Excellence 2021

Key Statistics - Students

UNE students are predominantly mature aged students who prefer the flexibility of online study. About one in five of UNE's students are also classified as low SES and reside in either a regional or rural area. Through the dedicated efforts of the Oorala Aboriginal Centre, UNE has increased its number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to above the national average. The latest online technologies and pedagogies are used to bring quality academic experiences to students anywhere in the world.

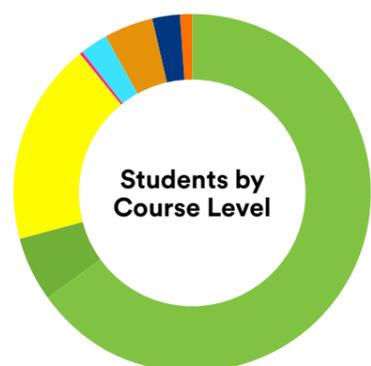


International Students

Enrolments by country



All other countries: 466

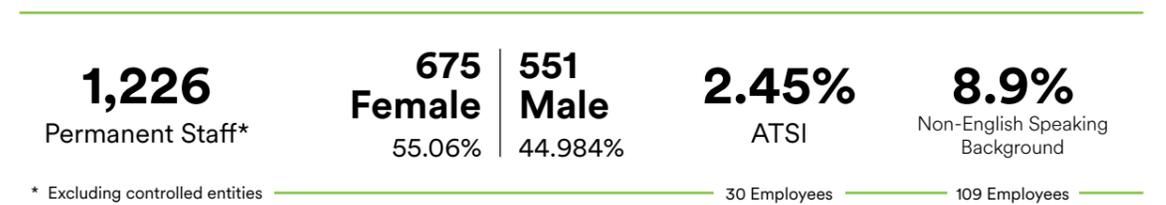


Non-Award	200
Grad Cert.	627
Grad Dip	966
Doctorate	574
Masters Research	124
Masters Coursework	4,182
Diploma	1,326
Bachelor	15,018

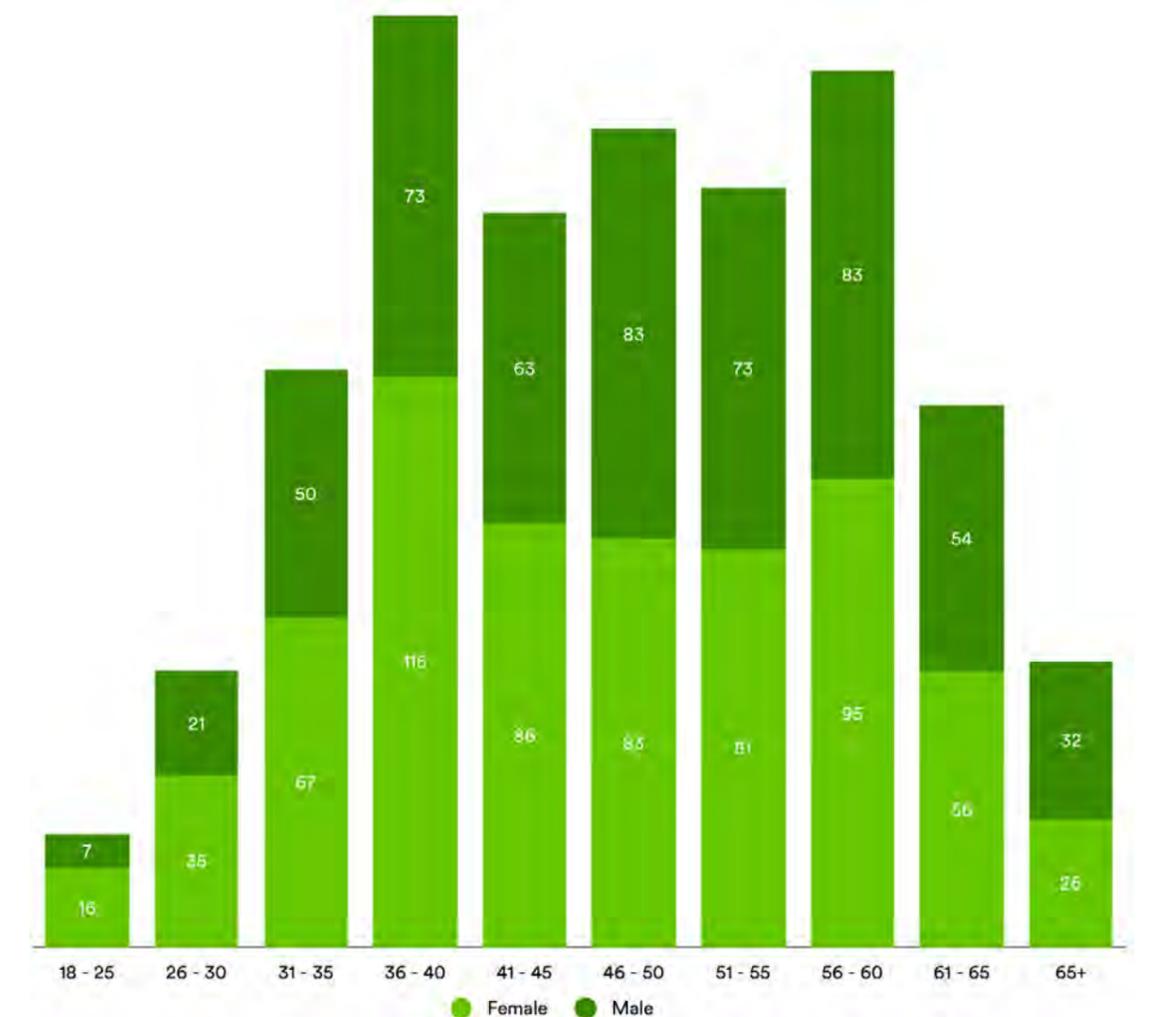
Key Statistics - Staff

UNE staff support a complex range of operations across the University. They are drawn from Australia and further afield and connect in many ways with community through service roles, as emergency service providers, and as members of various school, club, learned society and political groups, and through contributions to a comprehensive range of social and cultural enterprises. UNE is the largest employer in the NENW and contributes \$318 million² to the GDP of New England.

² The Economic Impact of the Regional Universities Network, 2018.



Staff Distribution by Age





Our Strategy

Future Fit

Future Fit Goals



Goal 1
Personalised Learning Journeys

Crafting, adapting and supporting learning journeys that are distinctive in their accessibility and flexibility.

The learning journey of each and every one of us is unique. Whatever the goal, whatever the starting point, whatever the mode of study, whatever the route to get there, we will provide the opportunities to succeed.



Goal 2
Empowering Communities

Creating and sharing knowledge to make a difference locally, regionally and globally.

We are a university that supports individuals within communities and communities within regions - whether that community is virtual, rural, remote, coastal, suburban, on the urban fringes or metropolitan, in Australia or overseas. We do this through transformative teaching, learning and research, informed by our engagement, which reflects the unique aspirations of each community.



Goal 3
Building Resilience

Committing to environmental, social, and financial resilience for the university, our staff, our students and our communities

We believe that the University, our students, and our communities share responsibility for the future of our natural environment, the people, and the prosperity of the regions in which we live and work. We do this together through building a strong university and resilient staff, students and communities.



2021 Highlights

Personalised Learning Journeys

UNE commits to delivering personalised learning journeys, enabling students to develop their skills and education goals, and secure graduate outcomes in an accessible, personalised, and meaningful way. Study at UNE offers high quality, digital-first teaching and learning experiences, as well as engagement with industry and businesses to ensure alignment between quality higher education, graduate ready jobs and our goal to develop place-based opportunities and outcomes.

Personalised Learning Journeys: 2021 in Summary

With the launch of Future Fit, UNE focused on laying the groundwork for transformational change to enable the provision of learning journeys that better suit the individual circumstances and personal goals of each student. In 2021, UNE concentrated on enabling access to learning that meets the immediate and future needs of the regional and metropolitan communities we serve.

The confirmation of a new Digital+ Charter captured initiatives to deliver the digital enablers of Personalised Learning Journeys. A series of dynamic, interconnected projects have been activated to improve the overall student experience, and personalise and extend UNE's lifelong learning interactions with students and other stakeholders.

The Modelling the UNE Student Experience (MUSE) initiative, funded through the Australian Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), identified the binding sequence of service-related issues that need to be managed if UNE students are to benefit from a cohesive student experience. The student lifecycle has been mapped through a service-first lens, to ensure that support materials are better aligned with student needs, thereby creating a blueprint for an optimised student support model. A set of eight discrete, visualised student journeys from across UNE's diverse cohort has been developed to support progression and enhance retention.

Another focus has been the development and delivery of new models of teaching and engagement with students and communities. This includes:

> Work on the rejuvenated Course Design Framework (CDF), which includes a scalable, personalised academic and student support model. New UNE-specific Online Learning Standards have also been progressed within the wider academic transformation agenda. The revised CDF serves to ensure coherent structures, flexible entry and exit pathways. It features purposeful learning experiences and assessments across a comprehensive academic offering, with the objective of improving student choice and increasing the sustainability of UNE courses.

> As part of UNE's response to the Job Ready Graduate Reforms presented by the Commonwealth Government in 2020, 13 new Undergraduate Certificates have been approved and largely developed to meet regional community and industry needs. These will enable wider access to tertiary education.

> UNE has submitted an ambitious plan to the National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF) that aims to enhance regional participation in STEM subjects, provide better connections between education and work, and create a stronger axis for innovation through connections with industry – the central tenet being job ready graduates and graduate ready jobs.

With an increasing emphasis on experiential learning (to support all students, whether they are post-school and exploring future careers or mature-aged students seeking to reskill or upskill), the option to capture previous and current work and life experiences to enhance employability and long-term career outcomes was another critical thematic

priority. By strengthening UNE's engagement with industry, government and community groups, we are seeking to embed employment-related skills, hard and soft, in the student learning journey across a broad spectrum of employment areas.

UNE's Promise to Students

The unique life experience, knowledge and skills you bring to university will be recognised and will help to shape your personal learning and career journey.

UNE's TRACKS Tertiary Preparation Program has gone from strength to strength in 2021. Dedicated to preparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for university study, the program supports candidates to develop their academic literacy, IT, and study skills building confidence within a community of practice. This learning approach is grounded in the life experience and cultural practice of the students.

As an extension of TRACKS, the Oorala Indigenous Scholar/ TRACKS Peer Support Program was rolled out in 2021. It matches academically high-achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars with students enrolled in TRACKS to engage in mentoring and peer support activities. It provides real and authentic exemplars for students enrolled in the TRACKS program to learn via an informal mentoring relationship. The scholars' knowledge and experience of tertiary education is a powerful tool that is harnessed to assist those students at the beginning of their university journey.

Feedback indicates linkages to the Oorala Centre via the program have opened up a number of opportunities (scholarships, overseas study, employment, postgraduate study options) not otherwise considered by many of these students. Participants also noted how encouraging it is to work alongside other successful and experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This allows each individual candidate to see themselves as part of the university community and normalises success.

UNE's Promise to Staff

Our support for your teaching, student engagement and professional experience will enable both you and your students to succeed.

Ongoing professional and career development of staff in light of the Future Fit agenda has been a key priority in 2021.

For academic staff, a new Academic Development@UNE workshop series and In Focus Webinar Series has been rolled out as well as a new system for recognising academic excellence. UNE also hosted Academic Careers Week: A Community at Work, a series of sessions on different aspects of academic professional development. The UNE Learning and Teaching Symposium was held for a second year, as an institution-wide celebration of the outstanding learning, teaching and scholarship taking place at UNE.

A Professional Staff Development Week was offered to all UNE staff with sessions over five days on topics to support them at all stages of their career journey.

UNE also extended the opportunity for all staff to complete Udemy courses of their choice. During 2021, UNE staff undertook almost 1,000 Udemy courses in support of their professional development.

Each of these initiatives provides staff with opportunities to enhance their own career aspirations, through upskilling, and to enrich the learning experiences of our students.

UNE's Promise to Community

The needs, goals and expertise of your community will help shape what and how we deliver learning in your region.

The City of Tamworth has a plan to grow its population from 43,000 to 100,000 by 2041 and improve levels of education attainment in the region, which currently fall below the national average.

To help Tamworth meet this goal, UNE has worked with the Tamworth community and industry stakeholders to co-design several Undergraduate Certificate in Professional Practice (UGCPP) programs in 2021.

Four Undergraduate Certificate specialisations were delivered for the first time in 2021: Community Welfare and Wellbeing, Equine Management, Business Studies and Event Management.

These qualifications are a gateway to higher learning for people who might otherwise have failed to considered the

benefits of university study. As well as helping to meet UNE's institutional goals they are providing individuals with a sense of growth and personal attainment, achieving what this university was established to do: to bring the power of higher education to the regions.

Regional Australians experience higher levels of disadvantage and poorer mental health than their metropolitan counterparts due to a variety of factors, including lower incomes, and poor access to healthcare and other vital services. However, a consortium of regional universities has won a bid to establish a regional mental health institute to address significant regional, rural and remote (RRR) mental health challenges.

Led by UNE, the institute has been funded by a \$3.66 million Commonwealth grant under the new Regional Research Collaboration. The project aims to increase research capacity focused on solutions to the complex socio-environmental mental health challenges faced by residents of rural, regional and remote Australia.

UNE's Promise to Partners

The impact you seek, the challenges you face and the future you see inform the knowledge-based solutions we will create with you

UNE has been working with industry and communities in the New England to overcome issues of English language proficiency in the workplace. During 2021, UNE's English Language Centre successfully formalised a community industry partnership with Costa Tomato Farm, in Guyra, NSW, introducing a course to improve language skills for migrant employees. The focus was on workplace communications skills and building personal confidence among learners. The first cohort successfully completed the course in September 2021. In tandem with Sanctuary Armidale, UNE has also been delivering training to volunteers to teach Ezidi adult learners in and around the New England region.

These 2021 initiatives complement UNE's partnerships with Armidale Secondary College, Settlement Services International, Sanctuary Armidale, the Department of Human Services and Armidale TAFE to offer short courses for Ezidi

secondary school-aged individuals and young adults, to equip them with the skills and knowledge to be able to go on to university study.

Sixty Costa Tomato Farm workers, most from the Pacific Islands, enjoyed further opportunities to develop their English language proficiency when accommodated in UNE residential colleges in 2021.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted small businesses, with some industries harder hit than others. Initiatives to fully quantify the impacts are underway. In November 2021, UNE hosted the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand Online Symposium titled *SMEs and COVID-19: Just surviving or thriving? Sorting the rhetoric from the realities of COVID-19 for SMEs*. The event attracted speakers from around the world, and the online conversation between academics, researchers, practitioners and government representatives captured the unprecedented challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which were hit hardest across the globe.

UNE's Promise to Alumni

Your connection with us will be life-long. We will provide opportunities to grow your professional experience and your career

Fostering professional connections outside the workplace has been difficult for many during successive lockdowns.

To help alumni and current students connect with and learn from professional contacts as well as UNE experts, a program of online breakfast forums was delivered during 2021 from UNE's Metro campus. It united alumni, students and staff nationally and internationally to explore the Future of Business, with special forums dedicated to International Women's Day and the federal budget.

The initiative successfully fostered personal and professional links between alumni, students, staff and industry across these regions. It also provided current students with the opportunity to practice their networking skills and to gain inside knowledge on careers and personal opportunities.



Empowering Communities: 2021 in Summary

UNE was originally conceived by the people of the New England to serve the economic and social needs of the local population. Having a university located within the New England would not only overcome the tyranny of distance that existed, but also enable the region to achieve its independent development aspirations. In the intervening decades, this mission has expanded to serve communities, particularly regional communities, nationally and internationally.

The release and implementation of Future Fit has seen a renewed focus on empowering UNE's communities.

In 2021, several projects were established to lay the groundwork for a more integrated approach to engagement and delivery in UNE's key places. These included:

- > A Funding Deed, signed with Regional NSW and Infrastructure NSW, for the development of place-based delivery of courses, services and research in Tamworth;
- > The leasing and commissioning of a new site to explore a new model of teaching and student service delivery in metro locations, against the backdrop of Metro Light Rail requisitioning the original UNE campus in Parramatta;
- > The commencement of a highly collaborative engagement process with Moree Plains Shire Council, community and industry, to establish a place-based education approach. Consultation produced a Moree Business Case that embraces this unique opportunity to partner with Moree's community and industry; and
- > Similar engagement with community and industry in the Mid North Coast region and Taree.

The STEM Q precinct without walls to serve the New England North West has been launched, providing a blueprint for the infrastructure and networks needed to support research and investment in agribusiness, health and wellbeing, digital and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries. STEM Q conceptualises dedicated STEM pathways for regional students and an education ecosystem that supports their career aspirations. By addressing disparities in education, health and wellbeing, STEM Q champions a shared vision for sustainable and robust regions that are economically resilient and rich in human capital. It seeks to develop interconnected hubs with a common focus on industry-related research as an engine of innovation.

In the past, Aboriginal knowledge and cultural practices have largely been integrated into Western science and not recognised as a distinct scientific discipline. Through the establishment of a dedicated Aboriginal Land and Sea Hub, UNE hopes to recognise Indigenous knowledge systems as a science in their own right and support the revitalisation of cultural practices.

In 2021, Indigenous land and sea managers from throughout NSW gathered at the University for the first of a series of

planning workshops to determine new educational pathways for Indigenous people and opportunities for culturally relevant research. The Aboriginal Land and Sea Hub further aims to provide a transition for Indigenous people from vocational education and training to higher education, with the support of scholarships and internships. UNE's recent approval of a PhD and Masters in Aboriginal Cultural Practice further supports the hub's goals.

In December, the UNE SMART Region Incubator announced its new premises NOVA. Located in the heart of the Armidale CBD, NOVA joins the growing network of SRI partnership facilities across the New England North West region, including those being developed in Tamworth and Moree.

NOVA will support business innovation across the region by developing and offering programs that enable recovery, growth and resilience, and contribute to a strong regional economy. Its resources serve as a valuable knowledge base and launchpad for entrepreneurs in key regional focus areas including agriculture, creative industries, environment, renewable energy, food processing and health.



2021 Highlights

Empowering Communities

UNE continues to deliver outstanding education and research with impact through a series of initiatives designed to empower communities by developing key priority areas, with potential for high impact, aligned with local, national and international need. These thematic priorities are underpinned by UNE's innovative, industry-embedded PhD Innovation program, the UNE Tamworth model and our ongoing and emerging industry, government and community partnerships.

UNE's Promise to Students

Your learning will provide you with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to succeed in the world of work.

Staff members of UNE's Department of Archaeology, Classics and History have been exploring research-based learning to better teach the students of tomorrow. UNE initiated a 3D visualisation project with the goal of bringing virtual artefacts to external students in a way that accurately simulates the experience of seeing, studying and researching them in person.

UNE's pioneering use of 3D models has already given hundreds of students the opportunity to learn fundamental skills in artefact identification and analysis, providing them with

the technical and practical experience necessary to enter the workforce as professional archaeologists and to extend their practice and skills-based learning.

This kind of technology not only provides students with the ability to interact with objects from afar; it gives a growing number access to this learning environment when traditional lab class participation may be capped due to resource availability or on-the-ground WHS issues. UNE is now able to expand the number of students engaging in virtual yet integrated, research-based learning, ensuring equity of access for all students, be they regional or urban, domestic or international.

UNE's Promise to Staff

You will be part of a team that sets the benchmark for delivering digital-first, globally recognised higher education with impact

2021 saw online examinations (OLX) go mainstream for UNE students, allowing them to sit exams at home while supervised in real time via webcam and screen-sharing software. Using the student's webcam, microphone and speakers, the system also authenticates the student's identity, ensuring they are being assessed under exam-relevant conditions. Around 41,000 exams were held online.

Drawing on our expertise as Australia's leading online university, we have developed an approach to online examination that streamlines processes and responds to student need, rather than replicating paper-based practice in the online environment. UNE has been working towards standardising workflows, easing pain points, such as Single Sign-On requirements, and building capability. This has involved looking ahead to innovative practices such as rich media integration and untethering exams from a scheduled period, so students can book to sit an OLX at any time that suits them in a 24-hour window. This means that students who have work or caring commitments during the day can sit an exam at 8pm, for instance, tailoring assessment to

accommodate students' busy lives. UNE is now working to create more flexible options and to open up new forms of formative assessment.

Student satisfaction is high, with over 85% of students satisfied or extremely satisfied with the new processes. This a wonderful achievement given the fundamental shift required of students away from traditional assessment practices.

Propelled by external factors, educators at UNE have migrated teaching to the digital realm, and sustained online lessons sometimes for months on end. Circumstances have necessitated rapid changes to pedagogy, curricula and student engagement with institutions sharing best practice with their peers. In 2021, UNE hosted the 38th ASCILITE International Conference on Innovation, Practice and Research in the Use of Educational Technologies in Tertiary Education. Organised by an interdisciplinary committee, the hybrid conference drew delegates from across the globe and offered in-depth talks on educational technology.

UNE's Promise to Community

Constructive connections between thought leaders and experienced practitioners locally, regionally and globally will support solutions that will deliver sustainable impact for your community

In most African and Asian countries, two significant problems are encountered by smallholder farmers. The first is their almost exclusive reliance on local or informal markets, with no or very poor access to commercial markets that provide better financial rewards. The second is the farmers' lack of adoption of proven production and business practices known to improve productivity and profitability.

Three related Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) funded projects led by UNE researchers across southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, Eswatini and Lesotho), Indonesia and the Eastern Gangetic Plains (India, Bangladesh and Nepal) are directly addressing these problems.

The project teams are led by Professors Heather Burrow and Rene Villano (UNE Business School), Adjunct Professor Navjot Bhullar (School of Psychology) and Associate Professor Peter McGilchrist (School of Environmental and Rural Science). By connecting farmers to high-quality beef value chains and encouraging the adoption of proven practices, tools, technologies and processes, these projects are improving on-farm production and delivering significant social and environmental benefits to individuals and their communities.

UNE researchers are also closely working with the Australian Defence Force to better support young children of defence families dealing with separation. With funding from The Ian Potter Foundation, UNE staff are leading the Early Childhood Defence Programs (ECDP) project, which is supporting defence families with free, research-based, age-appropriate support materials and e-books for children.

UNE's Promise to Partners:

The results you seek, the challenges you face, and the future you see, inform the knowledge solutions jointly created with you.

Information that supports traceability, forward selling, biosecurity, climate variability preparedness and natural disaster responses is vital to an agricultural sector facing an increasingly volatile natural environment on one hand and socially mindful consumers on the other.

UNE's Applied Agricultural Remote Sensing Centre (AARSC), one of Australia's most diverse industry engagement centres of its kind, is collaborating with six horticulture tree crop industries (the Australian Macadamia Society, Citrus Australia, Avocados Australia Ltd, Australian Olive Association, Australian Banana Growers Council and Australian Mangoes Industry), the Australian Truffle Industry Association, Protected Cropping

Australia Association and Local Land Services to deliver interactive details of the location and extent of all commercial crops across Australia.

The Australian Tree Crop Map Dashboard is a world-leading initiative (winning the 2021 Best International Dashboard at the San Diego Esri User Conference) that provides each industry with an unprecedented measure of extent and seasonal change. Commodity maps are now being hosted by respective industry body websites to encourage grower engagement and annual updates, with the Australian macadamia industry naming the dashboard most innovative research for 2021. The AARSC is now expanding its mapping to other industries domestically as well as overseas.

UNE's Promise to Alumni

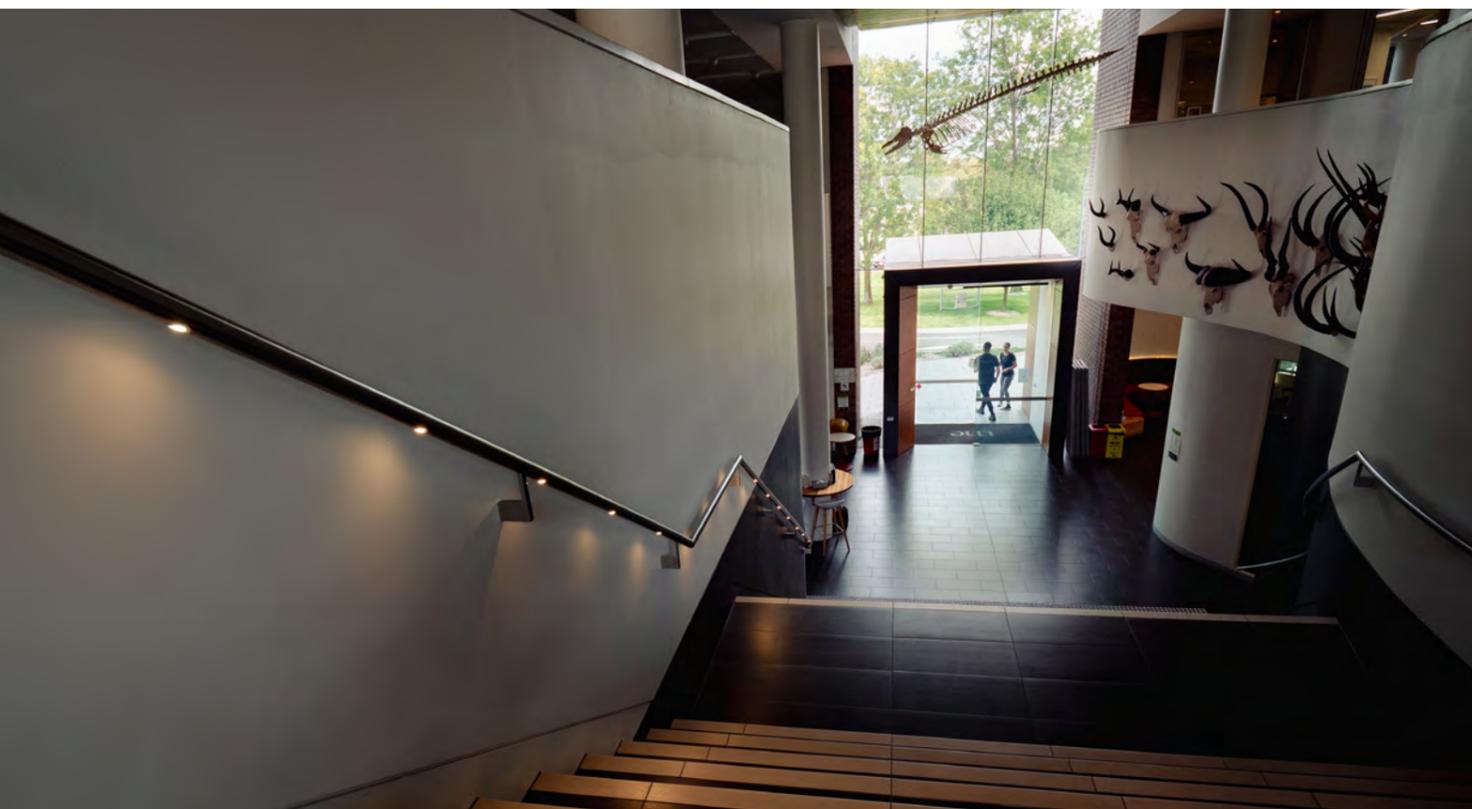
Your ongoing relationship with us will be built around your needs, goals and desire to contribute to future student success

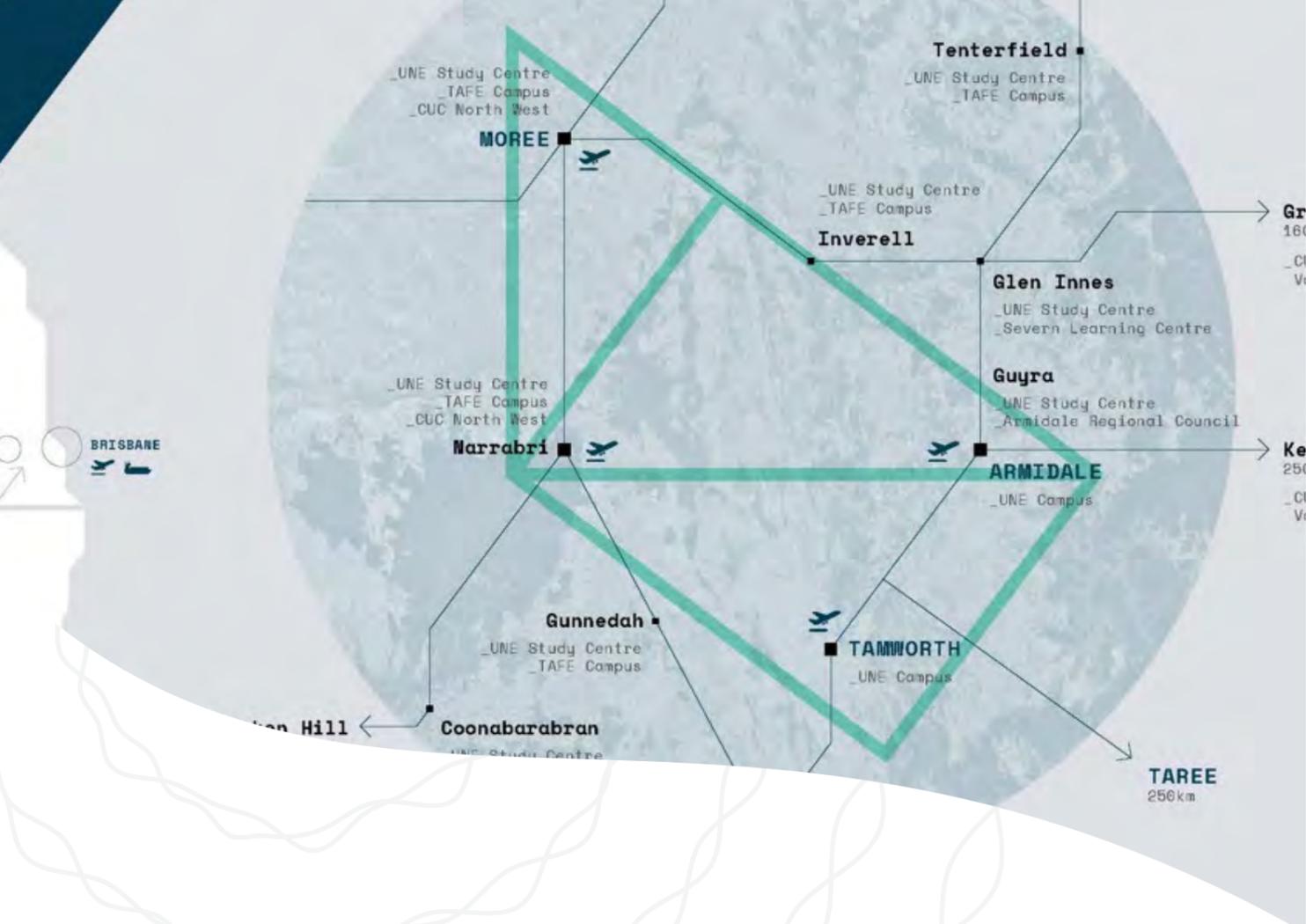
During consultation throughout the development of Future Fit, our alumni told us that they are eager to partner with the University to work with and support current and future students.

In response, UNE initiated the Connected Alumni project in 2021. The first stage of the project focuses on developing an online community platform that enables UNE to link personally with alumni, and alumni to connect with existing students.

The Alumni Mentoring Program will be largely delivered via the Connected Alumni platform, providing an opportunity for alumni to share their knowledge and expertise, and to contribute to the development of our aspiring leaders/current students. This is a transformative project that will continue to develop during the implementation of Future Fit in 2022 and beyond.

Ongoing work with UNE alumni has also secured valuable funding for scholarships to enable students to engage with tertiary education. Their support and generosity provided \$725,257 in scholarship donations to the UNE Foundation in 2021, and significant additional giving of \$36,000 allowed UNE to address hardship issues arising from the COVID pandemic. These alumni donations supported powerful UNE initiatives, including emergency student support, the Vice-Chancellor's Community Health Program, faculty support and prizes.





Building Resilience: 2021 in Summary

Threads of resilience and sustainability are woven through UNE's Future Fit goals, with a particular focus on:

- > Financial resilience to sustain our present organisational needs and support investment in our future and the future of our communities through strong finances, robust quality and risk management, and responsible resourcing;
- > Environmental sustainability, through proactive management and stewardship of our natural resources to support health, wealth and wellbeing through mindful campus practices and a commitment to education for and with our communities;
- > Human resilience via positive management of the impact of our university on people through an affirmative and empowered work and study environment; and
- > Social sustainability that positively impacts social capital by building connections, reciprocity, knowledge and open communication in and between communities.

2021 did not conform to forecasts or usual trends, with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to impact many aspects of University operations. The supercell storm event in October caused catastrophic damage to the Armidale academic campus, hampered operations and stretched UNE resources, causing a number of initiatives to be postponed or delayed.

The financial reports for the year signal all the required improvements. They highlight the success of the Time for Change organisational structure process, commenced in 2020, and provide assurances that UNE's planned investment in academic growth and development can be supported. In particular, capability within our Senior Leadership Team has been developed through consistent information-sharing and mentoring activities throughout the year.

The design of options for a more sustainable Academic Calendar has also progressed significantly, and consultation is now underway with students and staff to determine the most effective model for implementation in 2024. Processes for the ideation, approval and development of new educational offerings have also been streamlined to expedite delivery.

Much focus and effort has been undertaken to improve the University's cybersecurity defences, including implementing the AARNet1 Security Operations Centre (SOC) to monitor and respond to threats to the University via the internet, and the initiation of the deployment of Multi-Factor Authentication and implementation of user device data protection. A tactical response to Australia's Critical Infrastructure legislation and compliance with the Australian Cyber Security Centre's "Essential 8" is also underway.

Migration of our technology infrastructure from the on-campus Data Centre to the UNE Cloud was an imperative this year and is delivering improvements to network, architecture and security beyond the original project brief. This has provided flexibility, agility and resilience via improved information security as well as redundant communications and infrastructure hubs.

Improving the information available to prospective students in the Course and Unit Catalogue has also been a focus for

2021, including the introduction of new functionality to map and display the relationships between courses and units. This will make it easier for students to enrol and review their course requirements and progression. Work began in 2019 and will be completed in 2022, delivering significant advantages for current and future students, UNE staff and government reporting.

There have also been a number of successes in the area of environmental sustainability. The solar farm exceeded anticipated yield, offsetting 49% of the academic campus electricity and 42% of total electricity. UNE's Aboriginal Cultural Advisor also created a partnership with the local Aboriginal community to oversee the maintenance of the significant cultural site Mount Duval and ensure that all areas and artefacts are conserved. Finally, Lake Zot reached capacity in late 2021 and its water has been used to provide over 95% of Sport UNE's irrigation requirements.

THE UNE Council and Academic Board discussed UNE's approach to sustainability and contribution to the United Nation's Sustainable Developmental Goals in 2021. Recognition of climate change issues and corporate responsibilities for actions to manage and mitigate its consequences were part of the business cycle.

The pandemic also gave UNE an exceptional opportunity to contribute to building the resilience of our communities in real time. UNE's drop-in vaccination clinics, developed and staffed by an exceptional team of dedicated UNE Life staff, have so far delivered more than 7,000 'jabs' – a substantial contribution to regional resilience and public safety in the midst of an ever-evolving virus.



2021 Highlights

Building Resilience

By engaging with our staff, students, community, and industry partners, UNE is committed to contributing to a resilient future for the regions of the New England North West. UNE's course profile and approach to research is fiscally sustainable, aligned to market demand and need, and will balance opportunity and risk. UNE is fostering the economic and social resilience of the regions through collaborative initiatives such as the New England North West regional precinct, STEM Q.



Solar Farm Offset

49% of the academic campus electricity requirements

42% of total electricity consumption for the academic and Bellevue campuses combined

This is equivalent to over **3,700 tonnes** of carbon avoided.



Water

67% reduction in annual water consumption, compared to pre-drought avg.

Over 70,000kL non-potable water stored on-site in Lake Zot and rainwater tanks as of 31 Dec, 2021

Over 95% Sport UNE irrigation undertaken from UNE water sources, incl. Lake Zot and rainwater tanks

 Installation of additional telemetry for improved monitoring of Sport UNE irrigation

Commencement of Clark's Farm dam expansion, as irrigation source for the Toombs Pasture Technology Field Site



Wildlife

32 of 120 habitat hollows installed on main campus

Successful passive release of **70%** of the kangaroos from Deer Park



Recycling



Organic waste diversion has increased by **over 600%** since 2020

Over 145 tonnes of material diverted from landfill since implementation of new recycling service



Auctioned **238 disused assets** that were destined for disposal, including lawn mowers, furniture, tools and bicycles

Over 100 items Donated (such as stationery and car batteries) to local non-profit organisations and preschools



Cultural Heritage

Creation of a partnership with the Aboriginal community in relation to the maintenance of Mount Duval and cultural artefacts

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments completed for Clark's and Laureldale farms to document the presence of Aboriginal artefacts. Some sites will be used for education, while others will be maintained purely for preservation



UNE's Promise to Students

Your ability to study at any time, in any place, at any career point, will provide you with the flexibility to balance life and study, and future-proof your career

Entering yet another year of COVID-19, UNE was aware of the potential impact of external stressors on our students, many of whom combine career, family and community obligations with study.

With this in mind, and in conjunction with our commitment to managing the impact of university on people through an affirmative and empowered work and study environment, the Schools of Education, Psychology, Oorala and the UNE Wellness Centre collaborated on the design and delivery of principles for 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Wellbeing'. These focused on teaching approaches that support student mental health and wellbeing and draw on Universal Design

UNE's Promise to Staff

You will be part of a team that fosters innovation and builds personal and organisational resilience. We will be financially sustainable and will balance challenges, risks and opportunities

UNE's PhD Innovation (PhD.I) is a sector-first doctoral award that allows candidates to earn a doctorate linked to their industry or workplace that creates productive change without compromising on the academic rigour of a research program. It is a model of PhD study specifically designed to empower regional growth and resilience by connecting research, industry and investment.

Graduates of the UNE PhD.I program have already achieved ground-breaking industry innovation based on their

UNE's Promise to Community

Our goals for a resilient community, whether the focus is economic, environmental or social, will help inform our focus in teaching, research and university operations.

Climate change is worsening weather events, such as bushfires and drought, and rural and regional communities are, and will continue to be, disproportionately affected.

Tackling this reality head-on, UNE, Armidale Regional Council, Business New England and the local community have developed a collective vision for carbon-neutrality for the Armidale region – Project Zero30. It sets a target of making the Armidale region carbon-neutral under the Climate Active Standard, representing one of the first attempts in Australia to tackle carbon-neutrality as a community.

As an initial step, UNE researchers Dr Kara Tighe and Professor Neil Argent were appointed to create the first 'carbon account' for the Armidale Local Government Area (LGA). This will estimate emissions from all sectors of the LGA, including agriculture, land-use, energy, waste and transport, and form the baseline for planning for a carbon-neutral future. It is due to be completed in 2022. By 2030, some of the significant goals of the project will include having 25% of the Armidale LGA's buildings carbon-certified, bringing winter air-quality levels below the Department of Health's guidelines, and planting one million trees to offset carbon creation.

Crop pollination services and pollinator health is largely determined by climate change and unusual weather events. Insect pollinators play an integral role in the production of many food crops, influencing both quantity and quality,

for Learning, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Trauma Informed Pedagogy. At its core, this pedagogy has an aspiration to ensure UNE students experience education in a safe and accessible way.

UNE also recognised that COVID-19 would have a disproportionate impact on student progress and success. Students were supported to apply for extensions, special consideration when marking and exam deferrals. Support was also provided for withdrawal without academic penalty until the last day of the teaching period. In addition, over 300 student support bursaries of \$1,500 each were given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, low SES, and regional and remote students. TalkCampus, a 24/7 mental health and wellbeing phone app, was also made available to all UNE students to receive support any time. Over 200 students engaged through the app in 2021.

research, resulting in improved productivity and valuable new knowledge and skills that have boosted their careers.

In 2021, the UNE PhD.I team focused on establishing a business-to-business model for the PhD.I. At the local level, boutique durum wheat processor Bellata Gold Milling and ICT International, which develops remote sensing systems to monitor urban treescapes, collaborated with UNE to offer four funded positions, each worth over \$38,000 per year.

These opportunities not only support educational attainment in regional NSW but serve as an important building block in UNE's ambitious plan for a greater New England North West STEM region through STEM Q.

yet there is growing concern that the limited availability of floral and non-floral resources might be contributing to global pollinator health declines in agricultural landscapes. Associate Professor Romina Rader was awarded \$900,000 to fund a four-year research project to develop an integrated approach to pollinator resource management, with the aim of maintaining both wild pollinator health and supporting crop pollination service delivery in modified systems.

Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) is the most common heart disease found in children and young adults globally, but no specific test has yet been developed for the timely diagnosis of infections that lead to RHD. Professor Natkunam Ketheesan of UNE's School of Science and Technology was awarded \$485,134 to conduct further research into RHD. The project team has identified immune antibodies produced in RHD that can support the development of a new, cost-effective test. During this three-year project, the team will also identify the pathways that lead to heart damage.

UNE's Promise to Partners:

Our partnerships will be strengthened by our mutual connections and commitment to long-term, sustainable impact

A rare study of Aboriginal cultural burning, conducted by the Banbai nation and a team of UNE researchers, has found that the practice is as effective at reducing fuel as conventional hazard reduction burns, while being much less harmful than bushfires to native plants.

The multi-year project, conducted on Wattlebridge Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) north-east of Guyra, NSW, found that wildfire, hazard reduction and cultural burning all reduced standing fuel loads by about the same amount, but only cultural burning left a multi-age population of grevillea.

As a result, the Banbai rangers have been invited to undertake cultural burns in national parks and on private property.

On their own land, cross-cultural monitoring of the Backwater Grevillea has been extended and expanded, and will help inform the adaptive management of the IPA.

The damage caused by invasive foxes has highlighted the need for more research to protect threatened native species. Dr Deborah Bower is part of a multidisciplinary team comparing fox control strategies to improve the population viability of declining freshwater turtles. Expected outcomes of this project include a community-based conservation model that prevents turtle extinctions in south-eastern Australia at considerable cost savings. Significant benefits include improved management of the impacts of invasive species, and the restoration of ecosystem services provided by the freshwater turtle, which helps to maintain water quality through its scavenging.

UNE's Promise to Alumni

You will be able to engage with us at any time, in any place, at any career point, for the opportunity and flexibility to continually future-proof your career.

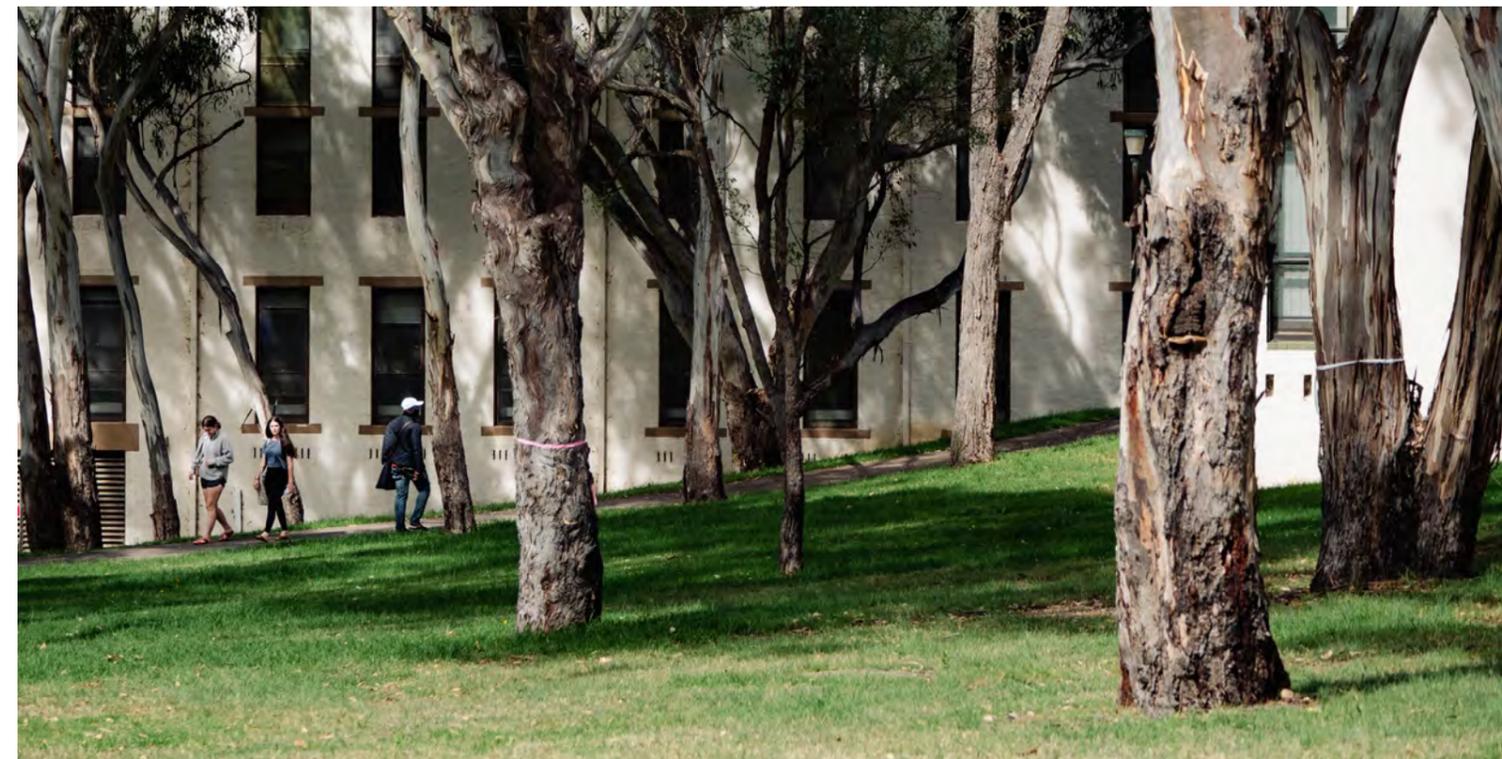
Australian agriculture is employing a growing number of high-calibre professionals, and its workforce may be larger than previously thought.

UNE Business School research in 2021 has identified the extent of this influential but until now hidden professional subset of farming. Researchers believe an extra 6,000 people are today employed in the professional agricultural services sector, which boosts Australia's 228,370-strong agricultural workforce by 2.6%.

As agriculture has become increasingly more complex, global and competitive, the profile of employment is shifting. Producers struggling with rapid technological innovation, climate change and new consumer expectations have become more dependent on farm consultants and market analysts, legal and financial experts, scientists and managers as they pursue economies of scale and efficiency improvements. Identifying the size of this professional workforce has major

implications for educators and communities dedicated to regional development, and UNE is responding by providing prospective students and alumni from our traditional agriculture-based offerings with career-enhancing skills via our traditional postgraduate awards and bespoke offerings.

UNE Bespoke provides the freedom to study two, three or four units assembled into a personalised short university course supported by UNE's Concierge team. The team works exclusively to personalise each student's learning journey and acts as an important sounding board for testing possible variations to study plans based on scenario-focused career planning. Through this process, students are given the autonomy to use their existing knowledge, skills and experience to design a learning program to suit their individual needs.



UNE Council

Appointment	Council Members	Member Since	Current Term Elected	Current Term Expiry Date	Qualifications
Official Members	Chancellor, Mr James Harris (Appointed)	11/1994	20/11/2019	19/11/2024	-HonDUniv (UNE), FRSN
	Vice-Chancellor, Professor Brigid Heywood (Appointed)	15/07/2019	15/07/2019		BSc (Hons) (Manchester), PhD (Liverpool)
	Chair Academic Board, Associate Professor Robyn Bartel (Elected)	23/02/2021	23/02/2021	22/02/2023	PhD (University of Melbourne), Master of Higher Education (ANU), BSc (H1)/LLB (ANU)
Minister Appointed	Ms Meredith Symons	17/08/2014	17/08/2019	16/08/2023	BFA (UNE), FCA
	Mr David van Aanholt	17/08/2016	17/08/2018	16/08/2022	B.Bus (Land Economy) (WS), GradDipMgt, MBA (UNE), FAPI
UNE Council Appointed	Deputy Chancellor, Ms Janette McClelland AM	02/10/2014 ³	01/01/2018	31/12/2021	BA (Hons) (Syd), BLegS (Macq), FACEL, FAIM, FAICD
	Mr Russell Evans	17/08/2016	17/08/2018	16/08/2022	BBus (Charles Sturt), MBA (UNE), GAICD
	Mr Phil Hess	25/11/2020	25/11/2020	24/11/2023	BALaw (Hons) (UNE), LLM Cantab, DipEd (UNE) FGAI
	Ms Rosemary Leamon	17/08/2014	17/08/2019	17/06/2021	BFA (UNE), CA, GAICD
	Mr Colin Murray	01/09/2021	01/09/2021	31/08/2023	
	Ms Patricia (Anne) Myers	01/12/2016	17/08/2019	31/03/2021	MBA (AGSM), GAICD
	Ms Megan Aitken	28/02/2022	28/02/2022	27/02/2024	Communications (UTS), BBA (UTS)
Academic (Elected)	Dr Melanie Fillios	21/08/2020	21/08/2020	20/08/2022	BA (BSU), MA, PhD (UMN)
Non-Academic (Elected)	Mrs Jane Schmude	21/08/2020	21/08/2020	20/08/2022	BA (USyd), GradDipEd, GradDipCounselling (UNE)
Student (Elected)	Ms Emma Wellham	12/10/2020	12/10/2020	11/10/2022	Undertaking BMSMD

³ Ms McClelland's original term on Council was 17/08/00 to 16/08/14. Ms McClelland was reappointed to Council on 2/10/2014.

Executive Team



Vice-Chancellor and CEO
 Professor Brigid Heywood
 Biological Sciences, BSc Hons (Manchester), PhD (Liverpool)



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (interim)
 Professor Michael Wilmore
 BA (Hons) (University of Exeter), MSc (University College, London), PhD (University of London), Senior Fellow Higher Education Academy



Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
 Professor Heiko Daniel
 BSc, MSc (Hannover), PhD (UWA)



Chief Operating Officer
 Professor Peter Creamer
 BSc (Aston), PhD (Nott), CEng, FIMechE, MCFI



Director Governance and University Secretary
 Mrs Gabrielle Price⁴
 B.Comm (Griffith), GradDipAppFin, GAICD



Chief Financial Officer
 Ms Anita Taylor⁷
 BCom (UNSW), BSCI (USQ), CA, GAICD, PRIMed



Interim Chief Financial Officer
 Ms Meg McKechnie⁵
 B. Bus (Acct)(QUT), CA, GAICD



Executive Principal – Education Futures
 Professor Steven Warburton⁸
 BSc. (Hons) (Bangor), PhD (Nottingham)



Executive Principal – Brand, Partnership and Business Development
 Mr Anthony Smith⁶
 B. Bus, Dip Market Research, Dip ExportMgmt FAMI CPM



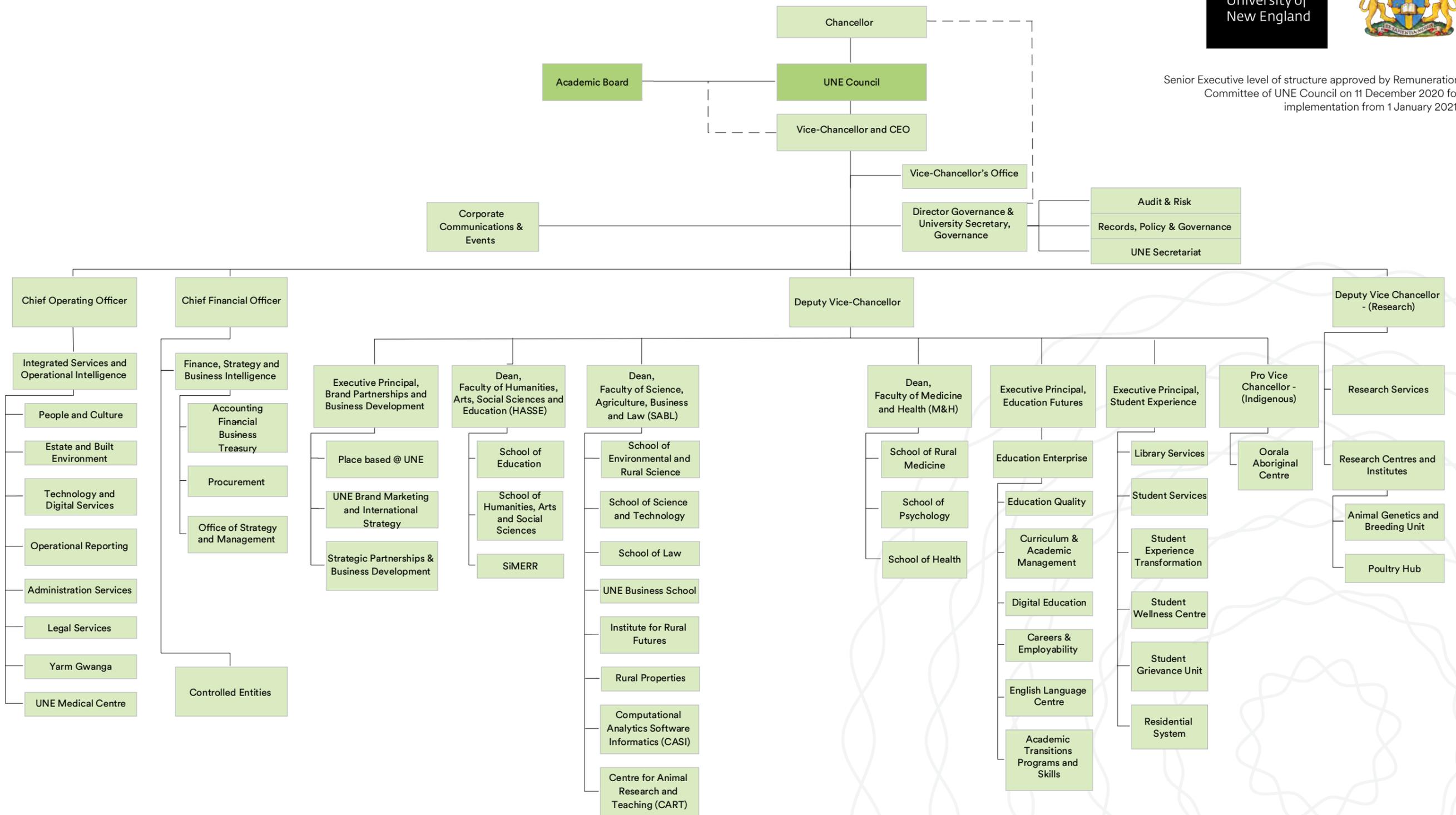
Executive Principal - Student Experience
 Dr Shelley Kinash⁹
 BA, M.Sc., PhD (University of Calgary)

⁴ Previously acting but appointed to the role in February 2021.
⁵ Commenced as interim CFO in September 2021.
⁶ Previously acting but appointed to the role in September 2021.
⁷ Occupied the role from 1 January to 3 September 2021.
⁸ Previously acting but appointed to the role in September 2021.
⁹ Appointed to role in July 2021. Ms Barb Shaw acted in the role prior.

Organisational Chart



Senior Executive level of structure approved by Remuneration Committee of UNE Council on 11 December 2020 for implementation from 1 January 2021)



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 and others 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.

Council

The UNE Council is the University's governing authority and has functions conferred upon it by the University of New England Act 1993 ('UNE Act' or '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 and Council Committees meet regularly to undertake functions provided for under the UNE Act, including to monitor UNE's performance measured against the strategic

plan, financial and risk management and compliance with the UNE Act, and other key legislative instruments relating to both the standards of delivery of academic programs and of operational and corporate functions consistent with relevant regulations. The Council receives reports from the Academic Board regarding academic assurance and retains authority for decision-making on a number of significant matters relating to academic programs and decision-making as set out in the Authorities Retained by Council Rule.

The Council seeks to make decisions that consider risk and act as stewards for UNE's ongoing provision to the communities it serves, upholds values including academic freedom and integrity, and contributes to the student experience, learning environment and interests of the University's stakeholders in a positive and transparent manner.

During 2021, Council and its Committees:

- > Oversaw the formal launch of UNE's Council-approved decadal Future Fit Strategy, following extensive consultation and planning in 2020;
- > Monitored financial performance and controls and approved the UNE Business Plan and Budget;
- > Approved the inaugural UNE Group Modern Slavery Statement;
- > Monitored outcomes from internal surveys and external governance reviews, with a focus on continuous improvement to governance practice;
- > Monitored improvements to UNE's performance reporting framework and institutional metrics, project management framework, risk management framework, move to an Enterprise Risk Management system and compliance reporting;
- > Approved a number of business cases and proposals investing for the future, including in learning management technologies, research management, student support and staff development;
- > Continued themed discussions of key operational areas both at Academic Board and Council. This involved monitoring progress of key strategic priorities under the pillars of People, Digital, Places and Sustainability, and specific projects, including relocation of the UNE Metro campus in Sydney, activation of the Tamworth campus and increased engagement with regional centres;
- > Approved updated risk guidance, and monitored improvements to risk and compliance processes;
- > Continued to review Council-related policies, making updates to policies and terms of reference for Committees as required; and
- > Monitored sector-wide emerging issues and policy changes, as well as broader legislative changes impacting UNE's operations.

In addition, Council and its Committees:

- > Continued to monitor and review UNE's response to the pandemic and the rapidly changing health orders and associated guidance;
- > Received regular updates regarding vaccination status, incidents, and the University's steps to support business continuity, manage risks to health and safety via COVID-19 safe return-to-work plans;
- > Supported and commended UNE's involvement in Australia's vaccination program, including running pop-up vaccination clinics locally, and throughout the New England and North West. This included clinics for some of our most vulnerable communities, delivered in conjunction with Armajun Health Service Aboriginal Corporation;
- > Rolled out, starting in Q4, 2021, a program of supervised on-campus Rapid Antigen Testing to support the return to campus of staff and students involved in intensive/practicum study programs. It also supported students and staff involved in practice teaching or research activities; and

- > Monitored the response to the supercell event and associated damage to the UNE Armidale Campus in October, which included the activation of UNE's Emergency Management Plan to manage the immediate crisis and response, as well as longer-term significant clean-up activities, planning for lost usable spaces, and a progressive return to 'normal' operations and remediation. The extraordinary response saw major areas of damage cordoned off to ensure safe campus and alternative working arrangements enacted within 24 hours.

UNE Council commissioned an External Review of Council in 2021. The review identified the value placed by Council on opportunities for formal and informal engagement as well as a number of areas for improvement, such as streamlining detailed reports via focused dashboards and summaries, allowing more time within meetings for considered discussion

and meeting reflection, and uplifting the governance induction for Council members. Other suggestions related to regular assurance statements on key compliance areas and a proposed review of the new risk management reporting framework.

Council Committees

UNE Council Committees play a key role in governance at UNE, supporting the functions of Council by monitoring and advising Council on those matters specified in the Committee terms of reference (which are available on the UNE website), as well as (in some cases) approving matters within the limits of delegation. The UNE Council was supported in the execution of its duties in 2021 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.

Honorary Awards

Council bestowed the following honorary awards in 2021:

Emeritus and Emerita Professor of the University of New England

- > **Professor Robert Banks (Livestock Genomics)**. For outstanding industry thought leadership, scholarship and research, and impressive contributions both to UNE and to the Australian livestock community, particularly via animal genetics and breeding work.
- > **Professor Oscar Cacho (Economics)**. In recognition of outstanding teaching and curriculum development, research leadership and contributions to academic life in the agricultural and applied economics disciplines.
- > **Professor Brian Dollery (Economics)**. In recognition of contribution to the economics discipline at UNE including but not limited to the establishment and management of the Centre for Local Government and the extensive research providing empirical analysis of local government performance.
- > **Professor Caroline Gross (Vegetation Management)**. For achievements in research and scholarship in environmental sciences including the reproductive ecology of Australian native plants and introduced species, international fieldwork in related areas, as well as service to UNE academic leadership.
- > **Professor Nick Reid (Ecosystem Management)**. In recognition of impactful research and scholarship, particularly the progress of transdisciplinary research connecting agriculture reliance, biodiversity and ecosystems as well as generous contributions to academic governance and leadership service roles at UNE.
- > **Professor Mahinda Siriwardana (Economics)**. For internationally renowned research contributions in the field of Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) modelling for the analysis of economic policies past, present and future, as well significant impact on the future of research in this area through quality supervision of PhD student candidates.

Honorary Doctorate

- > **Robert Finch**, Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa (HonDLitt). For service to UNE and particularly university leadership and governance and fiduciary oversight and monitoring.
- > **Colin Ahoy**, Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa (HonDLitt). In recognition of lifelong contributions to the Armidale Aboriginal community and the broader New England region, and ongoing commitment to UNE, the Oorala Aboriginal Centre, and Aboriginal education and employment.

- > **Gary Smith**, Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa (HonDLitt). In recognition of distinguished service to UNE Partnerships and to the professionalisation of the field of medical practice management over the past 30 years.
- > **Maxwell Schroder**, Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa (HonDLitt). In recognition of exemplary support for student success and opportunities in education, particularly for Aboriginal students.
- > **Jennifer Bott AO**, Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa (HonDLitt). In recognition of a distinguished career as an Australian arts leader and administrator, arts advocate, board volunteer, fundraiser, promoter of higher education access and inclusion.

Distinguished Service Medal

- > **Ms Yves Byers**, Distinguished Service Medal. For contribution to UNE’s reputation and achievements in the MidCoast area, and dedication to increasing the educational opportunities for communities in that region. Academic Board

Academic Board

The Academic Board, established by the University of New England Act 1993 (Section 15), 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 (reg 21 University of New England By-law 2005).

programs in accordance with internal standards and the Higher Education Standards Framework, and to advise the Vice-Chancellor and Council. The Board reviews and is responsible for oversight of the governance frameworks and policy instruments that guide the scholarly 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 that the University offers.

A key role of the Academic Board is to define, monitor the quality and assure integrity of the University’s academic

During 2021, the Academic Board and its Committees:

- > Oversaw the University’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and consideration of appropriate student support and progress, continuation of research activity and opportunities for continuous improvement;
- > Promoted discussion and awareness of academic freedom via the establishment of an Academic Freedom Working Group of Academic Board and review of UNE’s Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Statement and associated guidelines;
- > Oversaw development of UNE’s course review schedule and guidelines for 2021, monitored the implementation of the course review schedule and considered significant course proposals;
- > Monitored the quality review of a number of key third-party arrangements and actions recommended following the review;
- > Reviewed Academic Quality Assurance guidance and amendments to the Course Design Framework to support the quality of research, teaching and learning activities, and student experience;
- > Endorsed new undergraduate certificates consistent with Commonwealth initiatives;
- > Provided guidance regarding requirements for significant research, curriculum innovation and learning management systems projects;
- > Monitored and provided feedback on proposed changes to UNE’s future academic calendar;
- > Continued 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 identified and made recommendations regarding areas of focus for improvement and future change;
- > Monitored and advised on ongoing work in progress, areas of academic risk, academic quality, governance capacity-building, academic freedom, institutional benchmarks, the reform of academic policies, and executed Board and Committee surveys and reviews of Terms of Reference, with the aim of improving academic governance; and
- > Reviewed, proposed and implemented improved reporting to Board and Council in terms of key activities and contribution of activities to UNE’s compliance with external and internal standards.

Compliance with Voluntary Code of Best Practice

UNE complied with the Voluntary Code of Best Practice for the Governance of Australian Universities in 2021.

The University has identified opportunities to improve reporting and oversight for grievances, explicit annual standards assurance, and the development of an online governance induction with context relevant to multiple stakeholder groups that will be progressed in 2022.

Ombudsman Recommendations

There were no recommendations in reports from the Ombudsman that required action by the University or the Council in 2021. UNE did receive a referral from the Ombudsman of a matter that was appropriate for UNE to respond to directly.

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Attestation Statement

UNE is substantially aligned with the Model Code though separates its statement and guidelines.

The University Council is satisfied that the University:

1. Has a policy that upholds freedom of speech and academic freedom as paramount values, as required under the Model Code.
2. Maintains an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected.
3. Commits to addressing questions in relation to the management of freedom of speech and academic freedom issues promptly, actively and in good faith.
4. In addition, that:

- > Key policies include UNE’s Code of Conduct, Freedom of Speech Principles and Academic Freedom Statement, and Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Guidelines;
- > Academic freedom is considered in key operational design activities, supported and discussed in academic governance forums and with student consultative groups. Discussions have led to second-round amendments to policy instruments;
- > UNE’s response to Sally Walker’s review of implementation of the Model Code included the reformation of the Academic Freedom Working Group of Academic Board to inform policy review and discussions of Academic Freedom; and
- > Policy review activities and other operational controls incorporate references to academic freedom as appropriate.

Human Ethics

The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) processed 257 applications in 2021. Of these, 15 were considered greater than low risk and were thus reviewed by the full HREC. The reduced number of high-risk applications, lower than in previous years, is considered to be barriers to conducting in-person research due to COVID-19.

There was a notable rise in applications received in April (167 applications) due to an increase in applications from Psychology Honours students related to student research projects.

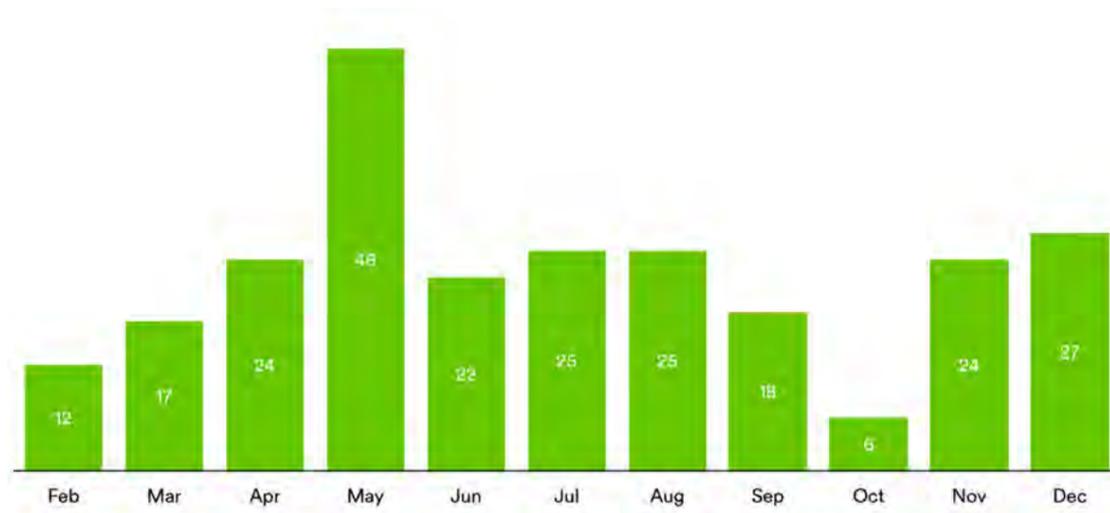
HREC 2021: Applications received



2021 Applications Approved

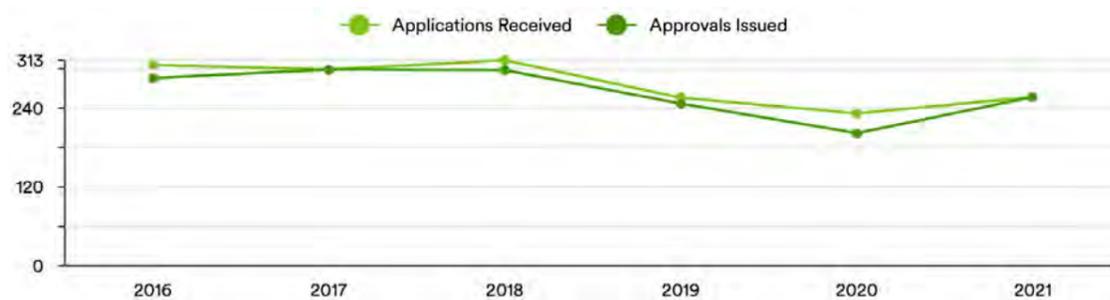
The Research Ethics Officer processed 257 approvals in 2021. Of these, 16 were applications that had been assessed in 2020 that were subsequently approved in the first quarter of 2021. Of the 257 applications received in 2021, 241 were approved, seven were withdrawn, five were cancelled, three are awaiting resubmission and one was rejected. All applications for 2021 have been accounted for.

HREC 2021: Applications approved



HREC Overview 2016–2021: Applications received and approvals issued

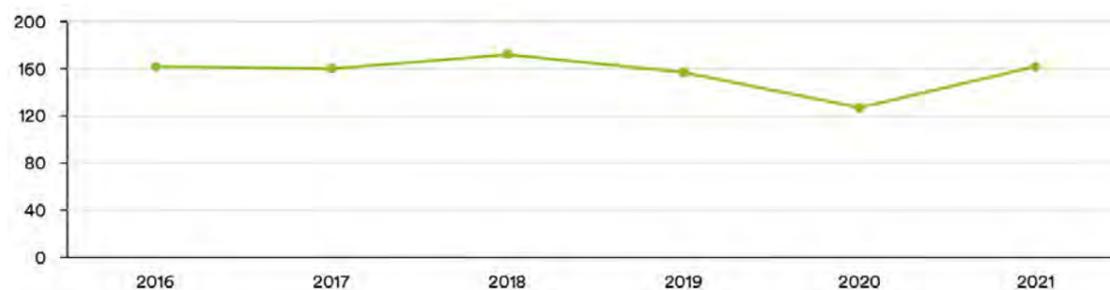
There appear to be no significant trends in the number of applications received since 2016 outside the assumed implications of COVID-19 in 2020. The Committee did note a significant shift to online research mechanisms, such as online surveys and interviews, to accommodate COVID-19 conditions.



Annual Overview 2016–2021: Variations

The number of variations received annually directly correlates with the number of applications received. The Committee is currently processing a high number of variations directly related to COVID-19, namely time extensions and procedure changes (changing to online research mechanisms).

HREC Overview 2016–2021: Variations



Animal Ethics

External Review

In 2021, Omni Advisory conducted an independent external review of animal research at UNE. The University’s response to the review was submitted on 20 September. The University was commended for its responses to the non-compliance issues and the recommendations outlined in the review.

2021 Applications

The Animal Ethics Committee (AEC) processed 134 applications in 2021. This is an increase of 14 applications on 2020.

Of the 134 applications submitted for review, 122 were approved, four were withdrawn, two were abandoned, 23 required resubmissions, two were rejected and four are pending approval. All applications for 2021 have been accounted for.

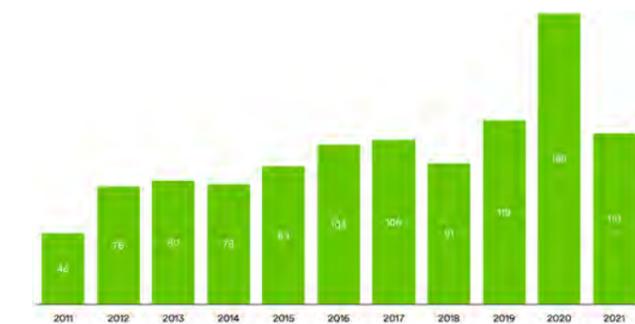
Animal Ethics: 2021 Applications



Animal Ethics Overview 2011–2021: Variations

The number of variations declined dramatically in 2021 compared to 2020, when a larger than normal number of variations were submitted due to COVID-19. In 2021, the number of variations reverted to normal as researchers factored COVID-19 conditions into their research designs.

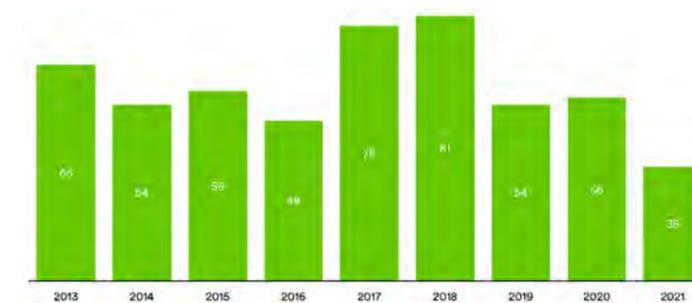
Animal Ethics Overview 2011–2021: Variations



Animal Ethics Training

Training numbers in 2021 were considerably down on previous years. This is because experienced researchers have undertaken training in previous years and only new researchers to UNE (mainly students) required it. Researchers are required to undertake training every five years, so we expect to see a steady decline before numbers again increase from 2023–2025.

Number of researchers trained: 2013–2021



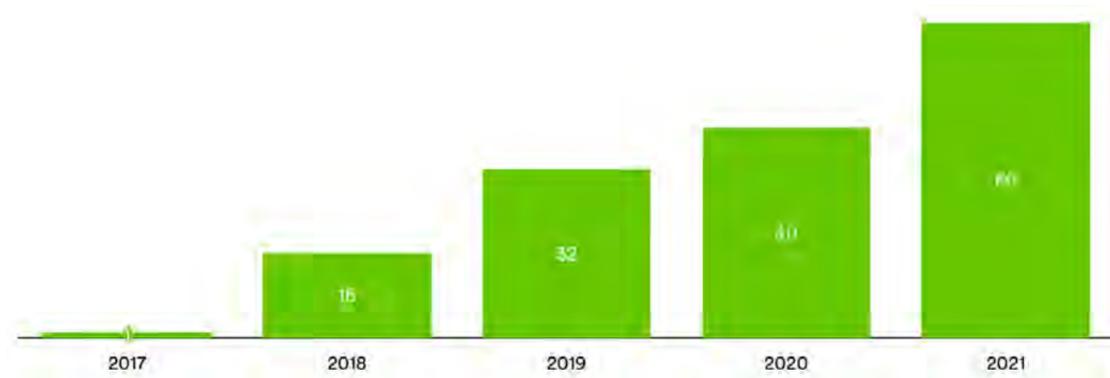
Unexpected Adverse Events, Complaints or Breaches

There was an increase in Unexpected Adverse Events (UAE) reports submitted to the AEC in 2021 compared to previous years.

This was not necessarily due to an increase in UAEs but courtesy of outreach conducted by the AEC on what constitutes an UAE and the requirements of researchers to submit reports to the AEC.

In 2021, there were three breaches and one non-official complaint. These were all dealt with by the AEC as per policy.

AEC Adverse Events: 2017-2021



Research Integrity

The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) sets out the responsibilities for an institution.

The UNE Code of Conduct for Research Rule sets out UNE’s institutional response and is supported by guidelines that are regularly updated when the NHMRC or other bodies make additions to the code and national guidelines.

The Director Research Services is the UNE Designated Officer for most matters, with a staffing complement focused on management of research-related complaints, training and procedural updates.

Research integrity complaints: 2019-2021

	2019	2020	2021
Complaints received	12	7	2
Proceeded to preliminary assessment	9	3	1

2021 achievements:

- > Final drafts of modules for the Research Integrity Training Package for Researchers, Supervisors and HDR students were completed and the Research Integrity Advisors’ Handbook was revised and reissued;
- > All templates and checklists for complaints were revised and adopted;
- > The UNE Integrity website was updated, including a new design and content;
- > The UNE HDR Student Conduct Policy was reviewed and updated; and
- > A working party was established to revise the Draft UNE Authorship Policy.

Cybersecurity Policy Attestation

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

Governance structures are in place to manage the cybersecurity maturity and initiatives introduced at the University while risks to its information and systems are being assessed in a large, University-wide program of work. Known risks are managed.

UNE has a current cyber incident response plan that was 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), which is aligned with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework. The University is also implementing a UNE Cyber Security Framework¹⁰, which is a priority in our program of works.

UNE did the following in 2021 to continuously improve the management of cybersecurity governance and resilience:

- > Established a Security Council, which meets quarterly, to drive ownership and

¹⁰ NIST Cybersecurity Framework: A National Institute of Standards and Technology framework of standards, guidelines and best practices to manage cybersecurity risk.

governance of information security at the senior leadership level;

- > Undertook a cybersecurity program of work to improve maturity and resilience, in alignment with the NIST cybersecurity framework;
- > Implemented a Security Operations Centre to detect and respond to cybersecurity incidents and improve reporting;
- > Worked with the Joint Cyber Security Centre (JCSC), an initiative of the Australian Government Signals Directorate and the CAUDIT¹¹ Cyber Security Community of Practice, to understand and implement the SLACI¹² Act (2021) and SLACIP¹³ Bill (2022);
- > Began implementing a Multi-Factor Authentication solution that will significantly reduce the risk of compromised user accounts, as well as providing secure logons from new user devices or locations; and
- > Established a Data Governance committee to create a Register of Critical Infrastructure and Information Assets.

This attestation covers the following agencies: University of New England

Angie Hendrick
Chief Information Officer

Risk Management

UNE supported a positive risk culture, risk awareness and understanding of risk appetite in 2021 through:

- > Focused discussion of risk, both at management committee and governance levels, including risk aligned to academic quality to inform decision-making, and actions to mitigate key risks;
- > A review of key strategic risks aligned with UNE’s new Future Fit Strategy;
- > Risk workshops with Council members and management, to support discussion of key operational risks identified as part of business planning;
- > Regular updates regarding external or emerging risks, including those arising as a result of changes to government policy, regulatory requirements, sector and environmental factors;
- > Approval of new, simplified Risk Management Guidelines, consistent with the ISO 31000 standard; and
- > Monitoring of the migration of risk management to an Enterprise Risk Management approach.

Risk Attestation

Internal Audit and Risk Management Attestation Statement for the 2021 Financial Year for the University of New England

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 [TPP 20-08], specifically:

Note: The Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy for the General Government Sector is a Treasurer’s Direction issued under section 3.1 of the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 (GSF Act). Section 3.3 of the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 (GSF Act) provides that Directions issued under section 3.1 shall not apply to universities, other than for the purposes of provisions of Divisions 7.2 and 7.3 (financial and annual reporting) that are applicable to universities and their controlled entities.

Risk Management Framework

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1.1 The Accountable Authority is ultimately responsible and accountable for the risk management in the agency.
Compliant</p> <p>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</p> <p>Internal Audit Function</p> <p>2.1 The Accountable Authority shall establish and maintain an internal audit function that is appropriate for the agency</p> | <p>and fit for purpose.
Compliant</p> <p>2.2 The Accountable Authority shall ensure the internal audit function operates consistent with the International Standards for Professional Practice for Internal Auditing.
Compliant</p> <p>2.3 The Accountable Authority shall ensure the agency has an Internal Audit Charter that is consistent with the content of the ‘model charter’.
In Transition</p> <p>Audit and Risk Committee</p> |
|--|--|

¹¹ CAUDIT, Council of Australasian Universities Directors of Information Technology.
¹² SLACI, Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Act 2021.
¹³ SLACIP, Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure Protection) Bill 2022.

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'.

In Transition

Note: The University considers the model charter when each charter is due for review and considers each 'model charter' as part of its review.

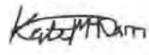
Membership

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, David van Aanholt, 7 December 2016 – 31 December 2022
- > Independent Member 2, Phil Hess, 25 November 2020 – 31 December 2022
- > Independent Member 3, Jon James, 30 September 2021 – 29 September 2023



Professor Brigid Heywood
Vice-Chancellor and CEO



Agency Contact Officer
Kate McNarn
Head of Internal Audit



Risk and Compliance Officer
Gabrielle Price
Director Governance & University Secretary

Legal Change

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

Amendments to the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (Cth)

The *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (Cth)* (the Act) governs national security risks of sabotage, espionage and coercion posed by foreign involvement in Australia's critical infrastructure. The *Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Act 2021 (Cth)* expands the application of the Act to a broader range of organisations responsible for critical infrastructure assets. Importantly, certain obligations under the Act will apply to the higher education and research sector.

The legislation also introduces mandatory reporting obligations in relation to cyber incidents, which may require organisations responsible for critical infrastructure assets to report critical and other cybersecurity incidents to the regulator. Organisations may also be required to provide information to the Government's Register of Critical Infrastructure Assets, which is managed by the Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre. The Act also provides for government assistance and intervention measures in certain circumstances.

Amendments to the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

The *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* has been amended to change workplace entitlements and obligations for casual employees. The Act introduced a new definition of "casual employee". A person is a casual employee if they accept a job offer from an employer knowing that there is no firm advance commitment to ongoing work with an agreed pattern of work.

The Act also introduces the requirement for employers to give new casual employees a Casual Employment Information Statement before, or as soon as possible after, the employee commences in a new role. In addition, the National Employment Standards now also include a pathway for casual employees to become full-time or part-time (permanent) in some circumstances (casual conversion).

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) establishes the standards that a provider must maintain to be registered to operate as a higher education provider in Australia. The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 has replaced the 2015 Threshold Standards.

Part B of the Standards (Criteria for Higher Education Providers) has been comprehensively amended to incorporate the recommendations from the 2019 review of the Provider Category Standards. Most significantly, the Standards will introduce four new provider categories (Australian University, Overseas University, University College and Institute of Higher Education), which have replaced the six previous provider categories.

Part A of the Standards (Standards for Higher Education) includes a number of amendments, such as the requirement for higher education providers' governing bodies to take steps to develop and maintain an institutional environment in which freedom of speech and academic freedom are upheld and protected (Standard 6.1.4).

Consumer Response

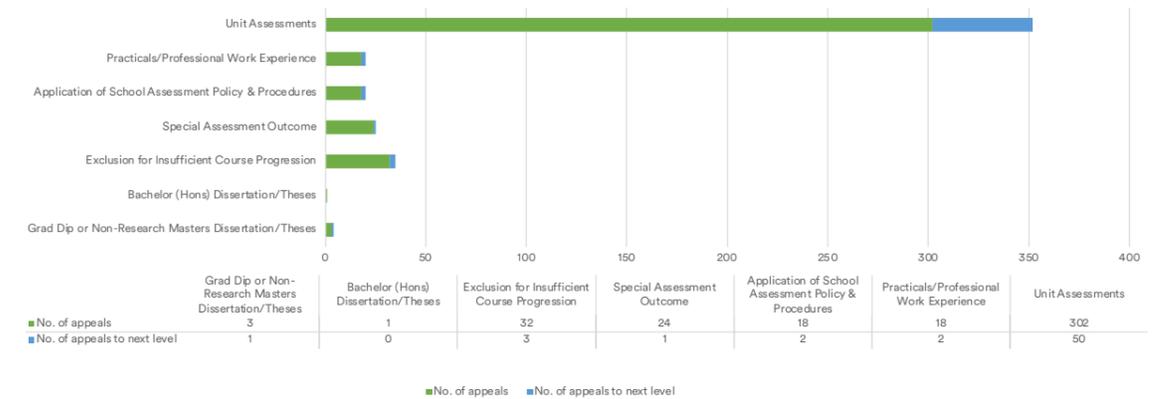
Academic Assessment Appeals

The Student Grievance Unit (SGU) processed 398 Academic Assessment Appeals in 2021, compared to 385 in 2020. Academic Assessment Appeals regarding unit assessments dominated at both the first appeal (Unit Coordinator) and second appeal levels (beyond Unit Coordinator), constituting 76% of all appeals received. This is lower than 2020, when 82% of appeals related to unit assessments.

To appeal a unit assessment, the student must present a case demonstrating how the original marking was inconsistent with the requirements of the Unit Guide or Outline. In total, 8% of appeal applications were related to exclusion for insufficient course progress, up from 4.7% in 2020, while 6% of the appeal applications were for special assessment outcomes, compared to 5.5% in 2020.

Where appeals disregarded the criteria or contained offensive/inappropriate content, students were guided and offered the opportunity to review their appeal prior to processing. Outcomes are referred back to the appropriate business units, who communicate it to the student.

Academic Assessment Appeals: 2021

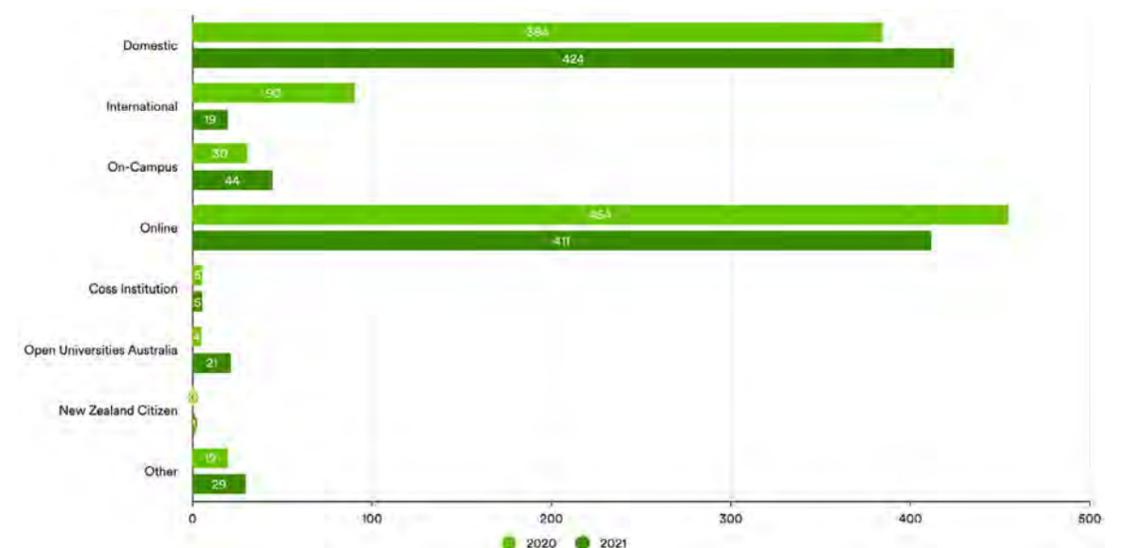


Complaints

The Student Grievance Unit (SGU) received 494 grievances in 2021, of which 192 contained multiple issues. A total of seven complaints were received through the University's confidential reporting system, Grapevine. The number of recorded complaints decreased by 1.5% from 2020 to 2021, however it should be noted that the policy changed in 2021, requiring exam misconduct complaints to be reported to and managed within the Schools. In 2020, the SGU recorded 148 exam misconduct complaints.

In 2021, the estimated average completion time for a complaint was 15 days, excluding public holidays or University closure days. Completion times are highly variable and dependent upon a number of factors. On average, most complaints are completed in a timely manner, however more complex matters, such as student behavioural matters, may take longer. While the Student Behavioural Misconduct Rule stipulates adherence to specific timeframes, this can be extended due to exams, holidays and the availability of decision-makers.

Complaints: Student Cohort, 2021

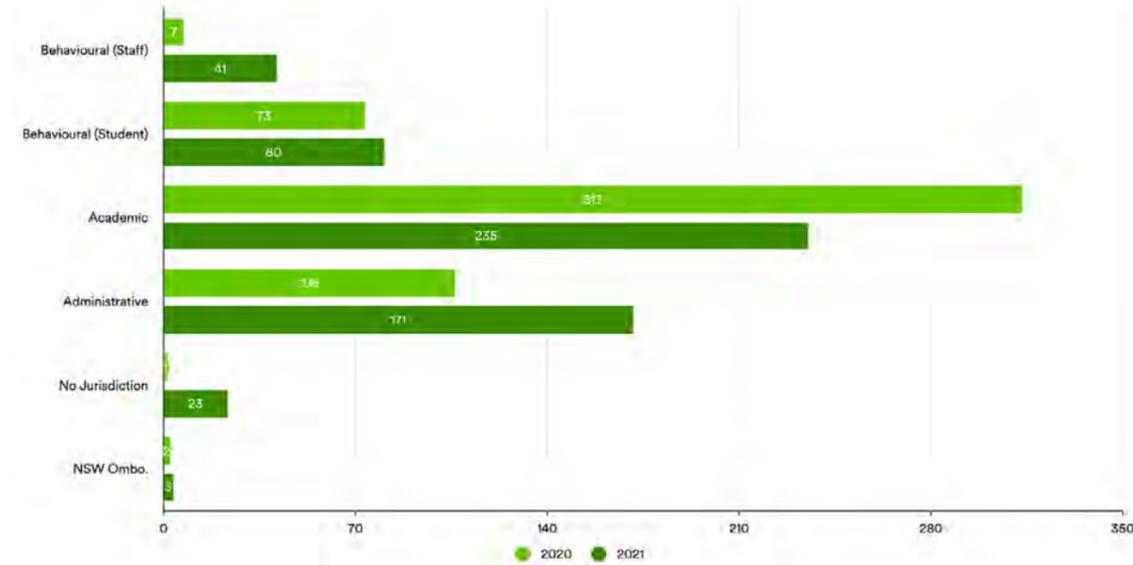


In 2021, the majority of complaints received by SGU were from domestic students studying online, which is consistent with 2020. A decline in the number of complaints from online students and international students may be attributed to the extra challenges and complications brought about by COVID-19 restrictions, which included continued study online and isolation, especially for international students. Increased confidence in the capabilities of the University and among

students completing online study may also have contributed to the decrease, as reflected in the graph above.

COVID-19 restrictions further impacted domestic students' ability to attend mandatory intensive schools and participate in placements/practicums. This, as well as delivery flexibility and perceived teaching standards, may also have contributed to the increase in the number of domestic students raising complaints.

Main categories of complaint: 2021



Complaints in 2021 were multi-faceted and of increasing complexity. The majority were academic in nature (48%), followed by administrative complaints (34%) and behavioural misconduct complaints (24%). There was a substantial increase in academic-related complaints from 155 (excluding exam academic misconduct) in 2020, to 235 in 2021. This increase may reflect the struggles students faced in relation to the constantly evolving COVID-19 situation and the significant disruptions to family life, work life and study.

Assessment, exams, results and feedback were the primary areas of concern for students in the academic grouping, followed by, and often incorporating, unit content, information and intensive schools with teaching standards/supervision.

There was a notable increase in the staff behavioural subcategory. This category is often reported in connection

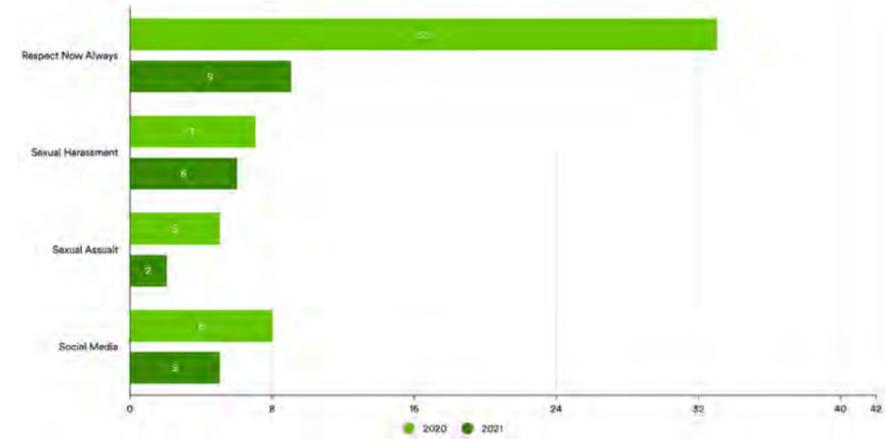
with teaching standards, assessments and unit content, and includes comment regarding the lecturer.

Administrative issues arose predominantly within the areas of student services, with increases within student enrolment and progression, and fees, charges and remissions.

The majority of student services complaints centred on courses and studies, including enrolment, waivers for prerequisites to enable entry to units, and course progression. An accumulation of inquiries at the commencement of trimesters, such as AskUNE requests and online inquiries, produced protracted waiting times and delayed responses. In turn, this compounded student concerns in areas such as enrolment, study progression, course admission, fees, graduation and study commencement.

Safer Communities

2021 Complaints



2021 saw a significant reduction in the number of Respect Now Always (RNA)-related complaints. RNA matters are issues that do not fall within the other more specific categories, however are related to safer communities (such as misogynistic content in unit Moodle postings, and inappropriate comments regarding use of transgender pronouns they/them).

The significant decrease may be influenced by the substantial reduction in students residing in colleges as a direct result of COVID restrictions and safety measures, such as the cessation of social gatherings in the colleges and broader community.

The number of student behavioural conduct matters increased from 106 in 2020, to 119 in 2021. This may be attributed to several factors, including enhanced awareness of reporting avenues and increased confidence to report, together with the heightened strain placed upon students and staff due to COVID-19.

The majority of behavioural misconduct matters related to inappropriate communication (students and staff).

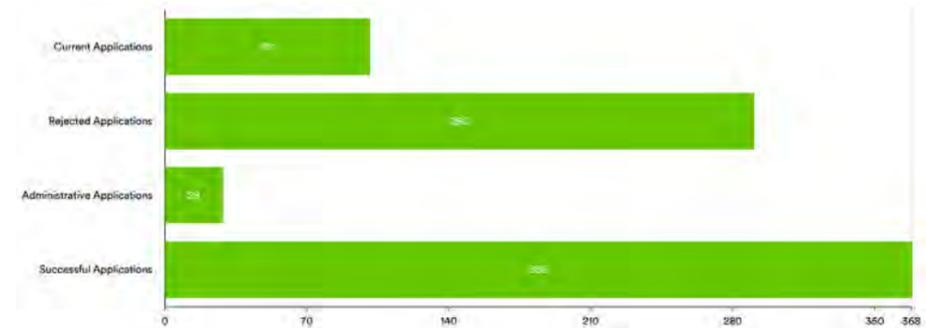
Remission of Fees

A student can apply for a remission of fees if their circumstances meet the legislated threshold, e.g. they have failed the unit of study and have made the application in writing within 12 months, and can demonstrate they meet the three criteria outlined below.

A total of 787 Remission of Fee (RoF) applications were received in 2021, of which 101 are currently being processed. The majority were for single units (67%), while 32% of applications were for multiple units, often encompassing four units in a trimester (full-time study load).

1. are beyond the student's control; and
2. do not make their full impact on the person until on or after the census date for the unit of study in question; and
3. make it impracticable for the person to complete the requirements for the unit during the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake the unit.

Remission of Fees: 2021



While the process is currently guided by legislation, UNE is working to develop a procedure that will guide administration of RoF applications within the institution in 2022.



Public Interest Disclosure

During 2021, 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.

Number of PIDs received and completed

Particulars	1 January – 31 December 2021
Number of public officials who made PIDs	4
Categorisation of PIDs received:	
Corrupt conduct	4
Maladministration	0
Serious and substantial waste	0
Government information contravention	0
Number of PIDs finalised	4

Privacy (PPIPA)

In 2021, UNE introduced, in support of an active privacy culture and the implementation of its Privacy Management Plan, a number of tools to inform the University's response to data breach incidents. The Data Breach Response Plan, Management Process and Investigation Checklist, are

consistent with Cyber Security Breach and Mandatory Notification Data Breach (MNDB) reporting requirements and support the improved coordination of responses to data issues across the organisation.

Further, in 2021 UNE:

- > Reported a number of data breach matters to the NSW Information and Privacy Commissioner. These included privacy issues related to a cybersecurity issue (unauthorised system access), incidents of unauthorised sharing of personal information (user error), and concerns regarding online examinations. Security protocols were added to systems to mitigate further issues, and process review and training support was made available to staff to help prevent future privacy instances resulting from user error;
- > Improved organisational governance through an enterprise management approach to data assets and management of personal information throughout the data lifecycle, including the security, retention and destruction of personal information;
- > Reviewed collection notices, to help improve transparency and better communicate UNE practices in relation to the management of the personal information of staff, students and community members. The collection of information regarding COVID-19 was limited to non-personal information;
- > Included updated privacy requirements in Schedule 1 of the UNE Tender Pack, ensuring privacy compliance can be further streamlined in the contractual process. This will hopefully achieve increased oversight of personal information held by third-party vendors and improve data breach responses; and
- > Participated in NSW Privacy Awareness Week in May, engaging in university-wide activities to improve privacy awareness and progress towards a mature, privacy-by-design approach.

Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

Details of the UNE'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:

UNE'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,

UNE has reviewed this program by identifying and discussing possible new Open Access Information at the senior level.

Total number of access applications received during the year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications): **15 applications were received in 2021**

Total number of access applications received that the 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 to be included in annual report.

Financial Summary

Budget

UNE Budget and Structural Surplus

Comparison to Budget	2021	2021	2022
Parent Entity	Budget	Actual	Budget
University of New England	\$M	\$M	\$M
Teaching income	238.99	236.81	238.59
Research and grant income	93.53	87.50	78.41
Other income	24.74	26.29	24.43
Total income	357.26	350.60	341.43
Employee related expenses	190.22	180.09	193.17
Non-payroll expenses ¹⁴	122.24	123.47	149.92
Underlying result	44.80	47.04	-1.67
Investment income	0.01	8.59	3.84
Interest expense	1.00	0.54	0.66
Depreciation and amortisation	28.24	25.11	26.00
Operating profit	15.57	29.98	-24.49
One-off income ¹⁵	0.00	82.21	7.61
One-off expenditure	0.00	12.79	1.08
Operating result attributable to members of the University of New England	15.57	99.40	-17.96

¹⁴ Strategic Investment spend included in non-payroll expenses, not classified as a one-off

¹⁵ One-off income includes a fully franked dividend of \$75.9 million received from EAL Limited. The dividend was paid via an in-specie distribution of IDP Education Limited shares

Funds granted to non-governmental community organisations

Non-Government Community Group	Sponsorship	Total	Event Description	Category
Ridley Innovation	25,000	25,000	Ridley Agriproducts Sponsorship PoultryHub Australia	Research
Australasian Veterinary Poultry Association Ltd	318	318	AVPA Virtual Science AVPA Sponsorship	Student
Jackie Kyte Conference & Events	1,500	1,500	Sponsorship of the Australian Association of Animal Science Conference in Cairns	Research
University of Sydney	3,636	3,636	University of Sydney APSS Sponsorship – Chook Chat Shack	Student
Poultry Information Exchange	364	364	Sponsorship for WP Triparty – CCS Sponsorship of WPSA/PIX	Research
Ooralta Aboriginal Youth Camps	768	768	T-shirt for Sponsorship	Sports
Ahoy Descendants RLFC	2,000	2,000	Sponsorship to Ahoy Descendants RLFC to take part in the NSW Aboriginal Rugby League	Sports
Northern Nations Foot Club	2,500	2,500	Sponsorship to Northern National Football Club to take part in the National Indigenous Football Championship held in Nowra NSW from 4-6 November 2021	Sports
Tingha Warriors Rugby League Club	1,000	1,000	Sponsorship to participate in the Inverell Highland Rugby 7s in March 2022	Sports
Crawford Fund Ltd	5,100	5,100	Sponsorship of the 2021 Crawford Fund Annual Conference	Research
New England Regional Art Museum Limited	30,000	30,000	NERAM Sponsorship for 2021-2022	Community
Parramatta City Chamber of Commerce	4,091	4,091	Sponsorship Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence 2021	Community
Total	76,277	76,277		

Payment of Accounts

Accounts Payable performance analysis for 2021

a) Detailing performance in paying accounts for each quarter from due dates (from Jan 2021)¹⁶

Quarter	Payment Completed (\$M)						Payment Outstanding (\$M)					
	Current	1-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	90+ days	Total	Current	1-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	90+ days	Total
1	22	3	1	0	0	27	22	3	1	0	0	27
2	22	7	1	0	0	31	22	7	1	0	0	31
3	24	4	1	0	0	29	24	4	1	0	0	29
4	28	10	0	0	0	38	28	10	0	0	0	38
Total 2021:	96	24	3	1	1	124	96	24	3	1	1	124

¹⁶ Note that table (a) includes invoices which have been recorded in the current year ledger (AP2021) and the due dates for payment starts from January 2021. Table (c) includes the payments for invoices that were recorded into the prior year ledger (AP2020) and current year ledger (AP2021), however the payment was made in 2021

Actual

Current	Payment Completed (\$M)					Total	Current	Payment Outstanding (\$M)					Total
	1-30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	90+ days	1-30 days			31-60 days	61-90 days	90+ days			
76%	11%	4%	2%	0%	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%		
73%	22%	3%	1%	1%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		
82%	12%	14%	1%	1%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		
71%	26%	1%	0%	0%	98%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%		
75%	19%	3%	1%	1%	98%	1.7%	0.6%	0%	0%	0%	2%		

(b) Details of accounts due or paid within each quarter (attached)

Number of accounts due for payment	9,962
Number of accounts paid on time	9,376
Actual percentage of accounts paid on time	94%
Dollar amount of accounts due for payment (\$M)	125
Dollar amount of accounts paid on time (\$M)	119
Actual percentage of accounts paid on time (based on dollar amount)	95%

c) Total dollar amount paid in quarter (includes payment for invoices recorded in previous year)¹⁷

Quarter	Current	Payment Completed (\$M)					Total
		30	60	90	90+ days		
1	24.308	1.414	0.000	0.000	0.000	25.722	
2	24.493	5.203	0.000	0.000	0.000	29.679	
3	25.180	4.949	0.000	0.000	0.000	30.129	
4	43.709	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	43.709	
Total 2020:	117.690	11.567	0.000	0.000	0.000	129.257	

No. of payments for interest on overdue accounts

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.

¹⁷ Note that table (a) includes invoices which have been recorded in the current year ledger (AP2021) and the due dates for payment starts from January 2021. Table (c) includes the payments for invoices that were recorded into the prior year ledger (AP2020) and current year ledger (AP2021), however the payment was made in 2021.

Consultants

Spend in Excess of \$50,000

Name of Consultant	Total 2021 Spend	Name of Project	Classification	Narrative
Wells Advisory Australia Pty Ltd	302,600	UNE Metro Assessment	Management Service	Wells Advisory was engaged by UNE to undertake a significant piece of market research and analysis that provided insight into the opportunities associated with UNE Metro.
Nous Group Pty Ltd	201,000	Benchmarking Leading Regional Universities, S1/S2/ NEViHN, Stage 6/Course Fees and Strategy Project	Management Service	UNE engaged Nous Group to develop a range of strategies and business plans associated with the implementation of UNE's Future Fit strategic plan. Nous delivered value for money by providing capacity and expertise across a number of projects over 2021.
Gartner Australasia Pty Ltd	160,400	Executive Programs & Core IT Research	Information Technology	UNE engaged Gartner to provide services in relation to our overall ITD strategy and capability, as well as best practice support for senior IT professionals.
Bevington Group	140,323	Administration Role Review & Process Effectiveness Review	Management Service	In 2021, UNE operationalised a significant change in structure to its administrative and service portfolios. This undertaking focused on delivering value by reducing administrative duplication and streamlining processes. The Bevington Group undertook a number of reviews associated with UNE's structural and process changes, and provided much needed external insights and knowledge in the form of benchmarking and sector best practice.
Dianne Flett & Associates	136,000	Consultant Services Information Technology	Information Technology	As part of the implementation of Future Fit, UNE is undergoing a significant uplift in digital capability. Dianne Flett and Associates was engaged to assist with overseeing, coordinating and streamlining the delivery of project management services across Technology and Digital Services (TDS).
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu	128,758	Economic Impact Assessment	Management Service	Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu were engaged to undertake an in-depth economic impact assessment on the proposed New England North West STEM precinct (STEM Q). This assessment was required to undertake the development of the overall business plan and operational roll out of STEM Q.
Tanner Consultancy Services Pty Ltd	114,980	Project Management Consultancy Services	Management Service	Tanner Consultancy Services (TCS) was engaged to provide professional, internal audit-related consultancy services in accordance with best practice and ethical standards in internal audit and NSW public interest disclosure guidelines and consistent with Chief Audit Executive-level responsibilities as described by the Institute of Internal Auditors. TCS was accountable to the University Audit and Risk Committee for internal audit matters and will provide advice to, and engage with, the Vice-Chancellor and CEO and Senior Executive as appropriate regarding the University's internal audit controls and assurance environment.
Grand Total	1,184,061			

Less than \$50,000 spend

Classification	Total 2021 Spend	No of Consultants per category
Legal Services	57,570	2
Management Service	231,413	13
Finance & Accounting	57,863	6
Information Technology	36,194	3
Grand Total	383,039	20

Investment Performance

The return on investment across UNE's portfolio for 2021 was 32.50%.

This comprised:

- > a weighted average return of 0.31% on UNE's cash and cash-like investments, which compared favourably to the benchmark return of the comparable NSW Treasury Corporation investment fund – Short Term Income Fund – of 0.03%; and
- > a return of 103.46% on UNE's shareholdings, which resulted largely from the restructuring of a large unlisted shareholding into an ASX-listed shareholding. This involved a very large in-specie, fully franked dividend and significant subsequent growth in the value of the ASX shares acquired.

The investment portfolios of the Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI) and the UNE Foundation (UNEF) also outperformed the comparable NSW Treasury fund benchmarks (shown in brackets) as follows: ABRI Long Term 13.40% (5.76%); ABRI Short Term 0.80% (0.03%) and UNEF 12.20% (5.76%) respectively.

In Q4, UNE appointed JB Were as adviser to all portfolios, with UNE, UNE Foundation and ABRI portfolios transitioning just prior to 31 December 2021.

Liability management performance

UNE took out a \$40 million loan from Westpac Banking Corporation in December 2020. The term of the loan is five years. Interest is payable quarterly in arrears. Loan repayments commence in June 2022.

Insurance

UNE renewed the primary areas of its insurance program through Unimutual Limited, Austbrokers and iCare NSW. Areas included property protection, general and product liability, professional indemnity, malpractice, management liability (including directors and officers), clinical trials and cyber (Unimutual), contractors' asbestos liability, business travel, student group personal accident, comprehensive motor vehicle (Austbrokers) and workers' compensation (iCare NSW).

Premiums for property and liability protections increased by an average of 10%, driven by market conditions. Just prior to the renewal of property protections, a tornado caused damage to the Armidale campus. The claim has not been finalised. The cost of general insurance decreased by 14%, reflecting reduced accident and travel-related claims given COVID-19 travel restrictions. Workers' compensation cover has been renewed, with an increase in premium of 27%.

Overseas travel

During 2021 three staff travelled overseas. Two were Fulbright Scholars and travelled to the United States to undertake research activities. The third travelled to Canada to undertake a Special Studies Program.

Land Disposal

The University did not dispose of any land during the financial year 1 January - 31 December 2021.

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 in 2019: 2	Expected to be resolved in 2021 Management Letter: 1
2020 Management letter	April 2021	3 (1 partial repeat issue) 1 recommendation not accepted	2019 recommendations closed in 2020: 4 2020 recommendations not accepted: 1	In progress but outstanding at 31 December 2020: 3 (all due to be completed in 2021)
Informational Systems audit				
2021 Management Letter	February 2022	9 (3 repeat issues, 2 partial repeat issues)	2020 recommendations closed in 2021: 0	8 (all due to be actioned in 2022) 1 issue relates to unspecified future situations

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 2020 and 2021 audit recommendations above would normally only be closed following the receipt of the 2021 management letter in April 2022. As at the date of printing of the 2021 Annual Report the 2021 NSW Audit Office Management Letter was not finalised.



People and Culture

Staff Numbers¹⁸

Staff in Schools

	Type	Female	Male	Total
Academics	Professor (E)	14	45	59
	Associate Professor (D)	25	37	62
	Senior Lecturer (C)	83	69	152
	Lecturer (B)	93	68	161
	Tutor (A)	17	21	38
	Total academics in schools		232	240
Executive	Executive	4	9	13
	Total executive in schools	4	9	13
Non-Academic	HEO 10+	1	2	3
	HEO 09	2	1	3
	HEO 08	4	6	10
	HEO 07	10	11	21
	HEO 06	16	8	24
	HEO 05	14	10	24
	HEO 04	7	5	12
HEO 03	2	1	3	
Total non-academic staff		56	44	100
Total	Total staff in schools	292	293	585

¹⁸ As at 31 March 2021



Controlled Entities

Agricultural Business Research Institute (ABRI)

ABRI employs agribusiness information specialists, who provide information services to the domestic and international livestock industries. It has been operating for over 50 years.

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 a nightclub, childcare facilities, hairdressers, a post office and newsagent, cinema, graduation, student advocacy and welfare, as well as functions and catering services. UNE Life manages the operation of the UNE Medical Centre, which provides health service and support to students, staff and the wider Armidale region.

UNE Foundation

The UNE Foundation receives donations from individuals, corporations and public entities to fund scholarships and other programs 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 UNE Foundation, and 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.

Ag360

Ag 360 previously provided farm management decision support software to livestock producers. It was wound up and deregistered by the Australian Securities & Investments Commission on 10 November 2021.

Staff in management, administration and centres

	Type	Female	Male	Total
Academics	Professor (E) and above	2	4	6
	Associate Professor (D)	1	4	5
	Senior Lecturer (C)	6	4	10
	Lecturer (B)	6	6	12
	Tutor (A)	2	4	6
	Total academics in schools		17	22
Executive	Executive	29	27	56
	Total executive in schools	29	27	56
Non-Academic	HEO 10+	5	5	10
	HEO 09	20	13	33
	HEO 08	46	32	78
	HEO 07	52	53	105
	HEO 06	76	38	114
	HEO 05	84	34	118
	HEO 04	40	16	56
	HEO 03	6	8	14
	HEO 02	5	4	9
	HEO 01+	0	0	0
	Total non-academic staff	4	9	100
Total	Total staff outside schools	380	252	632

	Female	Male	Total
UNE staff in Controlled Entities	2	4	6
UNE Total at 31 March, 2021	748	616	1,364
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

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

The focus and scope of WHS activities in 2021 was guided by the diagnostic audit ISO 45001 WHS Management Systems Improvement Plan, incident and hazard reports, and emerging environmental conditions.

In the 2021 reporting period, the University continued to invest considerable effort into the dynamic risk management of COVID-19 impacts to maintain continuity of work, learning

and research. While UNE staff proved resilient to numerous challenges over the past three years, the combined impact of the ongoing pandemic and a series of natural disasters has taken its toll on the UNE community. In July, UNE partnered with Benestar and its affiliated health and wellbeing portal, Benehub, to ensure staff had access to personal and confidential support where and when they needed it.

The University's response to COVID-19 included:

- > Regular scheduled Special Incident Group (SIG) meetings, with 16 held over the course of 2021. The special forum provided for escalation to Emergency Control Organisation in the event of community outbreaks;
- > Facilitation of business continuity planning during outbreaks and lockdown conditions,

including remote working, hybrid and staged return-to-campus plans;

- > Implementation of public health measures to ensure adherence to regulatory requirements relating to University operations;
- > Regular revision of COVID-19 organisational risk assessments, COVID Safe Plans, training and resources to guide teaching, working and residential activities;
- > Mass vaccination clinics as mentioned elsewhere;
- > Establishment of a medically supervised Rapid Antigen Testing program;
- > Development of a COVID-Safe Travel Framework, Events Management Framework and Governance Framework; and
- > University representation in the Local Emergency Management Command.

Significant 2021 initiatives included:

- > Completion of a diagnostic audit and WHS Improvement Plan aligned to ISO: 45001 WHS Management Systems;
- > Sourcing and implementing a new Employee Assistance Provider – Benestar – which has expanded the scope and format of specialist support, and provided access to a wellbeing portal;
- > Development and implementation of the WHS and Wellbeing Dashboard;
- > Wellbeing initiatives, such as the annual flu vaccination program, in-person and virtual active programs on the Armidale Campus, and distribution of a monthly promotional Wellbeing Newsletter;
- > Risk Assessments of chemical stores to identify threshold triggers for waste transfers to the central store;
- > Revision of staff WHS Induction packages;
- > Development of a UNE-wide WHS Training Needs Analysis;
- > Development of a WHS Communications and Reporting Plan and Consultation Framework; and
- > Implementation of First Aid, CPR and Warden Training, including the administration of fire drills within the constraints of COVID-19 campus occupancy and limits on gathering and movement.

Hazard and Incident Experience for 2021

Work, Health and Safety Performance (WHS) is captured by UNE's WHS digital safety management system Skytrust. In 2021, 137 incidents were reported, which is lower than the usual experience of sustained on-campus activity (199 incidents in 2019). This reduction relates to the implementation of remote working arrangements necessitated by COVID-19 public health orders and business continuity planning throughout the pandemic. Of the incidents reported, four were

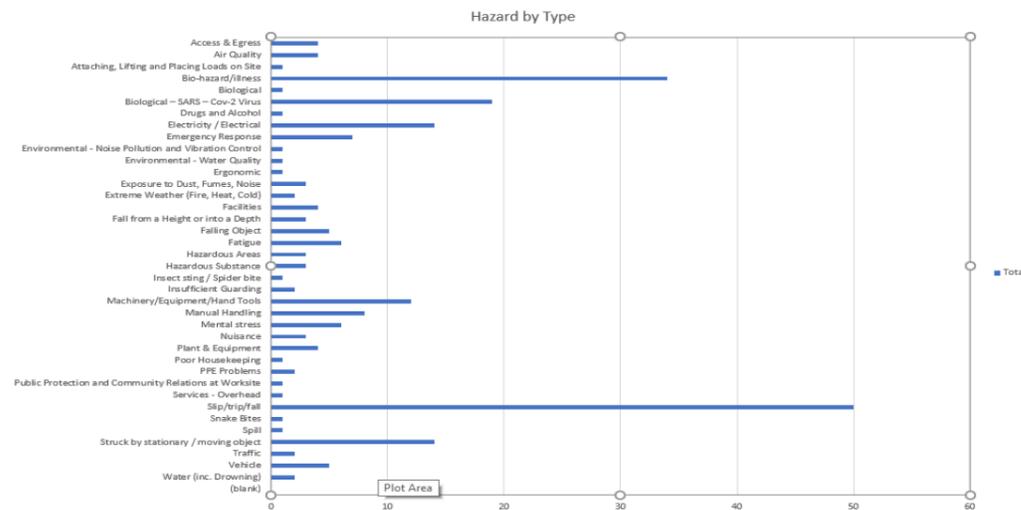
notifiable to Safework NSW. There were no prosecutions by the Safework Regulator in this period.

On the evening of 14 October, the Armidale campus sustained significant damage as a result of a supercell extreme weather event classified as Natural Disaster 797. As a result, the Emergency Control Organisation was activated, resulting in temporary closure of the campus to restore access and services, relocate essential services and secure severely damaged infrastructure.

Hazards entered into Skytrust are indicative of the WHS hazard profile for University operations.

- > Bio-hazards/illnesses were reported 34 times and include mouse plague activity on the Armidale campus, which required a facilities response to prevention and management;
- > The introduction of an additional hazard category for COVID to capture related issues, including breaches of public health orders, University safety requirements, positive cases and possible campus exposure; and
- > Increased reporting across slip/trip/fall and electrical safety categories compared to the previous period. The slip/trip/fall hazard category now also incorporates sporting injuries. An extensive electrical safety testing program was undertaken throughout 2021, with all residual current device (RCD) testing completed for the annual testing cycle. Five-yearly testing is well advanced.

Hazard by Type: 2021



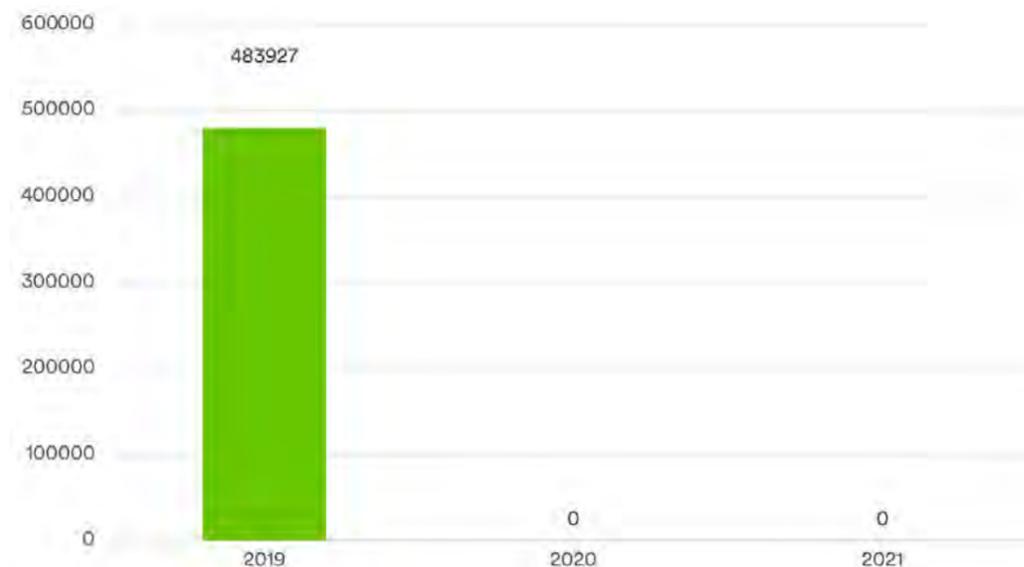
Workers' Compensation data for 2021

Workers' Compensation claims remained low in the 2021 reporting period. This is consistent with reduced campus occupancy by staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Campus occupancy ranged from full to remote or hybrid models of operation to align with regulatory public health and business continuity requirements.

Claims cost data, as shown below, is at the time of reporting each year and derived from iCare reports. There were no Claims Performance Rate (CPR) premium impacting costs

1. Total number of claims for 2021: **1 claim (medical treatment only); 2 (notified only)**
2. Total time loss incurred for 2021: **0 days¹⁹**
3. Total claim costs for policy year 2021: **\$0.00²⁰**
4. Total claim costs for policy year 2020: **\$0.00²¹**
5. Total claim costs for policy year 2019: **\$483 927**

Workers Compensation: Total CPR claim costs in AUD: 2019-2021



incurred in 2021 from accepted claims, with no wages payable from time away from work.

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 in which they occurred. The 2019 reporting period continues to experience accrued costs associated with claims for that period and was an atypical year in the University's claims experience.

¹⁹ Any payment for time lost is considered equivalent to a day for reporting purposes – source iCare
²⁰ CPR Claims costs refer to premium impacting costs of claims that includes the wages and whole person impairment costs.
²¹ See footnote 22 above.

Diversity

UNE complied with the Workplace Gender and Equality Act 2012 in 2021, regularly reports and monitors workforce diversity and aims to reflect its very diverse and multicultural student population. This data contributes to the development of priority programs and planning, and has informed the focus of the UNE's Diversity and Advisory Committee.

The following key initiatives took place at UNE in 2021:

1. The People and Culture Strategy was reviewed and five core strategies developed to ensure UNE communities are safe places for employees and students, where they can be their true selves and maximise their learning.
2. The establishment of two key roles – Organisational Development Consultant, Diversity and Inclusion; and Human Resource Consultant, Aboriginal Employment – boosted UNE's commitment to diversity and inclusion. These roles will ensure a consistent and coordinated effort and roll-out of key diversity and inclusion deliverables moving forward.
3. New staff all completed the online Cultural Competence Program, which builds capability around inclusion and cultural diversity in Australia.
4. New employees had the option to complete the SBS Inclusion Program, which has a multicultural focus, as part of the onboarding process or at any other stage in their employment. This package covers inclusion for various groups in the workplace, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Staff were further encouraged to attend an in-house Cultural Connections Program that covers a range of topic areas, including UNE's historical relationship with the Aboriginal community, our efforts towards increased Aboriginal employment, as well as activities and information aimed at creating a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture.
5. A comprehensive Cultural Awareness and Diversity training package was introduced for staff and students. This package was successfully trialled by UNE Joint Medical Program students before their placement at Armajun Indigenous Health Service, Inverell, NSW, and will now be presented to the Academic Board for approval to be integrated into all undergraduate degrees. The University has completed work on the final stage of the short course Cultural Awareness and Diversity, for all students and casuals, and is considering whether or not to make the program mandatory.
6. UNE trialled Cultural Connections training via Zoom. Migrating resources and activities, such as Dreamtime card reading, to an online environment was challenging but achievable. Evaluation and feedback were positive and lessons learnt will be implemented, to bring the online training to UNE employees working in other centres such as UNE Tamworth and UNE Sydney.
7. Other training programs pivoted to online delivery to support staff and leaders and to ensure UNE's messaging around diversity and inclusion remains at the forefront of business. Some of the courses that moved from face-to-face to an online/hybrid model included:
 - > Code of Conduct (Online);
 - > Selection Panel Training (Online);
 - > Workplace Health & Safety Induction (Hybrid);
 - > Cultural Connections (Hybrid); and
 - > Manager Toolkit (Online).
8. Induction and compliance workflows underwent a capacity uplift, to improve existing processes, particularly for completion tracking and records management.
9. Recruitment Selection Panel Training was updated to include information around unconscious bias, so that participants learn about inclusiveness and equity.
10. A comprehensive Safe and Respectful Communities paper was developed, which addresses student safety and the behavioural expectations of all employees in creating a safe and harmonious environment for all. The paper contains a number of recommendations that will be implemented in 2022.
11. People and Culture's weekly newsletter to all staff features key stories and program updates supporting diversity and inclusion, belonging and wellbeing.

Trends in the representation of EEO groups - academic staff (see appendix)

Multicultural Overview

Agreements with Multicultural NSW

The University did not have any agreements with Multicultural NSW in 2021.

Multicultural policies and services program

The Multicultural Action Plan (MAP) 2020 was the main driver for multicultural policies and programs at UNE in 2021. The plan aligns with a range of current student and staff-related strategic documents, plans and legislation, and incorporates the Multicultural Policies and Services Program themes alongside UNE's key strategic priorities.

Key activities in 2021 included:

People and Culture delivered planned cultural awareness programs as previously mentioned, with many face-to-face sessions adapted to online to enable staff to safely keep learning and developing during the pandemic;

The appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) Dr Joe Fraser, who commenced in January 2022 and will focus on driving Indigenous education priorities in line with UNE's Future Fit goals;

Ongoing leadership development programs, including senior leadership forums, were offered in an adjusted format to accommodate remote working;

More opportunities were identified to enter into agreements with overseas partner organisations or governments in order to boost UNE's research capability and ability to attract international students. The outcome of these initiatives will only be quantified in 2022;

Tri-annual informal English language support classes for international students and their spouses, offered by UNE's International Services. COVID-19 resulted in a digital version being trialled, which although not as successful as the face-to-face version, was supplemented by information on ways students and their families can access English Language support from external sources. The UNE English Language Centre remains a key pathway to further study through its formal English Language programs;

The implementation of a Global Connections Program that focused on building better connections between international and domestic students. It enables international students to enhance their understanding of the English language and encourages domestic students to engage with other cultures and people to broaden their own understanding of the world. It also addresses skills such as confidence building, improvement of pronunciation and emphasis, vocabulary building, life skills and cross-cultural competency;

International Student Services initiated an internship program for international students through the Outcome Life initiative. The program commenced in T3 with 11 international students participating (both face-to-face and remotely). Following its success, there are plans to increase the number of student places in 2022;

An adaptation of UNE's popular Culture Fest, which brings international students and the local community together through food and culture-focused activities. Due to COVID-19, the 2021 event featured small-scale dinners hosted by NERAM, with local businesses sharing their culture and cuisine with the Armidale community;

International students speaking monthly at meetings of the Rotary Club of Armidale Central, supported by International Students Services. These talks served to educate members of the wider community about who our students are, where they are from, their studies, research and culture;

A welcome food hamper program, run by International Students Services, which provided emergency food relief for international students in the New England via a partnership with Study NSW (funded by NSW Treasury) and Foodbank NSW/ACT;

Brainstorming between International Student Services and the Multicultural Community Development Team to devise ways to better integrate new migrants and refugees into the community. Together with partner service providers, they held safety days, information markets and small cultural activations throughout the year; and

A free online water safety course for all students and their spouses through Study Guard and Royal Life Saving Society. The short, non-accredited course provided students with education on water safety.

UNE will continue to review its performance against the MAP and to develop new priority areas to ensure the plan remains relevant. Its renewal will include consultation with the Diversity Advisory Committee and internal and external stakeholder groups.

Access Information

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 une.edu.au

- > **Office hours:** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (AEST or ADST during daylight saving)
- > **University switchboard:** +61 2 6773 3333 (office hours)
- > **Security and Emergency After Hours Enquiries Phone:** +61 2 6773 2099; E-mail: security@une.edu.au

Armidale Campus

The University of New England, Elm Avenue, Armidale NSW 2351

UNE Sydney

Phone: +61 2 9689 4888

Email: sydney@une.edu.au

Tamworth Study Centre

Phone: +61 2 6766 3860

Email: tamworthsc@une.edu.au

Taree Study Centre

Phone: +61 2 6557 7190

Email: tareesc@une.edu.au

Postal address

The relevant officer or business unit

The University of New England, Armidale NSW 2351, Australia





Appendix

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome¹

	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						3		
Members of Parliament								
Private sector business								
Not for profit organisations or community groups		1						
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	1	1		2	1			
Members of the public (other)	2	3		1				

¹ 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.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome¹

	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 ¹⁷	1			2	1			
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	2	5				3		
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other				1				

¹ 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.

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 to Act

	No. of times consideration used ¹⁸
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 Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015	0
Information about authorised transaction under Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Act 2016	0

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

	Number of occasions when application not successful
Responsible and effective government	10
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	39
Business interests of agencies and other persons	2
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	2
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Table F: Timeliness

	No. of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (²⁰ days plus any extensions)	14
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	1
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0
Total	15

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 ¹⁹	0	1	1
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	0	1
Review by NCAT	0	0	0
Total	2	1	3

¹⁹ 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.

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

	No. of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	3
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

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

	No. of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	0
Applicant-initiated transfers	0

Trends in the representation of EEO groups - academic staff

EEO group	NSW benchmark or target	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Women	60%	42%	44%	45%	46%	45%	47%	47%	45%	48%	47%	48.3%	48.5%	48.6%
Aboriginal people & Torres Strait islanders	2.63%	0.5%	1.1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%
People whose first language was not English	19%	21%	20%	18%	18%	18%	16%	15%	16%	18%	15%	14.0%	14.8%	15.8%
People with disability	N/A	8%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2.4%	3.1%	3.5%
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						

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	2021
Women	60%	61%	61%	61%	61%	63%	62%	62%	61%	60%	60%	60.7%	59.7%	60.9%
Aboriginal people & Torres Strait islanders	2.63%	2%	2.2%	2.3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3.3%	3.1%	3.2%
People whose first language was not English	19%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4.0%	3.3%	4.0%
People with disability	N/A	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3.0%	3.4%	3.8%
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						

Trends in the distribution of EEO groups - academic staff

EEO group	NSW benchmark or target	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Women	100	80	81	81	94	95	95	94	96	94	95	94	95	96
Aboriginal people & Torres Strait islanders	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	84	84	88	87	82	89	88	88	111
People whose first language was not English	100	96	99	97	99	100	101	103	102	101	100	100	100	100
People with disability	100	93	96	101	103	109	107	106	104	100	110	111	111	104
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase)	100	n/a												

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	2020	2021
Women	100	86	88	87	88	86	88	89	92	93	92	92	92	93
Aboriginal people & Torres Strait islanders	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	83	87	87	80	92	84	76	81	80	81
People whose first language was not English	100	107	106	110	112	99	101	103	105	103	108	111	118	111
People with disability	100	93	92	91	93	99	94	98	101	105	101	106	105	104
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (targeted increase)	100	n/a												

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Vice-Chancellor's Unit
University of New England
ARMIDALE NSW 2351

Ph +61 2 6773 2004
Email vc@une.edu.au

une.edu.au

The logo for the University of New England, featuring the lowercase letters 'une' in a stylized, rounded, light green font.
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