

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 2018

To: 2020

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

I am pleased to reaffirm Griffith University's support for the United Nation's Global Compact (UNGC) as part of our ongoing commitment to creating an equitable and environmentally sustainable society. Griffith's core values of First Peoples, environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and social justice underpin our commitment to the ten UN Global Compact Principles of human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption. This Communication on Engagement outlines a summary of the actions Griffith has taken to support these principles across the reporting period.

Griffith was the first Australian university to offer degrees in Environmental Science and established Australia's first tertiary student support unit for Indigenous Australians. This legacy continues through the incorporation of economic, environmental, and corporate social responsibility into our teaching programs, world-class interdisciplinary research, and effective community engagement and operational activities.

Sustainability is a core value of Griffith University and a key initiative of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan – *Creating a Future for All*. This Plan incorporates sustainability objectives into whole-of-university priorities including:

- embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals in University teaching and learning, research, and operations
- halving carbon emissions by 2030; with the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050
- investing in First Peoples' employment, leadership, and education.

The implementation of Griffith's sustainability goals is overseen by the Sustainability Sub Committee, which represents all elements of the University. This report provides an overview of the strategies and progress Griffith is making to advance our commitment and our engagement with the wider community on the crucial task of creating a more sustainable future for all. We are committed to sharing this information with our stakeholders through our primary communication channels and welcome responses to this report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Carolyn Evans
Vice Chancellor and President

Part II. Description of Actions

Human Rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Griffith University supports and advocates for the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, integrating these principles into its teaching and learning across all discipline areas, along with the University's own operational policies. Griffith also demonstrates leadership in research and external engagement in this area. The case studies below are illustrative of initiatives undertaken to support Principles 1 and 2:

- Griffith recognises the right of all staff and students to a university environment free from harassment, bullying and discrimination and is committed to providing safe and inclusive campus communities. In 2019 and 2020 Griffith reviewed both its Staff Harassment Bullying and Discrimination Policy and the Student Sexual Assault, Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy. The staff policy applies to discriminatory, harassing and bullying behaviours conducted by staff (including permanent, casual, visitors, etc.) when engaged in University related activities on campus, in transit to/from campus, off-campus and online. The student policy outlines the University's approach to preventing, reporting and responding to incidents of student sexual assault, harassment, bullying and discrimination. These policies are supported by associated policies for staff and students, such as Staff Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy and by the Safe Campuses Advisory Group. This group has driven the implementation of the full nine recommendations from the 2017 Australian Human Rights Commission of the "Change the Course: Report into Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at Australian Universities" in the areas of student counselling, policy and response pathways and accommodation services.
- Griffith embraces equity and diversity and provides a range of programs to support underrepresented groups, including First Peoples, the LGBTIQ+ community, people with a disability and those from culturally diverse backgrounds. Griffith Ally Network comprises Griffith staff and students who support and affirm the experiences of people who identify as LGBTIQ+. Programs that aim to attract, retain and support women include informal mentorships of women in STEMM initiatives for students and staff. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team provides a range of support programmes for student and staff from underrepresented groups, including LGBTIQ+ inclusion trained counsellors.
- Griffith University has access strategies for persons with disabilities and is committed to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment. The Accessibility and Inclusion website provides links to Disability and Accessibility services for students and staff. For students this includes appointments with a Disability Advisor to discuss a person's needs and provide mentor support. Targeted support includes the 'Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment – Students with Disabilities' policy. The Injury and Disability Support Team provides advice to staff with disabilities, regarding workplace support available for staff with disabilities enabling them to work effectively and participate equally. Griffith University policy and strategy for persons with disabilities is committed to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment.
- In 2020 Griffith was named the only UN Millennium Fellows campus in Australia and Oceania in recognition of our support for and achievements in the UN SDGs. 2020 Millennium Fellows developed and delivered projects aligned with the SDGs including the publication of *The Power of Youth: Stories of Peace*. Led by Griffith Honours College student and New Colombo Plan scholar, Kimberley Bates, this project used storytelling to help people share their triumphs over adversity and direct public conversation towards reconciliation and peace.

Labour

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Griffith University stands in alignment with the Labour Principles of the UN Global Compact and is committed to their integration across a range of areas, including rights at work, employment policy and supply chain management. Key initiatives undertaken in this area throughout the reporting period are outlined below.

- Griffith is committed to eliminating forced and child labour. The University participated in the Australian Universities Procurement Network Modern Slavery Program throughout 2020 to work collaboratively towards modern slavery elimination efforts across Australian supply chains.
- Griffith developed its Modern Slavery Statement for the reportable period 1 January – 31 December 2020 which details the actions taken to protect and respect human rights through a zero-tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking in all its forms.
- Griffith demonstrates a commitment to eliminating discrimination in respect of employment and occupation and providing a culturally safe environment for all students, staff and communities through recognition of our First Peoples. Griffith has the largest Indigenous student population of any Queensland university and is committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and career progression. The University employs a First Peoples Employment Consultant and the University's GUMURRII unit assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from recruitment, through to the provision of undergraduate and postgraduate support.
- Trained Harassment and Discrimination Contact Officers are located on each of Griffith's campuses and are available to people who are, or have been, the subject of discrimination within the University. These Officers are a confidential point of contact who discuss options for resolution and give staff/students access to the relevant policies and procedures.

Environment

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Griffith University is committed to creating a sustainable future for all, demonstrating environmental leadership through teaching and learning practices, innovative research, efficient operations and effective external partnerships. Through a defined vision, the development of sustainability targets and indicators and range of innovative policies, programs and partnerships, Griffith is working towards addressing current environmental challenges, whilst also fostering innovation for the future. Our commitment to the UN Global Compact Principles around the environment is evidenced by the below examples and case studies.

- Griffith's Strategic Plan: Creating a Future for All 2020-2025 was endorsed within this reporting period. It sets a range of targets to contribute to a robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable society and commits to: embedding the Sustainable Development Goals in University teaching, research and operations, the University being ranked in the top 200 universities globally for the implementation of the SDGs, halving carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This Plan provides an ambitious and holistic framework through which Griffith is committed to creating positive impact.
- In 2020, the University introduced the Griffith Climate Action Beacon—the first of several planned major interdisciplinary research initiatives known as 'Griffith Beacons'—to address one of the world's most pressing problems. This program harnesses expertise within the University and from external partners to generate knowledge and ground-breaking

research that delivers social dividends and enduring solutions for climate change. The Climate Action Beacon is centred on the need to achieve three broad societal outcomes (i) Motivating climate action: building the case for and enabling the practice of climate action among individuals, and collectively in communities, organisations and government. (ii) Future climate transitions: supporting progress towards climate-resilient development and net-zero carbon emissions (iii) Climate justice: ensuring that climate actions are fair, equitable and just, contributing toward the broader sustainable development goals.

- Griffith's Climate Ready Initiative was introduced through the Climate Action Beacon. Led by a board of high-profile external partners and Griffith experts, it is an example of an Australia-first initiative to develop new strategies, partnerships and investment for climate action. The Initiative is focused on a collaboration for impact approach to progress the transition to net-zero emissions across five focus areas of governments, communities, economy, nature and business.

Anti-Corruption

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Griffith recognises that good governance relies on institutions fulfilling their missions with integrity, supported by well-designed accountability regimes. Corruption resilience, detection and enforcement are critical priorities for the University, across its own operations and through innovative research projects and partnerships. Griffith University demonstrated its commitment to anti-corruption throughout the reporting period through a range of internal, external and collective action initiatives as detailed below.:

- Griffith's Fraud and Corruption Control Framework outlines the guiding principles and key structural elements for fraud and corruption management, including the actions and processes to effectively prevent, detect and respond to these matters within the University. A variety of actions are delivered through the framework, including training and awareness programs for all staff, a three-tier internal anti-corruption control approach and structured risk-based due diligence approaches to prevent third party fraud and corruption.
- Griffith University was a lead partner with Transparency International in the development of *Australia's National Integrity System: A Blueprint for Action*. Launched at Parliament House in November 2020, the Blueprint outlines 10 action in 5 focus areas for Australia's governments and the wider community. It provides a framework for action around connected national integrity initiatives to support open decision-making, a fair and honest democracy and public interest and whistleblowing protections.
- Griffith delivered the first Asia-Pacific Integrity School in March 2020, which included a symposium on the future of anti-corruption in the Asia Pacific region. Run in partnership with Transparency International, the program aimed to equip professionals and young people with advanced policy and analytical skills required to undertake effective integrity and anti-corruption measures.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

The results indicators below demonstrate the achievement of positive outcomes across the four focus areas of the Global Compact Principles. They provide an overview of the outcomes achieved through the University's strong strategic direction and the implementation of actions detailed above. They are indicative of Griffith's ongoing efforts to align our teaching and learning, research, operations and external engagement with the Principles to work towards a more just, socially inclusive and sustainable future.

Human Rights

- Griffith was awarded the 2020 Diversity Employer of the Year (Enterprise) at the annual Women in Digital Awards. This success recognised Griffith's achievements in workplace inclusivity and support for women in the workplace through a number of successful programs including the Women in Leadership program, Leneen Forde Leaders program, Gender Equality Research Network and our Griffith Ally Network to support LGBTIQ+ staff and students.
- Six Griffith staff, students and alumni were awarded Churchill Fellowships including Adjunct Assistant Professor Nick Marshall, winner of the Rodney Warmington Churchill Fellowship for enhancing community inclusion and reducing social isolation for people with special needs.
- All 4000 Griffith staff completed Equal Opportunity training at some point throughout the reporting period to increase awareness of discrimination issues and their responsibilities in this space.

Labour

- In 2020, Griffith Senior Lecturer, Dr Kate van Doore was appointed to the Australian Government's Modern Slavery Expert Advisory Group. As one of ten Australian experts in the field, Dr van Doore works to provide strategic advice to Government to support effective implementation of Australia's Modern Slavery Act and drive best-practice responses to eradicate exploitation in our supply chains.
- The University submitted to a Modern Slavery Risk Dashboard as part of its involvement in the Australian Universities Procurement Network. As part of a group of 27 Universities, Griffith contributed detailed information on its spend categories to further insights on modern slavery risks in the sector. The aggregated data reflected the broad supply chains of tertiary education institutions in Australia, covering over \$14.6 billion annualised spend across more than 183 000 individual suppliers.

Environment

- Total University carbon emissions decreased by 15% between 2018/19 and 2019/20, maintaining Griffith's positive trajectory towards its 50% carbon reduction target by 2030 (from a 2010 baseline).
- Griffith University reduced its scope 3 carbon emission by 24% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 due to reduced flights, a shift to carbon neutral paper use and reduced waste related emissions.
- In 2020, Griffith University, along with a series of partners, signed an agreement to purchase 50% of its energy from renewable sources. This is supporting the development of solar farm infrastructure and jobs in regional Queensland.
- Electric vehicle and utility carts have saved Griffith 6.88 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per annum across the reporting period. The university also installed four charging stations for electric vehicles and bikes.
- Further investment in renewable energy infrastructure throughout the reporting period brought total renewable energy production to 1 MW through a range of solar, wind and hydrogen technologies.

Anti-corruption

- Griffith's Centre for Governance and Public Policy delivered a series of 9 online seminars on governance, corruption and democracy and transparency throughout 2020, featuring experts and researchers from across the globe.
- All 4000 of the University's staff members completed online fraud and corruption training during the reporting period. The training builds awareness on what constitutes corruption,

along with the expected standards of behaviour from staff.