

2020 SAGE Annual Report



Lincoln University

SAGE Annual Report

Written by the Sustainability Action Group for the Environment (SAGE)

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Introduction

As New Zealand's specialist land-based university, our mission "for the world" and "live well" is always with the aspiration to "protect the future".

Lincoln University recognises that healthy ecosystems and environments are necessary to the survival of humans and other organisms and that the economy is a subsystem of society within the bio-physical environment. There are limits within which human economies and societies must operate if we are to function in a sustainable way. These limitations are the constraints placed by the natural systems of our planet.

Background

In 1990 the student run group Lincoln Environmental Organisation (LEO) was established. Three years later the University Council adopted an Environmental Charter. This quickly led to the adoption of an Environmental Policy in 1993 (a first among New Zealand tertiary institutions). In 1999 the University agreed to establish an Environmental Task Force with the aim of implementing the Environmental Policy. The University now has a Sustainability Policy which has been rewritten and updated (2017) and a Sustainability Action Group for our Environment (SAGE). SAGE is an active group with staff and student members who promote sustainability campus wide. SAGE reconvened in 2017 after a hiatus of a few years.

The 2017 policy states Lincoln University's commitment to be an international and national leader in promoting and achieving ecologically, socially and economically sustainable development. This commitment is aligned with Lincoln's strategic direction and will be implemented by the whole University community, in all aspects of the university's activities: research, curricula, extension, building design, facilities management and operational practices, including all university properties and farms.

SAGE Activities

The following Subcommittees of SAGE have been active in the following areas:

1. Native Biodiversity

Lincoln University has shown their commitment to ensuring our land is designed to demonstrate an aesthetic that encourages sustainable land use while supporting Lincoln's natural heritage.

Achievements in 2020

Brief report of Native Bio-diversity sub-committee (Wadia, Mike, Marcus and Nada)

The sub-committee members were proactive in procuring native plants, most of them free of cost (thanks to Mike), planting them (with help from Lincoln community members, students of SOLA and some LU staff) and more important of all, keeping them alive by regular watering (>95% of the planted natives are alive and some of them started growing). We meet (online or in person) once every two weeks to make important decisions, and regularly through e-mails.

Our Arboretum – Lincoln University's Forgotten Resource - guided tour on 2 July 2020



Environmental policy students visit to the Arboretum on 19 August 2020



Words of appreciation from Dr. Sylvia Nissen, Lecturer in Environmental policy:

“The Arboretum visit was hugely valuable for the students. Many commented to me afterwards about your depth of knowledge of the place and the flora within it. The discussion about the hazelnuts and chestnuts was definitely a highlight, as well as seeing your catalogue of the species in the Arboretum, and hearing about the progress being made within the space. It really demonstrated the continued importance and relevance of the space. Really appreciate how generous you were with your time and in sharing your expertise”

Native plants planting day on 25 August 2020 (Community members, students from SOLA and NB committee) **and 5 September 2020** (NB committee)



Not only has the SAGE Native biodiversity group been reinvigorating the native area of the Arboretum/Amenity area, but we collected the names of a number of people – staff, students and community members who would be interested with helping with the management of the

Arboretum. These people provided ideas and suggestions for the ongoing promotion and care of the Arboretum. Following this new interest and promotion by SAGE, the University has been looking into how to embed the Arboretum into the Life of the University as one of the “Living Laboratories” with the longer-term aim of opening it to the community. The historic and very significant collection of magnolias will now be looked after and kept in better health. SAGE has been consulting with Pauline Murphy (Field Services Centre) on the best way to do this, as well as with Jill Reader (Horticulture Lecturer) who has researched magnolia care.

Ongoing projects for longer term

1. Working towards Predator Free NZ 2050 – which means removing at least rats, possums & stoats (but should include hedgehogs, cats, mice, ferrets & stoats). Important to include education to our campus community.
2. Expanding biodiversity to the periphery of our campus and onto the Lincoln Dairy Farm.

2. Website/SAGE promotions

(Sally Price, Wadia Kandula, Max Lichtenstein, Kate Gislason)

The Website/SAGE promotions sub committee was active in working with the Chair, Sue Jarvis on the Arboretum – Magnolia area restoration/revitalisation as part of the “Draft Lincoln University Arboretum Plan July 2020”. The Lincoln University Magnolia Collection, one of significant standing, was in urgent need of attention in order to preserve it for the enjoyment of the staff/students/public and as a teaching resource. We provided support to Sue to lobby for a permanent irrigation solution to be found as the dry summers (and dry spring in 2020) are not ideal for tree health. Currently the Magnolias are being watered using sprinklers with the support of the Field Research Centre staff –many thanks. It is hoped that the trees will also be pruned and mulched in the near future.

The Website subcommittee has also been providing a SAGE “Tip of the month” for the Hub webpage

(Photos: W. Kandula)

3. Sustainable Transport

The SAGE sustainable transport sub-committee has developed a 3-year Transport Strategy Plan to reduce the use of carparks through reducing car use through carpooling, increasing bus usage, and increasing active transport (see Appendix 1). This Plan will be used in developing the overarching Lincoln University Sustainability Plan.

Following a mobile carpool activity in 2019, permanent signage was installed mid of 2020 at Calder Drive and the Orchard Car Park:



Ongoing projects for longer term

1. Promote carbon offsetting by staff and students when travelling by car and air by encouraging planting trees and regeneration of native bush as a way to mitigate climate change
2. Work with Environment Canterbury (ECAN) regarding improved bus services and explore possibilities such as subsidising student/staff fares (using funds generated from parking fees)
3. Support a Zero Emission Vehicle policy on campus through writing a plan and supporting a procurement project for future fleet cars to be zero emission vehicles.
4. Consider how the introduction of paid parking on campus might be used both as a catalyst to encourage the greater use of some of the more environmentally friendly, cheaper, healthier and more sociable alternatives, and in using the revenue from this to support other sustainable initiatives.

4. Waste Reduction

Lincoln University is working to clean up our waste stream here on campus.

Do you think you know what is and isn't recyclable? We are working hard on a plan to make sure you do!

A group of keen individuals including staff members, students, and the new club Lincoln Environmental Sustainability Society (LESS) are strategising ways to help educate our campus to ensure that we are diverting as much waste as possible.

If you aren't familiar with LESS, it is a student group started up this semester led by BEM student Kate Gislason with the goal of spreading education about waste and sustainability.

"Join the movement of LESS! Waste less, use less, and with LESS learn how to make Lincoln a cleaner, more sustainable campus!"

LESS has already done incredible work at LU by starting a composting pilot at the Farm Road self-catered flats for the students who live there. This project is hopefully on its way to become a part of a possible revival of compost options for more sections of the campus.

Compost is being discussed as an option here on campus as well. The effectiveness of this will depend on how many keen staff are willing and able to participate in the maintenance of this endeavor. The details of this will be discussed at the educational seminar. If you want further information on how you can get involved, please reply with a message stating so.

Our plan we have come up with is simple:

1. Audits of the rubbish bins of each building will be conducted in the next few weeks.
2. After this, educational 30-minute seminars will be executed throughout each building. We will be making these mandatory for staff members, and they can be organised by the heads of each department who should in response to this email, reach out to schedule a date in November.
3. We will conduct another audit after the educational seminar and send you back a "report card" on your progress in waste reduction.

Education is key! We hope this can get all of us on the same page with the basics of how to recycle right and make Lincoln a leader in waste reduction. Signage is looking to be improved, and we will be ensuring that you hear of any changes made to what is or is not able to be recycled.

Some key messages we want you all to keep in mind in the meantime are:

Rinse & Recycle!
Break down your boxes!
When in doubt, throw it out!

Budget request:

The budget consideration for 2021 is \$2000 to be spent on signage and labelling of our waste products and to encourage composting next year.

5. Sustainable Development Goals Summit & UNZ

As a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the NZ government presented its Voluntary National Report outlining its progress towards achieving the goals at the UN in July 2019. SAGE member Lin Roberts represented Lincoln on a Universities New Zealand (UNZ) Expert Working Group – Sustainability and SDGs which was established to contribute to this report and Lin and Kirsty Hurnen coordinated Lincoln's contribution.

The UNZ Working Group continues to meet and has an ongoing role overseeing the national SDG Summit series, supporting individual summits, and developing and executing a research programme to outline NZ universities' contribution to the SDGs. Lincoln University and Canterbury University have undertaken to co-host the 2020-21 SDG Summit (to be run as three online events leading to a 2 day face-to-face event in September 2021), with support from Ara Institute and Christchurch City Council. Lin and Kirsty are on the working group

organising the Summit, with Lin passing her role to Wim de Koning in October 2020. The successful first online event was held 19 November 2020.

STENZ

STENZ is the network of sustainability staff at each NZ university, plus several polytechnics which meets monthly by zoom, sharing their experiences in developing and implementing sustainability initiatives. Lincoln is the only university without designated sustainability staff, so Lin Roberts (and occasionally Kirsty Hurnen) has been attending meetings on behalf of Lincoln but it would be good to have a permanent representative from Lincoln who has a direct connection to the development and operationalisation of Lincoln's sustainability strategy

6. General Activities

EDUCATION - SAGE Seminar Series:

Despite Covid, we managed to hold a few seminars:

- **July 2nd:** Visit to the Arboretum for a guided tour. Discover its hidden secrets and discuss how it can be used again.
- **August 6th:** Kate Gislason talks about "The Many Ways of Managing Waste: Michigan, U.S.A. Waste in America: Management Obstacles" In E2 Kate worked at the Michigan State University Surplus Store and Recycling Center for 2 years prior to coming to New Zealand and will be unpacking her experiences and knowledge on what worked well for their operation and what still has room for improvement.
- **September 3rd:** Helen Fitt talks about "The concise History of the 'Adventure Machine' Tourism and electric vehicles".
- **October 1st:** Daniel Brown, Energy Management Graduate will give a presentation, working title: "Switching Off the Coal for Good - Lincoln University's journey towards a cleaner, electrical future."

SAGE BBQ:

On 11/11/2020 SAGE organised a BBQ in the Arboretum, saying thanks for the work done during this year. The event included the planting of two trees and sharing of information about what the future of the Arboretum could look like.

