

Vice Chancellor's Report to Council

February 2022

Introduction

This month has been dominated by the impact of the rapidly changing national response to the Covid pandemic as the University prepared to commence the 2022 academic year.

Even before the formal start of the academic year, many programmes have already been underway, including Education, Business and Science field trips. For instance, the School of Teacher Education (Faculty of Education) welcomed approximately 500 new to UC students into our teacher education programmes this year (with mihi whakatau on 31 January, 7 February and 14 February) across the early childhood, primary and secondary sectors. We also saw over 2,000 students take part in Summer School and all of that continued while negotiating changes in the national traffic light settings.

Te Pātaka (the student hub) is now successfully established in Puaka-James Hight. It is welcoming students and supporting them to access the various services that they require to make a strong start to their studies in 2022. Feedback from staff and students alike as they visit this new hub has been overwhelmingly positive. As part of Te Pātaka, the new Kaitoko team, under Ariana Johansson's leadership, has been working hard to complete induction activities in preparation for Semester 1. This team of new advisors is providing academic advice and wraparound support to new to UC students.

Many UC teams have been working hard to prepare the University's COVID-19 response in time for the start of the 2022 academic year. This is all the more important given we are anticipating that more than 17,000 students will be back on campus in the next two weeks and then that Omicron will impact through our community.

Knowing that students benefit from as much on-campus engagement as possible when they start their university studies, UC staff are showing significant innovation in adapting to changing circumstances by combining online and in-person delivery modes of learning and teaching.

On Friday, 18 February 2022 UC held Herea tō waka | Orientation Day Introduction session, an informative day designed to welcome new-to-UC students and their whānau to UC and introduce them to their programmes of study. This year was the first year this event was delivered in both hybrid format with attendees having the ability to attend session both in person or watch them live online. At total of 700 students, parents and whānau joined us on campus with a further 800 attendees watching online. Post event, students also have the ability to watch the sessions on demand at any time via the Orientation Day website.

UC continues to follow public health guidelines in the way it operates, giving priority to protecting both staff and student wellbeing as much as possible. Since moving to the Red setting, and getting further clarification on the three traffic light phases and what they mean for the tertiary sector, Aotearoa New Zealand universities have been receiving regular Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) guidance on mask wearing and their responsibilities for contact tracing of staff and students

on campus. The move to Phase 2 with the Red Light setting continuing places greater responsibility on individual institutions in determining how they respond to evolving situations.

Professor Catherine Moran is working with the Academic Liaison Group and the Executive Deans to implement flexible delivery modes while following the public health measures, such as mask wearing and vaccination, as well as TEC guidance. Each faculty is focused on flexibility in delivering its teaching programme, acknowledging that at times our staff and students will need to work remotely.

Executive Director of People, Culture and Campus Life Paul O’Flaherty has been working with the People, Culture and Campus Life and Te Waka Pākākano teams to:

- establish a new staff and student contact tracing team that is coordinated with TEC and the Ministry of Health
- initiate a process of updated business continuity planning across the University, including procedures for isolation
- coordinate with student halls on their response planning
- procure masks and Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)
- plan for ongoing support from the Health Centre, Student Care team and Recreation Centre

With regard to post-graduate students, the Post Graduate Research Office has been messaging students to prepare for potential COVID-19 disruptions by way of making contingency plans with their supervisors regarding accessing facilities, materials, research participants and equipment that may not be easily accessed if further restrictions are put in place.

Engagement

Professor Bronwyn Hayward has been awarded the Environment and Supreme winner awards in the Westpac Woman of Influence awards, announced on 10 February. Professor Hayward was nominated to celebrate key women of influence at UC. A UC Connect public lecture has also been scheduled on ‘*What does the new IPCC climate report mean for our cities?*’, presented by Professor Hayward.

Associate Professors Cheryl Brown and Kathryn MacCallum, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, are taking part in a national campaign by Tourism New Zealand to promote Christchurch and New Zealand as a place to convene international conferences. Last year they successfully bid to host the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) conference in December 2023 at Te Pae. Associate Professors Brown and MacCallum were also interviewed by the *Kia Ora* magazine for a feature article in March about this conference bid.

In the last month, UC has hosted and sponsored two important conferences, although ultimately both were run in hybrid mode with online and limited ‘on-site’ participation. The first was the 2022 New Zealand eResearch Conference, which attracted researchers working at the nexus of information technologies, big data and computational complexity. The conference was opened by Hon Ayesha Verrall as Associate Minister of Research, Science and Innovation. Professor Ian Wright provided introductory remarks on behalf of UC.

The second conference, overlapping with the eResearch conference in its focus on meteorology and oceanographic modelling, was the International Conference on Southern Hemisphere Meteorology and Oceanography. This conference series has been running for around 40 years, variously hosted in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.

The UC Aerospace Club launched the third of a series of rockets, called *Into the Black*, on 28 February 2022, with the mission aim of reaching space. The launch and flight were both spectacular and safe.

The Faculty of Education is happy to announce that Maraea Turketo started in her role as the Education Partnership Development Manager (EPDM) on 17 January 2022. The EPDM role has been established in direct response to the recommendation in the Partnership Co-Design Group Report 2019 to broker a network of formal partnerships with schools, kura and early childhood education centres. The focus will be on individual organisations in the Canterbury area, regional partnerships and potential partnerships in the South Pacific region.

The Faculty of Engineering held its major outreach event, the Women in Engineering Residential Programme (WiE CAN), in January 2022. This event aims to increase the number of female enrolments in the BE(Hons) programme at UC. The 2022 programme saw 59 year 13 students attend. It featured a range of workshops from each Engineering department, as well as presentations from female engineers, an entrepreneurship challenge hosted by the UC Centre for Entrepreneurship (UCE) team and various social activities.

Professor Sonia Mazey and Adjunct Professor Jeremy Richardson have edited *Policy-making Under Pressure: Rethinking the policy process in Aotearoa New Zealand*, a recent publication from Canterbury University Press (CUP). The New Zealand Productivity Commission has invited Sonia and Jeremy to participate in a roundtable on the topic of the book.

In a review of another CUP title, *Ten Acceptable Acts of Arson, and other very short stories* by Jack Cottrell, *Fashion Quarterly* magazine described it as “a collection of really short stories that are bound to leave you wanting more”.

The *New Zealand Listener* mentioned five forthcoming CUP titles in its “What to Read in 2022” article: Frankie McMillan’s new collection *The Wandering Nature of Us Girls*; *The First Winter at Vanda Station* by Al Riordan and Simon Cutfield; *Ahuahu: A conservation journey in Aotearoa* by Dave Towns; *Sure to Rise: The Edmonds story* by Peter Alsop et al; and Sally Blundell’s *Ravenscar House: A biography*.

The project was a collaboration between the PD-PCF Student Research Hub and the European Union (EU) Delegation to New Zealand. The cross-cohort team of students presented their findings to the Ambassador of the EU to New Zealand, Her Excellency Nina Obermaier, and EU Delegation diplomats.

Dr Pascale Hatcher has joined as Associate Investigator with the research network “Mapping Knowledge Gaps in Support for the Office of the Canadian Ombudsman for Responsible Enterprise (CORE)”. Funded by the Research Council of Canada (Government of Canada), the network is evaluating the role of independent Ombudsmen in addressing international human rights breaches from Canadian corporations in key sectors, including mining.

Associate Professor Jeremy Moses and postdoctoral fellows Sian Troath and Geoffrey Ford have been active with scholarly and public engagement related to their Marsden-funded project Mapping LAWS (<https://mappinglaws.net>), in which they are applying digital methods to study the emergence of debates about autonomous weapons (AWS). Specifically:

- the project team – Jeremy, Geoffrey and Sian – authored an article in *The Conversation* on New Zealand’s evolving position on AWS, which attracted considerable public interest (over 70,000 reads)
- Jeremy as featured on 1NEWS on New Zealand’s position on AWS on 20 December 2021
- the project team released multiple web-based visualisations and blog posts for the public and other scholars in the field.

For their part, Jeremy Moses, Geoffrey Ford and Sian Troath discussed the potential for autonomous drones in warfare at the 2022 New Zealand Political Studies Association online conference.

Education – Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

As we start 2022, we look forward to offering new degrees and courses. One of these is the Bachelor of Social and Environmental Sustainability, which has four majors to choose from:

- Environmental Policy, Governance and Social Justice
- Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Partnerships
- Social Action, Community and Global Development
- Sustainable Business, Enterprise and Economics.

It is pleasing to note that one of the leads of the programme, Dr Pascale Hatcher, was awarded the 2021 UC Arts Award for excellence in teaching.

The new year sees the introduction of more flexible learning offerings, including massive open online courses (MOOCs), micro-credentials and short courses. The second MOOC in the Organisational Psychology Micro Masters series has been released on ‘recruiting and selecting the right person’. The five courses in the Micro Masters series offer a deeper understanding of people at work and how organisations can get the best out of them. The first course, Performance and Motivation at Work, was delivered by Professor Katharina Naswall and Dr Fleur Pawsey and attracted 1,214 enrolments.

A substantial contribution to new short courses has come from Executive Education, a new partnership with the Marketing Association, which has expanded UC Business School’s short course offerings to 50 courses scheduled for 2022. We expect that a number of new products will be introduced into the portfolio.

Lisa Jones joined the Executive Education team in January 2022 and brings a great deal of experience in professional capability development event management.

Another highlight of 2022 is the range of initiatives that has been put in place to support outreach and academic success of UC students. Complementing the well-established Te Pātaka | Student Services Hub, the new Peer Assistant Learning Sessions programme (PALS) has been trialled. Evaluative results show PALS had positive impacts for those students who participated last year. As a result, in 2022 we will be widening the programme to large courses in three of the major degrees – BA, BCom and BSc. The programme will be delivered to four courses in Semester 1 and probably three courses in Semester 2. We are developing an online version of PALS to support students who may be affected by COVID-19.

Analytics for Course Engagement (ACE) will expand to all students taking undergraduate courses. The 100-level students will be triaged by advisors in Te Pākata while 200- to 400-level students will be supported by faculty-level processes.

Several students also have the opportunity to get involved outside the classroom. The Mechanical Engineering Department, led by Bill Mohs, is sponsoring a student-led team competing in the United States Department of Energy's Soar Decathlon. This competition challenges entrants to design a Net Zero Energy building, with the aim of improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of buildings. The UC team has chosen to compete in the retrofit residential category and is currently working to redesign a local house here in Christchurch.

Research – Impact on a Changing World

Research across the University has continued apace over the summer break with considerable work on preparation of funding proposals and the announcement of new funded projects.

UC Senior Lecturer in Music Performance, percussionist Dr Justin DeHart, will commission five new works for solo percussion from five prominent composers, thanks to a \$74,000 Creative New Zealand Arts grant.

Professor Renwick Dobson and Associate Professor Matthew Stott from the School of Biological Sciences were awarded funding in the 2021 Lottery Health Equipment Fund. Renwick received \$100,000 to support the School's purchase of a Beckman Optima Analytical Ultracentrifuge. Matthew received \$70,980 towards a Beckman Coulter CytoFLEX SRT (Blue) laser upgrade and Aerosol Evacuation System, which he will use in his work to generate evidence to improve uptake and equity in maternal immunisation. Professor Jim Briskie has received funding from Zespri Group for his research project "Understanding Bird Impacts on an Orchard".

In October 2021 UC was awarded a five-year \$5.2 million MBIE-funded research programme, titled "A New Electromagnetic Imaging Method for Advanced Food Process Optimisation". Our EPECentre is leading the project, which has Dr Bill Hefferman as the Principal Investigator and is a collaboration between UC, University of Auckland and Lincoln Agritech. Contracts for this research are currently being executed.

EPECentre has just secured a one-year action-based research project related to transition engineering. Funded by industry (Swire), the project is titled "Evaluating the Opportunity to Engineer Transition to a Low Carbon Freight Transport System in New Zealand, Phase 1: Baseline of direct tank to wheel transport Greenhouse Gas emission for key commodities and modes". The multidisciplinary project will be delivered in collaboration with UC's Maths and Statistics and Geography departments as well as with Professor Susan Krumdieck at the Heriot-Watt University in the United Kingdom.

Three EPECentre scholarships have been secured via the MBIE Strategic Science Investment Fund. These support the Future Architecture of the Network project led by UC as well as Māori participants in the Energy Academy event Lumo – Energy Reimagined.

A 15-month specialist consulting and research project run by EPECentre in conjunction with Sun Cable an Australian company registered in Singapore, concluded in November 2021. The project aimed to address the feasibility and challenges associated with integrating a giga solar farm within a weak grid and extraction of power via a 4200km high voltage direct current cable from Australia to Singapore. The cable connection would be seven times longer than any connection installed to date, and would traverse harsh and diverse environments along the way. The key focus of the concluding piece of work undertaken by EPECentre was to assess the feasibility to locate faults through on-line measurements at the converter terminal.

Jessica Stone, an MSc Part II student in the Marine Ecology Research Group, was awarded a Postgraduate Scholarship from Te Papa Atawhai | Department of Conservation for her project “The Demographics of Early Life Histories of Marine Taonga Species around Kaikōura, New Zealand”. Her research will focus on the early life stages of pāua and bull kelp, which are species of great cultural and ecological value. Her experimental work involves testing the interactions of habitat characteristics, juvenile survival and growth in post-earthquake recovery around Kaikōura. The research will also involve experimental restoration of populations. The scholarship has a value of \$15,000.

Successful recipients from the School of Biological Sciences 2021 round of the Brian Mason Scientific & Technical Trust were:

- Research Associate Michael Hickford – “The Effects of Whitebaiting on Freshwater Fish Assemblages”
- Associate Professor Pieter Pelser – “Conservation Genomics of the Nationally Endangered Canterbury Endemic *Veronica armstrongii*”
- Professor Ian Dickie – “A Slime Mould of Our Own: Developing an Aotearoa NZ teaching and research resource”
- Senior Lecturer Claudia Meisrimler and Associate Professor Volker Nock (Faculty of Engineering) – “Multiplexing Plant Physiological Research Using a Novel Bi-directional Dual-flow-RootChip Platform”
- Senior Tutor Helen Warburton – “Early Warning Signs of Community Collapse in Drying Streams”.

UC’s internal Vision Mātauranga Research Fund has been launched and closes in mid-March. Its goal is to increase Māori researchers’ capacity and experience in applying for government funding in the future.

Research outputs continue to be published. Professor Philip Schluter and former PhD student Dr Johnny Bourke have reported wide inequalities in how disabled people are disproportionately affected by disasters. Professor Natalia Chaban is co-editor of and a major contributor over a number of papers to a Special Issue of *European Foreign Affairs Review*, which provides an extensive analysis of and reflection on external perceptions of the European Union.

Professor Bronwyn Hayward was a co-author of a *Nature* commentary that highlighted the current state and proposed actions of increasing gender diversity in Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) processes.

Newly enrolled doctoral numbers continue rebound from pre-COVID-19 levels, which is an excellent signal given the difficulties associated with the border closure. Currently, UC has around 80 extramural doctoral students, and expanding this group will be a priority for UC as the sector learns more about the easing of border restrictions during 2022 and brings the sector-wide cohort of 5,000 tertiary students to New Zealand as recently signalled by the Government.

For Herea tō Waka | O Day, engagement efforts have moved online as much as possible. With the Library’s O-Day stall cancelled, a series of Kahoot quizzes provided an induction to Library services. These was promoted via social media and prizes were provided for quiz winners in the form of hoodies and treats. Library staff are busy supporting academics preparing for teaching, including by

identifying and purchasing appropriate information resources. Staff are also busy designing and creating their online and face-to-face teaching for the start of term.

The following are viewing statistics for Open Access titles published by CUP:

- *Rape Myths as Barriers to Fair Trial Process: Comparing adult rape trials with those in the Aotearoa Sexual Violence Court Pilot* (2020) brought 66 total visits to UC's research repository page this month. Top country views: New Zealand, Australia, United States, United Kingdom, Canada.
- *Ngā Kōrero a Mohi Ruatapu: The writings of Mohi Ruatapu* (CUP, 1993; OA facsimile digital edition 2020) brought 39 total visits to UC's research repository page this month. Top country views: New Zealand, United States, United Kingdom, China, Germany.
- *Ngā Kōrero a Pita Kāpiti: The teachings of Pita Kāpiti* (CUP, 1997; OA facsimile digital edition 2020) brought 22 total visits to UC's research repository page this month. Top country views: New Zealand, United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany.

People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

As detailed at the start of this report, most of our efforts with and for staff so far in 2022 have been in planning and preparation for the advent of COVID-19, with a focus on health and safety and business continuity.

Nevertheless, we have been able to celebrate over the summer, the achievements and efforts of our staff in a range of areas.

The Faculty of Science 2021 awards winners were announced as follows:

- Emerging Researcher Award, Senior Lecturer Sarah Flanagan of the School of Biological Sciences
- Innovation in Teaching Award, Postdoctoral Fellow Rodrigo Martinez Gazoni of the School Physical and Chemical Sciences
- Excellence in Research Linkages Award, Professor Brett Robinson of the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, working in collaboration with Environmental Science and Research (ESR)
- Kaupapa Māori / Bicultural Competence and Confidence Teaching Award, Senior Lecturer Phoebe Macrae of the School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing
- Health and Safety Champion Award, Chemical Compliance Technician Tom Davison of the School of Biological Sciences
- Outstanding General Staff Award, Senior Specialist Technician Stephen Hemmingsen of the School of Physical and Chemical Sciences
- Culture Champion Award, Technician Brigitta Kurenbach of the School of Biological Sciences.

UC has appointed four new Distinguished Professors they are:

- Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva, was recognised for his global leadership in pioneering interdisciplinary research in a range of fields, including ethnicity, security, politics, affirmation action, development and social protection,

- Distinguished Professor Maggie-Lee Huckabee, the innovating founder of the UC Rose Centre for Stroke Recovery and Research
- Distinguished Professor Michael Hall, a leading international sustainability and tourism researcher, and
- Distinguished Professor Charles Semple, a leading international mathematical modeller for the evolutionary history of species.

The Faculty of Education has welcomed several new staff into the School of Teacher Education. To prepare for the newly approved Ako: Bachelor of Teaching and Learning degree that will have endorsements in Mātauranga Māori, early childhood and primary sectors, two new staff have been hired as lecturers in Mātauranga Māori and the 2022 Teaching Fellow will work in this space. The Faculty has also hired new lecturers in technology Education, Mathematics Education and Science Education, as well as a lecturer in primary education who brings the lived Pasifika experience to her teaching.

The New Ideas Seeding Grant is to support the development of new ideas and innovative, collaborative research within the Faculty of Science that have an obvious pathway to external research income. The successful applicants in 2022 are Senior Lecturer Sarah Flanagan for her research on “Untangling Drivers of Population Decline in a Local Little Blue Penguin Population” and Senior Lecturer Mads Thomsen for his research “Building Climate-resilient and Diverse Marine Forests”.

Notable successes in the Faculty of Arts are that:

- Senior Lecturer Pascale Hatcher has become Head of Department of Political Science and International Relations.
- Political Science Lecturer and climate change advocate Professor Bronwyn Hayward has been named the Supreme Winner at the annual Women of Influence awards.

Among Faculty of Health staff successes are:

- Individual Research Excellence Award – Associate Professor Laurie McLay
- Experienced Teacher of the Year Award – Piet Van Hasselt.

The Faculty of Engineering Teaching and Research Awards for 2021 were presented to recipients at a celebration on Wednesday 2 February. Congratulations to the winners: Alex Yip (Established), Paul Docherty (Established), Pram Abhayawardhana (Emerging), Daniel van der Walt (Emerging), Brendon Bradley (Established) and Mehdi Keyvan-Ekbatani (Emerging).

At the New Zealand Mathematics Society (NZMS) micro-colloquium in December 2021, members from the Faculty of Engineering received accolades.

- Two esteemed Faculty members were made Fellows of the NZMS – congratulations to Liz Ackerley and Mike Plank. Fellowship is awarded to members of the NZMS in recognition of their contributions to mathematics and their professional standing in the New Zealand mathematics community.
- Clemency Montelle received the 2021 NZMS Research Award. Her citation reads, “Professor Montelle pursues outstanding research in the field of the history of mathematics, employing the rare combination of fluency in ancient languages and an extensive background in mathematics to uncover hitherto unknown profound and diverse mathematical achievements of our predecessors.”

For their Engineering New Zealand fellowships, congratulations to Professor Geoff Chase (Distinguished Fellow) and Professor Mathieu Sellier (Fellow).

Suzi Hall and the team in the Pukemanu Centre have been awarded \$150,000 from the Wylie Foundation, via UC Foundation. This funding has been provided over the next three years specifically for work with children and their families on anxiety. Funding is to cover staffing as well as anxiety training via *Fear-Less* Triple P and parent workbooks. Postgraduate students in the Child and Family Psychology programme will benefit from engagement in this work.

2021 Computational Fluid Dynamics graduate Holly Millar made headlines in the *New Zealand Herald* for the continued success of her final-year project. Holly won a scholarship to take part in the UCE Summer Startup programme where she's creating her safe sex prototype.

EPECentre has supported last-minute endeavours of some of the Power Engineering Excellence Trust (PEET) members to secure summer interns (at Edison, PowerCo, Horizon Network, MainPower, EEA) and Engineering graduates (at MainPower, Wellington Electricity, Orion) by advertising vacancies on available platforms for UC students.

Congratulations to final-year Engineering student Jennifer Berry, who has become the only New Zealander and first person from the southern hemisphere to win a prestigious Brooke Owens Fellowship. This fellowship recognises exceptional undergraduate women and other gender minorities with space and aviation internships, senior mentorship and a lifelong professional network.

Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked

New Zealand continues its position as the slowest country to reopen its borders to international students. A fourth and final cohort of 5,000 international students have been announced for Semester 2. This had been in discussion since late last year, but details were not ready at the time of the announcement and have not yet been confirmed. 2019 market share is applied to the current quota to arrive at institutional share. We currently have 405 international students offshore and will ask about their intentions as soon as Government confirms details.

Consultation is underway on Government's proposed revisions to work rights for international students. MBIE's proposal works against calls from other sectors of the government for universities to embrace transnational education (TNE), online, and market diversification. Notably, the Ministry of Education's consultation on what constitutes a high value international student, intended to inform MBIE modelling, has not been finalised.

Visa processing for offshore students will continue to be through the exception (invitation only) process until October. There is significant concern within the sector on Immigration New Zealand's capacity to restaff and deploy a long overdue information system upgrade at the same time as border processing resumes at scale. Any real resumption of the international education sector for New Zealand will not happen before 2023.

Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030

UC's own Vaccine Reader app went live on 9 February, the weblink was sent out to a small controlled group of 200 students, before being circulated to all UC students on 10 February. A further distribution was sent out to all staff the following Monday. The web app is designed to allow the capture of Vaccination Certificate QR codes, submitted by UC students and staff via a single sign on

(SSO), and to validate these against the Government's vaccine register. Once a QR code is validated, it is disposed of. The data from only the validation process are recorded in UC's data warehouse, where the Business Insights team produces reports and dashboards with up-to-date information on the number of students and staff that have completed the validation process. Further work on administrator functionality will allow authorised staff to manually load staff or student vaccination status via the vaccination portal. This functionality is in the final stages of development and testing.

The cyber programme outlines to be implemented with MFA (Multi-Factor Authentication) progressively being rolled out across the University Service and Academic departments as quickly as possible. Other Digital projects are ramping up as staff resources and procurement processes allow. The new operating model and Digital Services structure will be fully in effect on 1 April as planned.

The annual audit by Audit New Zealand is progressing slower than normal due to the impact of COVID-19 conditions on the audit team but we are still hopeful of a sign-off before 30 April statutory deadline.

Planning is underway to implement a more comprehensive Key Performance Indicator (KPI) system and monitoring process across the main Senior Leadership team portfolios ensuring connections to the top level organisational KPI's already agreed. This system will involve regular monitoring of progress and action plans to ensure we remain on track to achieve the UC Strategic Goals.

The strategic risk register is currently being updated which is important given the rapidly changing environment we are operating in, both COVID-19, border and immigration changes and government policy initiatives.

The Project Creative Economy (PCE) project, now named the Digital Screen Campus Project, has the internal Programme Control Board operating as is the separate Project Control Board for the construction leg of activity. Key positions have now been appointed to resource the work required to progress this project to the next stages of business case for the first phase and to develop key partnerships with Industry and Government.

The equity review response planning co-design process will continue in March 2022, following a resetting process led by Sacha McMeeking, Executive Director Māori, Pacific and Equity, who starts in her new role mid-February 2022.

The current priority of the Kaihautū Taunaki Tangata | Director of Equity is to ensure that equity is designed across the current UC COVID-19 response. This focus recognises the disproportionate negative outcomes the pandemic is having on the most at-risk populations. The Director of Equity is on the UC COVID-19 Business As Usual Steering Group to assist with equity-focused responses across the workstreams.

Environmentally Sustainable

A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up between Christchurch City Council (CCC) and UC to clarify the role of each agency in managing the Waitutu/Okeover Stream (including a box drain along a portion of Ilam fields). The draft is with CCC for approval. We are also working with CCC to advance planned works to daylight this boxed drain for teaching, research, operational and ecological reasons.

A Waste Strategy has been drafted to identify key performance targets. This is intended to help frame interventions and provide new benchmarks for our waste services provider.

Biodiversity improvements will be advanced in 2022 through the employment of a fixed-term Biodiversity Projects Coordinator. This role is currently being advertised.

The procurement plan for the Climate Change Infrastructure Assessment (flagged in the Climate Change Risk Register) is being finalised. We intend to go to market in quarter two to start this work by quarter three.

UC, with Waikato University and the Waikato Wellbeing Project, is developing a proposal for a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Declaration roundtable. This online event aims to provide organisations who signed up to the SDG Summit Declaration last year with an opportunity to discuss their progress and any barriers they have met.