

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

July 2022

Introduction

After a well-earned break for students and many staff, the second semester of the 2022 academic year started on Monday 18 July.

I had the opportunity to travel internationally on official university business for the second time since my appointment as Vice-Chancellor – the previous trip being in 2019 before the pandemic. The trip was to Australia where I visited the Australia National University (ANU), University of Canberra and the University of Adelaide. I had the opportunity to look at many of their facilities and in particular, student accommodation facilities. For the Adelaide leg of the trip, I was part of a Mayoral delegation to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sister City relationship. The scale of the investments in the universities I visited was most impressive with significant funding from the three tiers of Australian government. At the Civic reception, I met with one of the Flinders University DVCs and since then there has been focussed follow up. I shall be working with colleagues across UC to ensure that opportunities for collaboration are followed up.

On a very positive note, I wish to commend UC Business School for earning reaccreditation from the European Foundation for Management Development (EQUIS). With this reaccreditation, the School has maintained the gold standard 'triple-crown' of international business school accreditations, reflecting that it conducts impactful research, empowers students and offers high-quality education. The report was very positive overall and one of the specific commendations was the change to a faculty model with clear internal governance. I was also gratified to read that there is a culture of positivity and openness. A key area for improvement is internationalisation, which is not surprising given our experience of about two years of border closure.

Engagement

Late June, we launched Te Kakau a Maui, our scholarship for the 150th anniversary. Focused on increasing access through outreach to students from decile 1-7 schools across the South Island, and screening applicants by the power of their motivation and plans to make a difference to their community, these scholarships are a gamechanger. The announcement kicked off a debate in the media on equity and access in the New Zealand education system that largely validated the need to address these issues. More information on the scholarships later in the report.

In July, we shared the UC Foundation Annual Report and stories through video content, our UC news page and social media while maximising the use of the homepage and Facebook banner to highlight student success. These stories show that UC is an engaged university, empowering students to thrive and succeed, building strong partnerships, and delivering creative and innovative research, as well as drawing attention to the generosity of donors and supporters.

UC hosted the two-day regional Ngā Manu Kōrero speech competitions, regarded as the most significant annual event on the Māori education calendar – both regionally and nationally. All secondary schools were invited to participate in the competition, which focuses on nurturing the bilingual oratory skills of taiohi Māori and encourages bilingualism and fluency in te reo Māori. This was the first time that UC has been the host in the Waitaha regional competition's 57-year history and our involvement this year signals the beginning of a potentially long-term partnership with the competition.

In January we announced our partnership with the New Zealand Game Developers Association (NZGDA) to sponsor its 2022 Kiwi Game Starter Competition, a business start-up competition supporting the best of Aotearoa New Zealand's up-and-coming game development talent. Three talented teams became the finalists announced late last month. Professor Andy Phelps, Programme Director of UC's Digital Screen Campus programme, was one of the three visionary judges tasked with identifying the finalists from an exceptional pool of entrants.

Overall, the three Career Fairs for 2022 have been successful. Although they were all conducted online, that did not seem to affect the level of participation among the companies, given so many of them are now familiar and comfortable with this form of presentation. This event will be moving back to an in-person event next year.

UC Aerospace students recently took part in the Spaceport America Cup, the world's largest student rocketry competition, in New Mexico, USA. The team received positive feedback on their rocket and air-brake design. They were the first team to represent Aotearoa New Zealand in this competition.

UC Ōtehiwai Mt John Observatory was opened to the public as part of the Matariki Mackenzie festival. Astronomy research students, academics and staff talked to visitors about the telescopes, research and activities at the observatory.

Kaiārahi rangahau facilitated a blessing ceremony held for the Edward Percival Field Station, in Kaikōura Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura before the site was vacated ready for demolition. The event was attended by current and former staff as well as family of Professor George Knox, who was instrumental in establishing the research wing. Ngāti Kurī led the ceremony, while Head of the School of Biological Sciences Professor Matthew Turnbull spoke on behalf of the many UC manuhiri and kaimahi in attendance.

Professor Donald Matheson, Media and COMS, worked with an undergraduate student to run four sessions for Te Mātāpuna Mātātahi | Children's University. Students aged 7–11 years took part in this opportunity to think about media more deeply.

UC hosted the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to introduce the mayors of our region to UC generally and to members of the Senior Leadership Team in particular, with the aim of strengthening our relationship with them. The visit showcased the educational opportunities available to students at UC and solidified our commitment to engaging with the region. The event opens up future opportunities for UC to have wider conversations about education in Canterbury, the range of research currently under way across the campuses and how the Forum can be a useful advocate for our institution.

In June, UC staff quoted in the media included Sacha McMeeking and Professor Letitia Fickel (on 150th anniversary scholarships), Professor Simon Kingham, Dr Jarrod Gilbert, Associate Professor Laura Revell (and her PhD students Helena Ruffell and Alex Aves on microplastics), Associate Professor Steve Weddell (on a NASA collaboration), Professor Alex Tan (with an op-ed in *Stuff*),

Professor Steven Ratuva, Emeritus Professor Greg Newbold, Associate Professor Arindam Basu (on monkeypox) and Professor Mike Plank (on COVID-19).

Specialist Teaching and Research Technician Graeme Plank and MSc student Ben Lowe have been visiting schools to inspire the junior and senior students about astronomy. In these sessions, they present information on what astronomers do, and also engage students in interactive roleplays, looking for sunspots using a solar telescope and viewing objects on the Port Hills through Dobsonian and Galileo telescopes.

UC Māori and UC Pasifika undertook significant community outreach across June. Staff visited 35+ schools across Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington to run sessions for Māori and Pacific students specifically. The sessions, which engaged over 600 students in total, heavily promoted UC's scholarship offerings, including the 150th anniversary scholarships.

Professor Felipe Voloch from Mathematics and Statistics gave a talk and led a discussion about cryptography with a group of high-functioning young adults at Socially Speaking, a private company collaborating with people on the autistic spectrum. Felipe shared with them how cryptography has moved from the ancient art of sending secret messages to become the basis for internet security, and how it's now poised to be revolutionised again because of the potential threat of quantum computers.

Education – Accessible, Flexible Future Focussed

The start of Semester 2 has been marked by an increase in activity and a noticeable buzz across campus. Te Pātaka, the student hub in Puaka-James Hight, has been especially busy supporting students who are seeking advice and changing enrolments for the second semester, as well as welcoming new students.

Fourteen PhD students have received new UC scholarships that will help them tackle sustainability issues. These scholarships, which are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will enable emerging researchers at UC to pursue projects in areas as diverse as health, early childhood education, indigenous youth leadership, food security, green design, gender and equity, ecosystems, peace and justice, community, carbon capture in oceans, and transport.

This semester UC is launching the only undergraduate degree offering an Aerospace Engineering minor in Aotearoa, coordinated by Mechanical Engineering Lecturer Dr Natalia Kabaliuk. Aerospace Engineering involves designing, developing, testing and producing aircraft, spacecraft and related systems and equipment.

[Distributed Leadership in Teaching Development Programme \(DLTP\) scholars](#) for 2022 have now been selected, while the [2020 and 2021 cohorts](#) are receiving ongoing support. Among the successful scholars this year are Associate Professor Billy O'Steen, School of Educational Studies and Leadership, and Associate Professor Darren Gravley, School of Earth and Environment, for their project on "Blending Field Science Education with Social Entrepreneurship and Environmental Conservation through a Virtual Zipline".

Associate Professor Arindam Basu from the Faculty of Health received a DLTP scholarship for his project titled "Building the 'Metaversity' of Canterbury". This ambitious project aims to build and test a model of experiential teaching in a setting of extended reality over a web browser. Ultimately, this experiential teaching model will build on and extend the 'traditional' classroom through Web3,

metaverse and virtual reality (VR). These environments will be applicable across UC disciplines so the term ‘Metaversity’ is apt.

Based in the UC Business School’s Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, Associate Professor Ann-Marie Kennedy received her DLTP scholarship for her project “Incorporating Student Voice in Engagement with Online Learning”. Her project aims to explore and validate additional online engagement measures to support student retention, success and pedagogical development. The students folded into the project will self-define their own engagement types and levels of interaction with AKO | LEARN and identify how and when they want intervention. This information will in turn give current support networks in UC (eg, teaching staff and Analytics for Course Engagement (ACE) users) a better understanding of student needs. Ultimately this will lead to the creation of student engagement/learning archetypes so that academics to have relevant information about developing courses and taking pedagogical approaches that are most suited to their student cohorts.

Lecturers Hilary Kingston and Nikki Tod, School of Teacher Education, were successful in securing a scholarship for their project on “Building Authentic Partnerships to Inform Using Narrative Pedagogy in ITE [Initial Teacher Education] Programmes”. The project’s two overarching aims are to:

- identify a process for engaging with mana whenua that is authentic, culturally safe and appropriate
- understand the use of cultural narrative as a pedagogy to enhance design and delivery of educational programmes across the University.

Lecturer Nicola Dunham was successful in attaining a DLTP scholarship to drive her project ‘Story Globe: Immersive narratives for teaching and learning’. This project involves converting video-based community research resources into an immersive VR experience. The proof of concept showcases the use of video narrative embedded within an interactive virtual story globe. Users can manipulate this story globe in the VR space to select areas of the globe populated with narratives relating to the issue of indigenous responses to alcohol misuse in children aged 13 years and under. A UC HitLab team has built the VR pilot using Unreal Engine and the Oculus Rift headset.

Multiple seminars and workshops for UC staff in June and July had a major focus on blended teaching and learning. Over 80 academic and support staff attended across nine different sessions. Taking a hybrid format, they included the UC academic integrity module, student data and feedback for teaching – ACE teacher dashboards, use of quizzes in AKO | LEARN, assessment design in a blended and online world and engaging with distance students in real time – to name a few.

MSc Environmental Science student Grace Feltham, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, published a thought-provoking opinion piece on *Stuff* and in the *Christchurch Press* about Matariki and light pollution.

Audiology students Tare Lowe (Kāi Tahu) and James Dawson joined the Eisdell Moore Centre Whakarongo Mai podcast series to discuss te reo Māori speech assessment and New Zealand audiology programmes. They contributed to episode 4, “Everything We Do Should Be ‘Mana Enhancing’”.

BSc third-year student Julia Palmer, in a recently completed study through her summer scholarship for the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai Trust research project, found 175 different invertebrate species living in the restored wetland at Charlesworth Reserve. Forty of these were common species and 135

were rare. They included spiders, beetles, bees and wētā. Her work built on earlier research in 2016 and 2017 that found 39 insect species and a 2020/21 study that found 73 species.

TVNZ 1 Breakfast interviewed Teacher Education students Ila Reeves and Max Beach from the Faculty of Education on 16 June. Responding to a question about teacher shortages across New Zealand, they agreed that their prospects of getting a job were positive once they qualified for the degree. Both students could not imagine doing anything other than teaching and, while they had a degree of concern about the salary that awaits them, they had no doubt that they would become employed in their chosen profession.

Research – Impact on a Changing World

UC's research and research impact continued at pace over the last month, which included disseminating high-profile research outputs and supporting and translating research into beneficial outcomes.

The 2022 Food, Fibre and Agritech (FFA) Supernode Challenge climaxed in an outstanding showcase during E Tipu: The Boma Agri Summit at the Christchurch Town Hall. The gala evening on 21 June highlighted and rewarded the impressive prize-winning thinking behind the top 12 ventures entered in this year's Challenge. UC's Centre for Entrepreneurship also had a joint trade stand with ChristchurchNZ at the two-day summit, demonstrating the close partnership between UC and ChristchurchNZ and providing a platform for FFA Challenge teams to interact with the summit attendees.

The overall winners and grand prize recipients were Associate Professor Ken Morison and student Mahnaz Shahverdi, Chemical and Process Engineering, for SuperPro – a highly soluble and nutritional pea protein for the expanding plant-based foods market. The runners-up for the Research Award were student Daniel Mak, Professor Renwick Dobson, Biological Sciences, and Associate Professor Volker Nock, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, for Winealyse – a tool to analyse wine quality quickly and cost-effectively.

UC was also a sponsor of the recent Christchurch Aerospace Challenge to support new innovations and potential commercialisation in aerial imaging for local and regional disaster and natural hazards planning. Associate Professor Wolfgang Rack (Gateway Antarctica) was a finalist in the challenge with a proposed innovation for remote and autonomous snow-depth mapping.

A two-year Canterbury study is kicking off in 2022's rugby season amid growing concern about health and safety in the sport. Faculty of Health lead researcher Professor Nick Draper aims to gain a better understanding of collisions in junior rugby. Through funding from the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation and the Neurological Foundation, this timely study explores the possible health consequences of collisions for young brains and the potential of rugby headgear to reduce collision forces. "There are parents who are choosing not to let their children play rugby as more concussion cases come to light, and I think as researchers and as a university, we have a responsibility to the community to better understand collisions in junior rugby," Nick says.

In her capacity as a member of the EdTechNZ board, Associate Professor Kathryn MacCallum has accepted an invitation from the Ministry of Education to support sector consultation on the NZ Digital Strategy, including through workshops and other activities in the coming months. Professor Pavel Castka presented to the New Zealand Food Safety Science and Research Centre on the use of

technology for remote auditing (as highlighted during the pandemic) and its implications for food procedures and regulators. Kathryn was also invited to speak at the 11th International Conference on Education and Management Innovation (ICEMI 2022) with a presentation focused on “Supporting the Creation Mixed Reality (XR) Artefacts and Its Implications on Technology Pedagogical and Content Knowledges”.

Among lesser-known rankings emphasising different aspects of university activity, the latest 2022 Leiden Rankings show UC is the top New Zealand university for the number of publications available through open access at 56.8%, and 10th equal in Oceania. Open access to research publications is an increasingly important issue, especially where the research has been publicly funded. New Zealand has one of the lowest rates of open access to research outputs in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Lodging research outputs in the UC Library Repository to enable “Green Open Access” is a cost-effective method of giving the public access to UC’s research. Open-access publishing also increases citation rates by around 50%. The Leiden Rankings are based on “Web of Science” indexing. Open-access publishing in the New Zealand university sector is the topic of a newly established working group convened by Universities New Zealand after an initial assessment by the Office of the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor.

Open-access publishing is also available via “Read & Publish” agreements with Wiley, Springer Nature and Oxford University Press within the Australian and New Zealand library consortium. Publishing is capped under these agreements, meaning that when the cap is reached, UC authors lose the ability to publish openly. The library consortium is encouraging UC researchers to target these high-impact publishers early in the calendar before the publishers reach their cap.

The UC Library has agreed to support the publication of a new open text, *He Awa Whiria*. This text contains case studies of research projects where mātauranga Māori and western research conventions have been combined using the braided rivers methodology, *He Awa Whiria* (inspiring the name of the text).

Editors of *He Awa Whiria* will be UC Professor Angus MacFarlane, along with Associate Professor Sonja MacFarlane of Massey University and Dr Melissa Derby of Waikato University. Authors will include researchers from research institutes, universities and government departments.

This will be a traditional text published in print (on demand via Canterbury University Press) and online (via the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Collective Pressbooks platform). The eight members of the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL) have agreed to share the cost of publication, as the text will be useful across the universities.

UC continues to publish in the highest-impact journals in recent months, including in *Nature Communications* and *Scientific Reports*. Associate Professor Matthew Stott, Biological Sciences, is a co-author of a paper looking at the role of tungsten in anaerobic thermophilic archaea, while Adjunct Senior Fellow Graham Hill, Gateway Antarctica, has published on carbon dioxide-rich magma at Mt Erebus. Publications from the School of Earth and Environment have come from PhD student Nicholas Patton, on modelling of current and future soil organic carbon-stocks, and Senior Lecturer Shelley MacDonell on air temperature drops and wind pattern change in Chile associated with the 2019 total eclipse. In addition, PhD student François Thoral, with his UC supervisors in Biological Sciences, has published on seasonal trends and impacts of coastal heatwaves.

A number of media outlets shared an article in *The Conversation* by UC Senior Lecturer Dr Michele Bannister and Associate Professor James Scott from the University of Otago about the meteor seen above New Zealand this month. The article explained the fireball had the explosive power of 1,800 tonnes of TNT and set off a sonic boom heard throughout the southern parts of the North Island. The event was captured from space by US satellites.

Adjunct Senior Fellows Alan Gilmore and Pam Kilmartin, UC asteroid hunters extraordinaire, have named an asteroid they discovered in honour of eminent mathematician UC Distinguished Professor Roy Kerr. Professor Kerr is renowned for his influential work in astrophysics and solving Einstein's theory of relativity.

The next round of Aho Hīnāture | Accelerator Scholarships has opened with an increasing funding allocation for up to 70 PhD scholarships. Applications are open to any student currently in Aotearoa and a small number will be set aside for projects with no named student. This Aho Hīnāture programme has been a hugely successful initiative to support research students and researcher supervisory teams. This year has also seen the first return of stipend payments for master's scholarship holders since their withdrawal post-earthquake: the first round has awarded 14 students up to \$14,000 a year towards fees to support their research, while a second round is due in October 2022. The number of doctoral scholarships being offered in 2022/23, within planned programmes, has nearly doubled from last year.

Briana Steven from Mechanical Engineering has recently been awarded *both* Fulbright and William Georgetti scholarships to support her Master of Engineering in Bioengineering at UC Berkley, California. Her win of both awards highlights how our students are doing stellar work and their potential to have a huge impact on the world stage.

UC is again hosting the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition in partnership with Research First to challenge our postgraduate research students to share their research findings in three minutes or less. Winning contenders are in line to win a grand prize of \$5,000 and represent UC at the Asia Pacific Finals (if a PhD student) or the New Zealand finals (if a master's student). Prizes for second- and third-place entrants are also awarded.

Recent PhD graduate Iveren Abiem's research is based in Nigeria in association with UC's Nigerian Montane Forest Project. This research is part of the biodiversity-conservation project led by Associate Professor Hazel Chapman and is partly funded by philanthropic donations from Chester Zoo in England and the AG Leventis Foundation. Iveren plans to support research in Nigeria that will promote policies to both improve the livelihoods of Africans and strengthen environmental and climate protections for their continent.

People – Nurturing Staff, Thriving Students

The People and Culture team is developing UC-specific online learning content for staff. The current focus is on interactive compliance training driven by legislative requirements, including the Privacy Act 2020 and Pastoral Care Code.

The recruitment specialists led a successful pilot workshop focused on the impact of unconscious biases on attracting and selecting candidates in relation to equity and diversity. The workshop, anchored in Ngā Uara | Values, sought to raise awareness of stereotypes, use of language to create or remove barriers and how to prepare as a selection panel member. The workshop received a very

positive response and will become a framework that provides future support for hiring managers and recruitment panels across UC.

UC is diversifying its recruitment advertising channels. Following conversation with our partners in Te Waka Pākākano, we are now advertising Māori and Pasifika roles on Ahu Jobs. Ahu Jobs is a new recruitment website focusing on connecting businesses with Māori and Pasifika capability and is now available as part of our Snaphire advertising suite.

Occupancy with the UC accommodation portfolio is increasing this year with new initiatives to attract students above first year, as well as the likely return of a small number of international/Study Abroad students. As at 30 June, 85% of rooms were contracted compared with 75% at the same time in 2021. This includes 106% occupancy for first-year catered facilities (with overflow at Ilam Apartments) and 62% for apartment-style self-catered facilities. Semester 2 arrivals will increase occupancy by an estimated 55 rooms.

A familiarisation visit to accommodation partner UniLodge facilities in Melbourne and Canberra has been undertaken to inform the planning and accommodation programme mandate for new and enhanced facilities to meet identified needs over the next 10 years.

Directors of Accommodation and Wellbeing and the UC Security Manager have initiated a new project, Positive Community Behaviours, to address the ongoing and increasing alcohol-related anti-social behaviours within the community adjacent to our campuses. A Steering Group that includes external stakeholders such as the University of Canterbury Students' Association (UCSA), halls, residents, police and Lincoln University has been formed to oversee initiatives ranging from education and influencing to early-stage interventions and growing positive relationships with neighbours. An alcohol and drug harm reduction review is under way to inform this programme.

The Student Care team appointed Sophie Bailey to a new role as Sexual Harm Prevention Coordinator in June 2022. Working collaboratively with staff and students, the role will provide expert advice and lead the development of interventions and initiatives designed to reduce sexual harm.

The Health Centre has remained busy with significant flu-like illnesses, and we have seen several notifications for patients with a second infection of COVID-19. The Medical Centre is encouraging influenza vaccinations and has been running a dedicated clinic for this purpose. COVID-19 vaccine clinics commenced from 18 July 2022. We are running a dedicated measles, mumps and rubella, influenza and COVID-19 booster vaccination stand-up on 27 and 28 July 2022 in Haere-roa in collaboration with UCSA, Community and Public Health, and Pegasus, using an external COVID-19 vaccination team.

Kaihautū Taunaki Kaupapa | Director Projects and Innovation Jeanine Tamati-Elliffee has been named as a finalist in the 2022 Women in Governance Awards. These awards are an annual celebration of the women and organisations working to achieve gender diversity on boards. The winners will be announced on Thursday 4 August.

Engineering graduate Yuyin Kueh was named the Young Energy Professional of the Year at the New Zealand Energy Excellent Awards. Yuyin graduated BE(Hons) from UC in 2014 with first class honours in Electrical Engineering.

Internationalisation – Locally Engaged, Globally Networked

The International team was excited to welcome our largest international cohort in the last 2 years for the start of Semester 2 in July. This cohort included both students coming to us via the border exception process and a group of new Study Abroad students. At the same time, we continue to work with a cohort of students studying with UC from offshore in Semester 2 as we transition towards the border reopening. A range of welcome and orientation activities were held the week prior to the start of Semester 2 for both onshore and offshore students.

With student visa processing due to open from midnight 31 July, it is expected that some currently enrolled offshore students will be hoping to secure visas and travel to New Zealand during Semester 2. While it is expected that visa processing will take some time, parameters have been put in place for these students, who must arrive prior to the exam period or complete their semester offshore.

In advance of the border reopening, a large focus for the international recruitment team throughout this month has been preparing to re-enter the market and ensuring our agent network is well supported to promote the university's offerings. A visit was conducted in July to Auckland-based international agents to reconnect. In the coming months visits to Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, and Japan are also planned, along with Study Abroad travel to the US.

UC is also beginning to resume outbound student mobility, with a small number of students planning to travel on semester student exchanges in September. A virtual exchange fair will be held in Semester 2 in conjunction with UC exchange partners as we look to resume wider mobility in 2023.

Supported by the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Network's Creative Economy and Culture International Link (REACTIK), Language, Social and Political Sciences (LSAP) Professor Natalia Chaban presented a keynote address "Understanding the Strategic Role of Culture in International Relations: A perceptual approach" at the Network's final event *Perspectives on the Future of EU Cultural Diplomacy* at the University of Copenhagen on 20 June. Natalia is an AI in this Jean Monnet Network.

Natalia also won a competitive Senior Research Fellowship from the Institute of Advanced Studies (Istituto di Studi Avanzati (ISA)) of University of Bologna, Italy. She undertook the fellowship in June, collaborating with the Department of Political and Social Sciences. Within the framework of the ISA Senior Researcher Fellowship at Bologna, Natalia gave her ISA public lecture on "Crisis, Conflict and Critical Diplomacy: EU perceptions in Ukraine after the Maidan".

Organisational Efficacy – of a sustainable scale by 2030

The University has recorded its highest ever number of domestic enrolments this year. This record high is partly the flow-on effect of the previous record enrolment levels achieved in 2021 and the COVID pandemic control measures, which limited offshore travel and caused many people to choose a change in career. Coming economic headwinds along with high employment levels will mean that the University will continue to experience changing patterns of enrolment.

The Digital Services team led three staff hui this month. Participants reflected on the changes involved in creating Digital Services, their vision and what has been delivered in the last six months. They also looked ahead to the major enablement initiatives planned.

The new University Service Experience platform launched smoothly last month, and the Digital Services team is busy bedding in the new ways of working with Service Now across various service

management processes. The project team is now turning to focus on phase 2 and onboarding People and Culture onto the Service Experience platform, planned for launch in quarter 4.

Following business case approval earlier this year, a preferred platform (Jaggaer) has been selected for UC's hazardous chemical management. As well as standardising and improving our health and safety processes in handling chemicals across UC, the new platform will optimise the purchasing and inventory management of chemicals, further reducing the wastage in chemical disposal required each year. The project team is working closely with a cross-UC group of key users and subject-matter experts to roll out the platform to all schools by the end of February 2023.

The RecCentre is in the process on onboarding a new software program, Perfect Gym. This will enable advanced analytics and reporting tailor-made to help the team run all operational aspects of this business, which was not previously available.

Environmentally Sustainable

A Plastic Free July campaign has been a focus for the month. The communications campaign included internal and external messages, on-campus activations, research stories, student stories and opinion pieces. [See Plastic Free July stories.](#)

The University has featured as one of four case studies in an ANZ Insights paper called "Hitting the Target". The [paper](#) profiles businesses, such as UC, that have already made a noticeable difference to their carbon emissions and have a clear plan moving forward. It's written is to help other businesses move in the same direction.

We have begun to talk with the Christchurch City Council (CCC) about holding a joint Sustainability Showcase in October this year. Initial discussions have focused on the format and how we will ensure it is genuinely joint event. We discussed the concept of joint talks and the presence of many key players among CCC's partners, such as Lyttelton Port Company, Christchurch Airport and Orion.

UC is on track to reduce carbon emissions from coal to zero by 2025 and to become carbon net neutral by 2030, in line with the sustainability aspirations of Tangata Tū, Tangata Ora | Strategic Vision 2020–2030. Three large projects are currently under way to support these aspirations: the conversion of the coal boilers on Ilam campus to biomass; the conversion of UC buildings to ground-source heat pumps; and the refurbishment of the Ann Ballin building (formally Psychology staff building).

The Ann Ballin building has reached the end of its current working life and will be extensively refurbished to provide modern staff and teaching spaces for a further 50 years. Construction begins this month and is expected to be completed for the start of Semester 2, 2023. To prepare this building for a low-carbon future, the refurbishment will reduce the energy required to heat the building through incorporating double glazing, upgraded insulation, improved fresh air systems and low-temperature hot-water radiators. This will be the first retrofitted building at UC to install these radiators to connect to ground source heat pump systems in the future. In addition, a new hospital simulation area will help students develop their bedside psychology consultation skills. Other additions will be two new computer teaching labs, gender-neutral toilets, acoustic and kitchen upgrades and new building services.

EPECentre has been awarded a contract from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority to study the efficiency and network interoperability of electric vehicle (EV) chargers as they begin to proliferate in step with the increasing numbers of EVs on our roads.

VC Activities

07 July 2022	Attended a series of meetings in Canberra to inform planning and accommodation programme mandate
08 July 2022	Attended an Association of Commonwealth Universities Pacific Regional Committee meeting in Canberra
11 – 12 July 2022	Part of a Christchurch City Council delegation attending various meetings with strategic partners including University of Adelaide, Adelaide Economic Development Agency, Australian Space Agency and Australian Space Discovery Centre
18 July 2022	Hosted an informal visit by Hon Siaso Sovaleni, Prime Minister of Tonga
19 July 2022	Attended a Tokona te Raki Board meeting
22 July 2022	Chaired a Vice-Chancellor's meeting via Zoom
25 July 2022	Hosted the Southern Mayoral Delegation
25 July 2022	Presented at the Rotary Club and talked about the UC vision and future priorities
27 July 2022	Met with Christchurch City Council CEO, Dawn Baxendale
28 July 2022	Attended a New Zealand Qualifications Authority Board meeting in Wellington