2024 - 2026

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN

AFTRS
Creating the Future

Artwork Story
GAPALA

It means the ripples from a canoe in the water and reflections of stones being thrown in the water.

This artwork was created by Gwiyaala Aboriginal Art: Bronwen Smith Yuin, Nation Walbunja woman and Gavin Chatfield, Wiradjuri man.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) is located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Bidjigal peoples.

AFTRS is committed to learning and deepening our understanding of responsibility to Country, and as a School, committed to building a sense of community that respects First Nations principles of belonging.

The First Nations Strategic Plan acknowledges that First Nations storytelling practices and principles are thousands of years old and that AFTRS values a practice-based approach to teaching and learning and seeks to embed First Nations values within the school through its alignment with First Nations' practices and principles.

The Statement of Purpose

The Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (ESSP) responds to the ambitions articulated in the Australian Film Television and Radio School's (AFTRS) 5-year corporate strategy – Creating the Future – and has co-dependencies with other School strategic plans including the First Nations Strategic Plan (FNSP), the Learning & Teaching Strategic Plan and the Technology Strategic Plan. First Nations Values and Knowledges sit at the heart of the strategy and the School. Recognising 60,000 plus years of ongoing and reciprocal care for Country, work in this sustainability area will be guided by First Nations Knowledges as articulated in the FNSP.

The ESSP sits within the Sustainability pillar of AFTRS Corporate Strategy. Environmental sustainability measures are embedded into all key business plans.

Environment, social and governance (ESG) factors are some of the most important considerations for every modern entity – everything from sustainability to human rights, ethics, culture and regulatory compliance fall under the ESG umbrella. AFTRS ESSP purely covers the environmental aspects of ESG.

01 National Reach
- First Nations
- Outreach & Inclusion
- Flexible Delivery

02 Excellence
Industry-aligned and future-focused
- Learning & Teaching
- Research
- Industry Engagement

03 Sustainability
- Business Development
- Resourcing
- Creativity & Wellbeing

Commitment to Continuous Review and Improvement
AFTRS is dedicated to ensuring the effectiveness, progress, and continuous improvement of our Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan (ESSP). To this end, we commit to an annual review of all initiatives and their measurable outcomes in September each year.

This process will include:

Assessing Progress:
Evaluating how AFTRS is tracking against the outlined goals and initiatives within the ESSP.

Identifying Challenges:
Pinpointing any obstacles encountered and strategising solutions to overcome them.

Celebrating Successes:
Highlighting and acknowledging the achievements and milestones reached in the past year.

Adjusting Strategies:
Making necessary adjustments to initiatives and tactics to ensure continued strategic alignment.

Living Country

The First Nations idea that "Country is Alive" is at the heart of sustainability. This means that as humans, we are connected to everything around us - landscape, water, stars and animals. We are part of a living system where everything is interconnected.

Living Country is also about how we, as people, can put this idea into action. We should understand that we are part of a local and global environment, and everything we create - whether it is products, buildings, or technology - should respect and reflect this living relationship with nature.
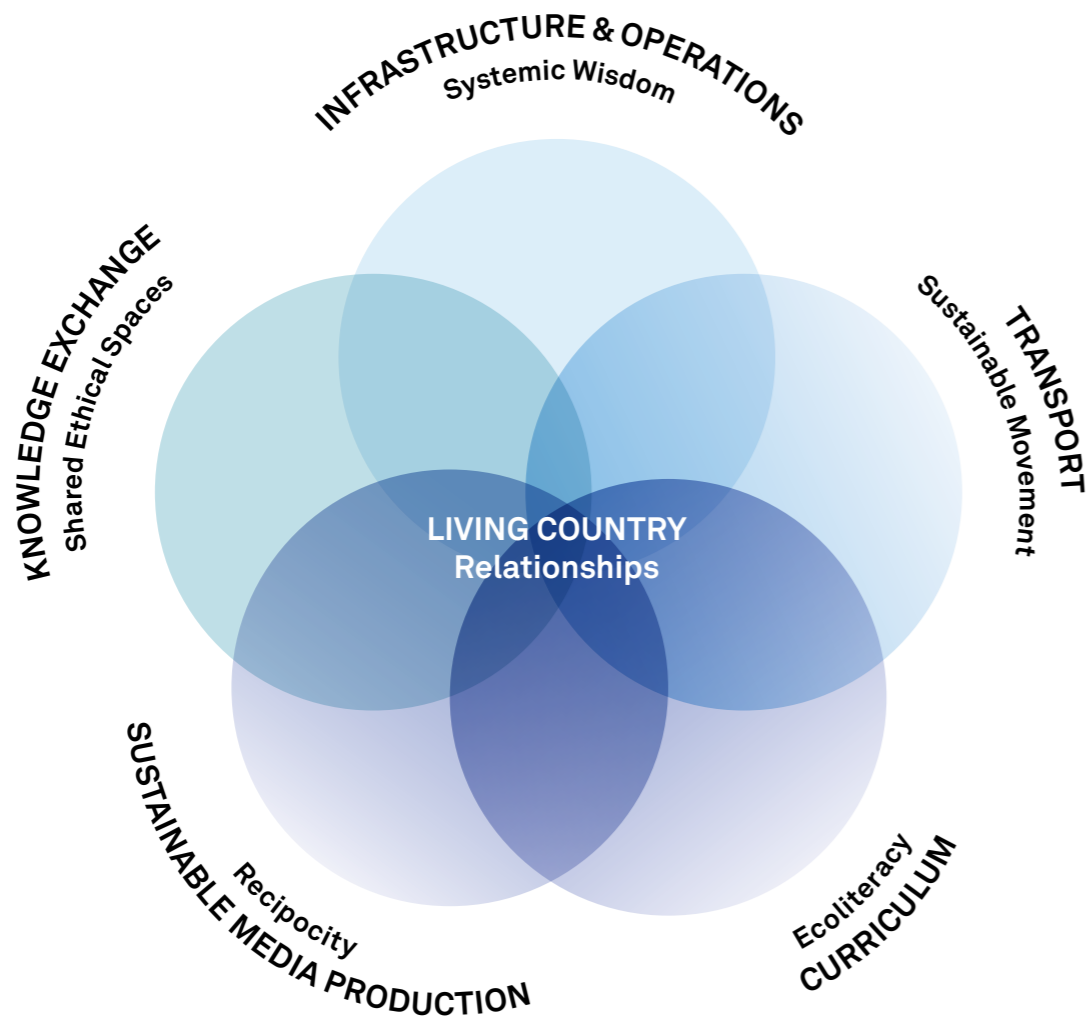
Core Environmental Sustainability Principles
Government APS Net Zero 2023
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Infrastructure & Operations: Systemic Wisdom

- Respect Limits: Acknowledge that ecosystems have limits. Avoid overuse of resources and work within sustainable boundaries.
- Think in Ecosystems: Understand that everything is part of a larger system. When planning projects, consider how each piece fits into the whole.
- Holistic View: Treat systems (Information, media, nature) as interconnected, informed networks, not just mechanical processes.

Transport: Sustainable Movement

- Flexible Delivery: AFTRS is committed to reducing travel by offering courses that can be completed remotely or on Country. This minimises the need for travel and supports local engagement.

Curriculum: Ecoliteracy

- Integrated Approach: Explore how media impacts the environment, from the materials used to the messages sent, and how media can support environmental sustainability.
- Ecomedia Literacy: Teach and learn about the connection between media and the natural world.

Sustainable Media Production: Reciprocity

- Environmental and Social Responsibility: Take responsibility for reducing harm to the environment and communities. Explore ways to offset carbon and reduce emissions.
- Use First Nations Knowledge: Incorporate sustainable practices inspired by First Nations teachings into every project or course.
- Care for the Land: Actively work to reduce environmental impacts – minimise waste, use sustainable materials, and be mindful of your carbon footprint.

Research and Knowledge Exchange: Shared Ethical Spaces

- Mutual Respect: Create spaces where different knowledge systems (like First Nations and Western science) can share ideas on equal terms.
- Diverse Perspectives: Encourage collaboration between diverse communities to solve problems in a respectful and generous way.
- Living Knowledge: Treat knowledge as evolving and connected to living systems, where new ideas can grow and adapt to changing environments.

Supporting Creating the Future Strategy

The screen and broadcast industries have a significant environmental impact, with each large-scale production contributing an average of 2,840 tonnes of CO_2 emissions. As a leading institution in these fields in Australia and globally, AFTRS is committed to making our operations, curriculum, and productions environmentally sustainable, aligning with the core First Nations principle of Living Country. This principle reminds us that the land and environment are alive, and we are part of a connected ecosystem that must be respected.

AFTRS embraces this by recognising our relationship with nature extends to the way we produce content and interact with the environment. We aim to ensure our activities, whether in production, teaching, or operations, honour this interconnectedness by reducing our carbon footprint and reflecting the balance between human activity and the natural world.

We are committed to embedding the values of Living Country into our operations, where we act not only as creators but as stewards of our environment. AFTRS will encourage our students, staff, and industry partners to adopt sustainable practices that respect this relationship with the land. This responsibility is essential for creating a future where the screen and broadcast industries thrive in harmony with the planet.

By taking practical steps to reduce our environmental impact, we will not only lower our carbon footprint but also inspire others in the industry to adopt sustainable practices. We will provide the resources necessary to support these efforts and promote Living Country as a guiding principle for all our work.

Driven by a commitment to reduce our environmental impact, promote sustainability, and honour our relationship with the land, our actions align with government sustainability goals. In 2023, we reviewed our Environmental Action Plan, outlining principles and goals for the next phase of our Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan, which now incorporates Living Country as a foundational element. This review will guide our efforts from 2024 to 2026, in line with AFTRS Corporate Strategy: Creating the Future.

AFTRS is committed to achieving Net Zero goals and reporting requirements by 2030. We will comply with relevant Commonwealth legislation and applicable environmental policies.

During the period of this strategy AFTRS will consider whether, in the long term, it will aim to become a certified environmentally conscious organisation (ISO 140001 Environmental Management System).

Sustainable Pillars

01 Infrastructure and Operations
AFTRS will create a safe, sustainable physical space for staff and students while actively reducing its environmental impact in the building, remotely, in the digital space and through offsite productions. AFTRS aims to implement practical cost-effective measures to reduce waste and to save on energy and resource use. AFTRS will endeavour to prioritise suppliers and partners with ethical and responsible sustainability practices.

AFTRS will increase staff and student awareness of environmental sustainability issues, and highlight what actions can be taken both individually, and as a school.

02 Transport
AFTRS is committed to addressing the impact of travel, across business travel, fleet emissions, its own productions and through a commitment to flexible working practices which reduce the carbon footprint of commuting staff. AFTRS will continue to invest in remote delivery, which will reduce the necessity for travel.

03 Curriculum
AFTRS is committed to embedding environmental sustainability throughout existing and future curriculum, enabling students, industry and the broader public to make positive changes to their workplaces in the future. AFTRS will facilitate the design and delivery of new courses or modules to support industry's efforts to reduce environmental impact and be more sustainable.

04 Sustainable Productions
AFTRS commits to measuring, then reducing, the environmental impact of its productions and projects, to continue to protect the land, space, and communities where we work and study.

05 Research and Knowledge Exchange
AFTRS will work with values-aligned partners to extend the commitment to transformative excellence it brings to its learning and teaching to environmental sustainability.

[1] BFI (2020), A Screen New Deal. https://wearealbert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Screen-New-Deal-Report-1.pdf
[2] https://www.finance.gov.au/government/climate-action-government-operations/aps-net-zero-emissions-2030

Infrastructure and Operations

RESPECT LIMITS

Acknowledge that ecosystems have limits. Avoid overuse of resources and work within sustainable boundaries.

AFTRS will create a safe, sustainable physical space for staff and students while actively reducing its environmental impact; both in the building or remotely, in the digital space and through offsite productions. AFTRS will endeavour to prioritise suppliers with ethical and responsible sustainability practices as part of its procurement processes.

CURRENT CONTEXT

AFTRS leases its building infrastructure and grounds through Carsingha, who hold the head lease for the Entertainment Quarter. Prior to occupying the premises in 2010, AFTRS specified that the building met the National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS) rating of 4.5 stars in the Accommodation/Project brief, which was part of the Agreement to Lease. In addition, the property complied with the building code at that time, including section J (Energy Efficiency). Since that substantial environmental audit, AFTRS has developed, implemented, and tracked usage of air conditioning, lighting, power and water usage, waste, paper, and recycling over several years.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE / TARGET

AFTRS is fully committed to meeting APS Net Zero targets by 2030. Furthermore, sustainability will be front of mind in all operational and capital investment decisions, covering emissions, waste reduction and responsible procurement practices.

AFTRS will work independently and with its landlord to facilitate improvements to operations, with particular focus on solar energy and waste management.

Sustainability will be a consideration in procurement practices.

AFTRS staff and students can propose and be part of initiatives, and awareness will be embedded in communication and training.

EMISSIONS

01 Initiatives:
Install solar generation on site to reduce CO_2 emissions

Measurables:
20% of electricity usage generated through solar

Dates:
01.07.26

02 Initiatives:
Participate in the Whole of Australian Government electricity contract

Measurables:
Signing of agreement to participate

Dates:
01.07.25

03 Initiatives:
Enhance reporting processes to comply with statutory requirements

Measurables:
• Carbon Emissions
• Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Requirements
• Compliance with APS reporting requirements

Dates:
01.07.27

04 Initiatives:
Reduce electricity usage in facilities

Measurables:
100% LED lighting in studios auto light switches and standby modes installed around the building

Dates:
01.07.26

05 Initiatives:
Minimise energy use by optimising cloud and server storage

Measurables:
Policies in place on retention of data to assist in minimising storage requirements

Dates:
Ongoing

06 Initiatives:
Powering down computer labs while not in use

Measurables:
Reduction in power usage

Dates:
28.02.26

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Infrastructure and Operations Cont.

PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

01 Initiatives:
Introduce sustainable procurement practices to reduce waste and increase social sustainability

Measurables:
- Include in procurement section of administrative orders
- Education of staff involved in procurement
- Education of selected existing suppliers

Dates:
30.06.25

WASTE REDUCTION

01 Initiatives:
Reduction in landfill - facilities

Measurables:
Place recycling bins on all floors throughout the building and work with the landlord to improve recycling initiatives, including composting

Dates:
01.07.24 ongoing

02 Initiatives:
Reduction in landfill - technology

Measurables:
- Ensure all e-waste is recycled through suitable programs
- Minimise photocopier use

Dates:
30.06.24 ongoing

03 Initiatives:
Minimise single use plastic use throughout the building

Measurables:
- Environmental impact to be included in event brief and risk assessments
- Reusable coffee cups encouraged
- Adequate access to water for refilling of bottles around campus

Dates:
30.06.25

GREEN SPACE

01 Initiatives:
Increase green spaces and biodiversity around the school

Measurables:
Work with landlord on surrounding areas to increase green space

Dates:
Ongoing

STAFF & STUDENT AWARENESS

01 Initiatives:
Increase staff and student awareness and engagement with sustainable practices

Measurables:
- Sessions at PD and O week
- Reminders in town hall, weekly Exec updates and student newsletters
- Set up a staff forum / specific working groups
- Launch dedicated award for sustainability innovation or practice

Dates:
01.03.25 ongoing

Transport

FLEXIBLE DELIVERY

AFTRS is committed to reducing travel by offering courses that can be completed remotely or on Country. This minimises the need for travel and supports local engagement.

Transport is one of the highest contributors to emissions in the screen industry, responsible for an average of 51% CO_2 on large-scale productions[3]. AFTRS is committed to reducing the impact of business and production travel, fleet emissions, and the carbon footprint of individuals travelling to the workplace. Delivery of courses at non-Sydney locations or online will reduce the need for individuals to travel to the School, avoiding associated emissions.

CURRENT CONTEXT

AFTRS carried out a survey early 2024 to understand the patterns of staff travel to/from the Moore Park workplace. Key findings were:

- 53% of staff drive to work
- 39% take 30mins or less to get to work
- 26% of trips take over 1 hour

No student information is currently available.

AFTRS is a 10-minute walk from Moore Park light rail station and is close to other bus routes (mainly eastern suburbs). Flexible working means that most staff work in the office at least two days per week under agreed flexible work plans.

AFTRS has a fleet of five vehicles - two vans, two trucks and one Ute. All fleet and business travel emissions are reported as part of the APS Emissions Reporting Tool annually.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE / TARGET

- Students and staff are encouraged to use sustainable modes of transport to travel to the campus
- Travel for business is considered a last resort if virtual meetings are an option
- Travel for business is at least 99% in economy class
- Use of fleet vehicles is minimised, with electric vehicles investigated at the time of replacement AFTRS will work with its landlord and the Entertainment Quarter to implement initiatives to encourage staff to utilise more sustainable modes of transport including EV charging stations, bicycle storage/parking, and improved wayfinding from the light rail station
- AFTRS will continue with its investment in remote delivery, including development of partnerships with other providers and delivering courses on Country

EMISSIONS

01 Initiatives:
Ensure that any work related travel is essential and is offset by green credits

Measurables:
- Justification provided on travel forms
- Investigate online options first for meetings and events
- Green offsets implemented
- Minimise number of people required to travel for events/conferences

Dates:
31.12.25

02 Initiatives:
Encourage and facilitate staff to travel to work through alternatives to internal combustion engine (ICE) private vehicles (this would include public transport, bikes and electric vehicles).

Measurables:
- At least 50% of staff travel to work through alternatives to ICE private vehicles

Dates:
Ongoing

03 Initiatives:
- Enter into partnership arrangements with education providers to deliver courses outside Sydney
- Reseach and scope a secure, stable remote access system for use by students and staff
- Work with local communities to deliver courses on Country through the On Country Pathways Program

Measurables:
- Contributes to corporate performance measure of 35% of course enrolments outside NSW
- Remote Access Strategy Plan, costed with an implementation timeline to support the future-proofing of AFTRS.
- Deliver up to 9 On Country Pathways Programs nationally

Dates:
Ongoing
31.12.26
01.09.24 to 31.03.26

[3] BFI (2020), A Screen New Deal. https://wearealbert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Screen-New-Deal-Report-1.pdf

Curriculum

INTEGRATED APPROACH

Explore how media impacts the environment, from the materials used to the messages sent, and how media can support environmental sustainability.

AFTRS is committed to embedding environmental sustainability throughout existing curriculum, and in future curriculum design, to educate students, industry and the broader public, thereby enabling them to make positive changes to their workplaces in the future.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Students receive training in the environmental impact of production activities through expert-led workshops or presentations (for example, by Sustainable Screens Australia). Crew and cast on student productions are encouraged to be personally responsible for reducing their environmental impact (for example, avoiding single use plastic item), scripts and production documentation are distributed electronically and call sheets include specific instructions on sustainability relevant to the production/location. Environmental factors are considered when choosing production locations.

Where possible, AFTRS assists the industry to reduce the environmental impact of productions by accepting donations of props and staging materials that might otherwise have gone to landfill.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE / TARGET

Environmental practices are embedded across the curriculum and productions. AFTRS will facilitate the design and delivery of new models, including the training of environmental officers to support the industry's efforts to reduce its environmental impact and be more sustainable. Such design may be internal or through partnership arrangements.

DESIGN

01 Initiatives:
Embed Sustainable Screens Australia awareness training into Staff Professional Development Week

Measurables:
Scheduled sessions at PD week

Dates:
01.03.25

02 Initiatives:
Design and implement an induction workshop on sustainable production for all student productions

Measurables:
Online module on Moodle

Dates:
31.07.25

03 Initiatives:
Embed resources from relevant partners, including Sustainable Screens Australia, to promote awareness of sustainability and environmental skills and practices in curriculum

Measurables:
Online modules and Moodle pages with appropriate content

Dates:
28.02.26

DELIVERY

01 Initiatives:
Design, or work with partners, to deliver a course to train on-set environmental implementation

Measurables:
Course delivery

Dates:
31.07.25

02 Initiatives:
Embed sustainable practices into the student production handbook

Measurables:
Inclusion in the student production handbook

Dates:
31.07.25

Sustainable Productions

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Take responsibility for reducing harm to the environment and communities. Explore ways to offset carbon and reduce emissions.

As a screen leader, AFTRS commits to measuring, then reducing, the environmental impact of its productions and projects to continue to protect the land, space, and communities where we work and study. Production protocols support the training of students and the wider upskilling of the screen and audio sectors.

CURRENT CONTEXT

AFTRS is an education partner with Sustainable Screens Australia (SSA), an emerging industry-funded initiative working to provide the sector with access to resources, education, and toolkits to accurately measure the carbon footprint of productions. This gives the School access to resources to better understand and measure the impact of AFTRS productions and the steps to reduce our environmental impact. This partnership provides the potential to co-develop training for industry.

AFTRS is also involved in Green Ears - a cross-industry initiative to encourage a more environmentally sustainable Australian audio landscape through education and setting guidelines.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE / TARGET

AFTRS commits to key deliverables across productions, including:
- The implementation of measures to track the carbon footprint of productions, with the aim of reducing that footprint
- Ensuring students leave AFTRS with the tools they need to implement green practices in the industry
- Promoting sustainability via on-screen/in-audio messaging within student projects. (For example, characters demonstrating eco-friendly practices on screen)

RESPONSIBLE RESOURCING

01 **Initiatives:**
Use appropriate resources to set and track production sustainability measures

Measurables:
- Production mandate: No single use plastics in all productions
- Prioritise reuse of props and materials and responsibly manage any waste
- Consider 'green-cost' of props and staging
- Use SSA sustainability checklists across productions

Dates:
S2, 2027

02 **Initiatives:**
Set production briefs for undergraduate and postgraduate productions that promote and raise awareness of sustainability

Measurables:
- Sustainability checks in all production risk assessments
- Set environment-themed production briefs
- Initiate minimal impact productions

Dates:
S2, 2026

Research and Knowledge Exchange

MUTUAL RESPECT

Create spaces where different knowledge systems (like First Nations and Western science) can share ideas on equal terms.

To enable meaningful and systemic change in the sector, supporting and strengthening communities of knowledge and practice must be at the heart of the next phase of work. AFTRS will work with values-aligned partners to ensure a commitment to transformative excellence in learning, teaching and environmental sustainability.

CURRENT CONTEXT

AFTRS is a thought-leader within the Australian screen and audio industry, with the sector looking to AFTRS for research outputs. However, there is limited research and available data on the impact of the Australian industry on the environment.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE / TARGET

Using its position as a thought leader, AFTRS will work with partners to investigate, raise the profile of, and conduct research into environmental issues within the screen and audio industries. The Digital Futures Summit forum will be used as a platform to facilitate discussions with industry, education and government.

AFTRS staff and students will be encouraged to propose and be part of initiatives, with awareness embedded in communication and training.

POLICY

01 **Initiatives:**
Ensure sustainability is considered in partnerships

Measurables:
Amend the Partnerships Policy & Procedure to include shared responsibility for sustainability

Dates:
31.03.25

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

01 **Initiatives:**
Use AFTRS position to influence and educate the screen and audio sector

Measurables:
- Add Sustainable Screens Australia as a standing agenda item on all cross-sector working groups, including the Screen Leaders Working Group and Arts8
- Include environmental sustainability as a focus topic of a future Digital Futures Summit
- Program thought leadership panels and talks on sustainability both internally and at conferences

Dates:
31 12.25

RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

01 **Initiatives:**
Design and commence a research partnership with a trusted partner focused on sustainability in screen and audio production
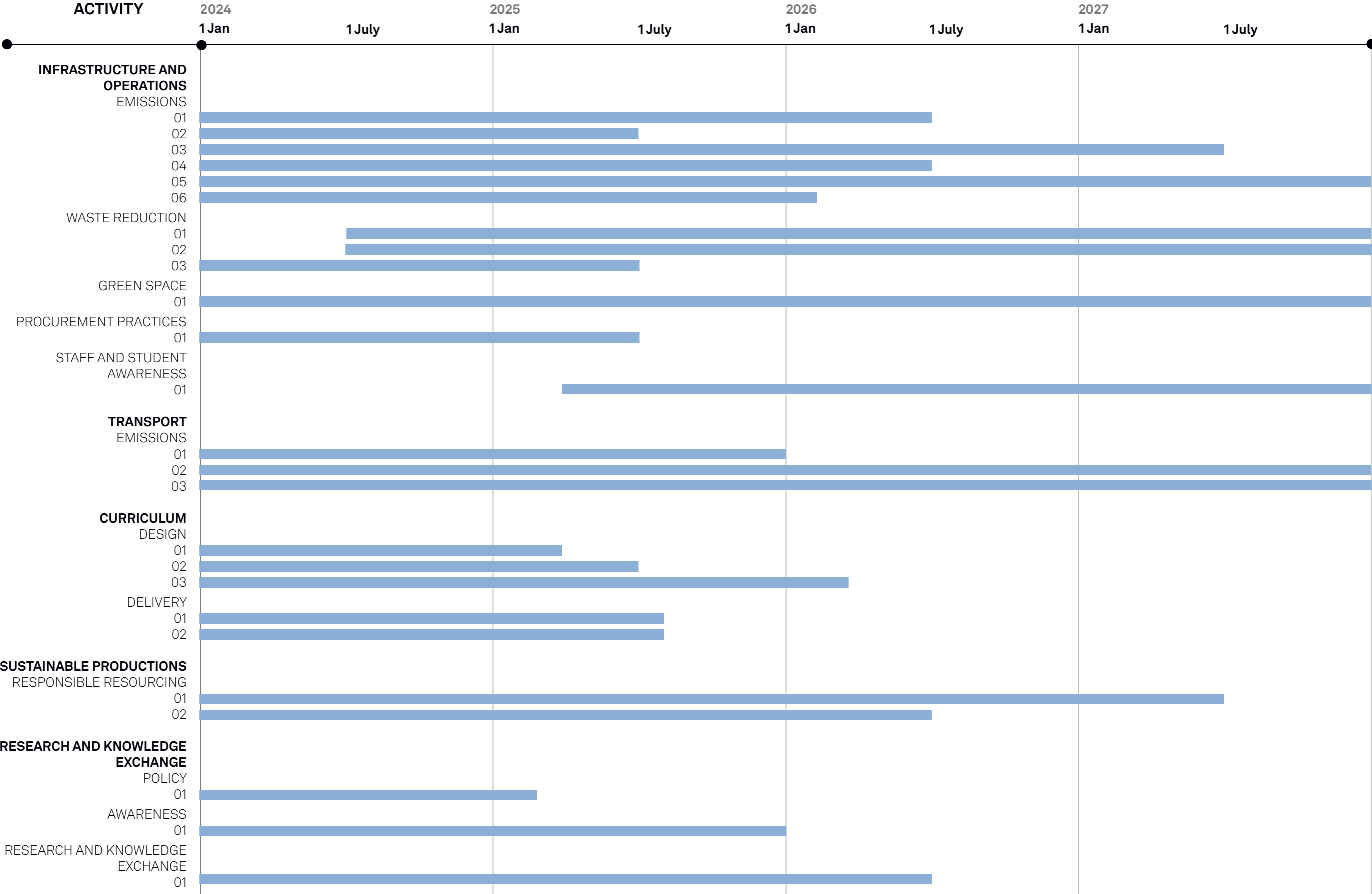
Measurables:
- One research partnership in place
- Encourage students to participate in AFTRS environmental research projects

Dates:
30.06.26

Roadmap

| ACTIVITY | 2024 1 Jan | 1 July | 2025 1 Jan | 1 July | 2026 1 Jan | 1 July | 2027 1 Jan | 1 July |

INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

EMISSIONS
01
02
03
04
05
06

WASTE REDUCTION
01
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GREEN SPACE
01

PROCUREMENT PRACTICES
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STAFF AND STUDENT AWARENESS
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SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIONS

RESPONSIBLE RESOURCING
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02

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

POLICY
01

AWARENESS
01

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
01

Australian Government