



Tiakina te Taiao Newsletter - March 2026

From NZ Tertiary Education Union <jared.commerer@teu.ac.nz>

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To Jared Commerer <jared.commerer@teu.ac.nz>

Tiakina te Taiao Newsletter March 2026

In this newsletter:

- Join the network advisory group
- Upcoming network meeting – 12pm, Wednesday 25 March
- CLIMATE RALLY: Airing the Government's Dirty Climate Laundry
- Sustainability action in tertiary education institutions – Air travel levies
- Read on for more climate news!

Tēnā koutou

Many fellow TEU members across the motu have experienced extreme weather events, most recently with flooding in Coromandel and Canterbury, and devastatingly in Mount Maunganui. Our thoughts are with all of those impacted by these disasters.

Given these events, it is shocking that our sustainability and climate change

action have been deprioritised nationally over the last few years – we need to see change in 2026. TEU are committed to sharing election policies with you as they become available. See this [Newsroom article](#) for a summary of recent climate policy changes.

Tiakina Te Taiao in 2026

The Tiakina Te Taiao Advisory Group has entered 2026 with renewed energy, as we welcome new advisory group and network members, and set our workplan for the next 2 years.

What we do

Tiakina te Taiao advocates for the tertiary education sector to play a leading role in climate change action in Aotearoa – and for this to be grounded in commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and intergenerational equity.

Our sector produces the research that provides solutions, prepares the next generation to be informed and make a difference across sectors, and we need more action and sustainability leadership on campus too.

The Advisory Group writes submissions on proposed climate-related changes (currently on the [proposal to disestablish the Ministry for the Environment](#)), works with other unions to strengthen our voices, and brings inspiring speakers to our network meetings.

How you can help

As part of our Workplan, we will begin planning an online conference centred on the relationship between tertiary education and the climate crisis. There is plenty to do and a wide range of skills needed.

Want to take climate action? Join our advisory group!

If you feel passionately that the planet must be protected so that we and our children can have a decent future, then please do [express your interest](#) in joining our Advisory Group and encourage other TEU members to join the

network or attend our next meeting on Wednesday 25 March – we will be joined by Chief Science Advisor at the Climate Change Commission, Dr Grant Blackwell (see details below).



Meet Amy Ross, TEU's new Te Pou Ahurei I National Secretary

We'd like to welcome TEU's new Te Pou Ahurei I National Secretary, Amy Ross. Amy joined our Advisory Group meeting in February and is most supportive of our kaupapa and the need to protect our environment for future generations. As Amy stated, "There are no jobs on a dead planet."

Read on for climate inspo!

In this edition of our newsletter, we have highlighted some examples that may inspire others, such as the air travel levy used to fund sustainability action at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki | Lincoln University and Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington. We also celebrate the research and scholarship from within our sector that is feeding into global climate change efforts such as Sandy Morrison's contributions to the next IPCC report surrounding indigenous knowledge solutions.

Ngā mihi,
Tiakina te Taiao Advisory Group

UPCOMING TIAKINA TE TAIAO NETWORK MEETING – 12PM, WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH

We're starting 2026 with an online Tiakina te Taiao network meeting that is open to all TEU members. Don't miss our updates and guest speaker.

- **Date: Wednesday 25 March, 12:00pm**

- **Guest speaker:** Dr Grant Blackwell, Chief Science Advisor, Climate Change Commission

From climate governance to climate action: The role of He Pou a Rangī | Climate Change Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand

Dr Grant Blackwell the Chief Science Advisor at He Pou a Rangī | Climate Change Commission, an independent Crown entity established to provide the Government with advice, monitoring, and reporting that supports Aotearoa New Zealand's transition to a climate-resilient, low emissions future.

Grant will provide an overview about the Commission, the climate governance system, and where the Commission plays a role. He is an ecologist by training and has spent his career working on the interactions between people and the environment – first in natural ecosystems and production landscapes, and then at the interface between science, public policy, and problem solving.

Dr Blackwell says, "Science is an incredibly valuable tool that provides the evidential basis to help us understand the challenges we face as a society, and to explore the solutions. However, science doesn't tell us what to do, our how we make judgements that meet our needs, the needs of our society, and of the planet. For that, we need to build on the foundation science has created, and draw upon our experiences, our creativity, and our humility."

This will be a great opportunity to learn and ask questions about the state of Aotearoa New Zealand's climate response.

Following the talk, the agenda will include further discussion about Tiakina te Taiao plans for 2026, and how you can contribute.

CLIMATE RALLY: AIRING THE GOVERNMENT'S DIRTY CLIMATE LAUNDRY

[350 Aotearoa](#) event at Wellington High Court 8am, Monday the 16th of March.

Minister of Climate Change, Simon Watts, is facing accusations in the High Court that the government's emissions reductions plan was not credible. This event invites people to bring a shirt or laundry item with a climate failure on it to

hang on the washing line.

Not in Wellington? Send in a climate policy cut you are most concerned about and we'll put it on a shirt for you – email Rachel Bolstad rachel.bolstad@nzcer.org.nz.

Click [here](#) for more information.

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION IN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS – AIR TRAVEL LEVIES

Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki | Lincoln University introduced a [5% levy on staff air travel](#) to fund sustainability projects in late 2023. Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University also has an internal carbon levy and air travel carbon targets for staff that power a [contestable fund](#). This initiative came about as an extension of the university's 2007 [commitment to reducing carbon emissions](#).

[Let us know](#) what's happening at your campus!

DOCUMENT CLIMATE IMPACTS ON CAMPUS

Tiakina te Taiao previously offered a photo archive to capture how climate change and extreme weather events are affecting the tertiary sector. We have since become aware of a new, centralised database and encourage you to share your evidence of climate change and extreme weather events damage to this platform. See [New Zealand Flood Pics](#) hosted at the [National Environmental Data Centre](#).

CLIMATE CHANGE COURSE: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR ACTION

A free online climate change course, created by Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury, in partnership with Christchurch City Council and Future Curious, has proven popular – the first intake, beginning the course in April, is already full. Offering the opportunity to deepen understanding of climate change and explore practical strategies to take meaningful action, the

nine-week course demystifies climate change and empowers participants to make a difference.

Sign up to enrol in future intakes [here](#).

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: TEU CLIMATE ACTION DELEGATES

Our Climate Action Delegates work to ensure a tertiary education sector that is actively contributing to a just and sustainable future through high-quality research, teaching, and institutional leadership, as well as the provision of exemplary working conditions.

For more information about what our Climate Action Delegates do, [see our flyer](#).

To express an interest in becoming a TEU Climate Action Delegate, please contact jared.commerer@teu.ac.nz

CLIMATE IN THE NEWS

- [Iwi can lead us through the climate crisis](#) (Jacinta Ruru for E-Tangata)
- [NZ's sodden January explained: what's driven this month's big wet?](#) (James Renwick for The Conversation)
- Walker, E., Cox, M., Whaanga, H., & Wehi, P. (2026). [‘Okea ururoatia’: the role of Indigenous activism in the restoration and protection of nature](#). *The Royal Society Publishing. Philosophical Transactions B*, 381(1942).
- [Massey's Bachelor of Science to include a Sustainable Climate Systems Major in 2026](#) (Massey News)
- [Economic growth is still heating the planet. Is there any way out?](#) (The Guardian)
- [Climate experts raise alarm as government plans ministries merger](#) (Waatea News)
- [Lincoln University invests in new initiatives to advance campus sustainability](#) (Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki | Lincoln University)
- [Can we educate our way out of the climate crisis?](#) Public lecture by Professor Chris Eames – Tuesday 24 March, 5:30pm (University of

Waikato, Hamilton)

- [Global review calls for river resilience to extreme events](#) – how rivers can soak up climate events and new research on [Fast-moving floodwater poses hidden danger for cities](#) (UC)
- [Sandy Morrison: Bringing Indigenous thought to the IPCC](#) (E-Tangata) – Waikato University Professor Sandy Morrison has taken up a new role with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

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