

MEDIA RELEASE

Pioneer to support University's switch to wood fuel

With help from Pioneer Energy, within three years, the University of Otago will halve its greenhouse gas emissions created by its energy use.

This initiative is part of the University's Sustainability Strategic Framework which was launched in May 2017. Otago's plan is to become a leader in sustainability in Australasia. The changeover of the fuel used to provide energy was just part of their target, which involved converting the existing 7.6 MW coal fired boiler to wood.

The University uses steam produced by Pioneer Energy at their Dunedin Energy Centre, for heating and hot water in twenty-nine of its buildings, previously produced using coal. The University's decision to move ahead with the change of fuel enabled Pioneer Energy to begin planning for the full switch to wood fuel.

With Pioneer Energy having its own wood fuel division; Pioneer Energy Wood Fuel, meant it was fully able to support the plan by adapting the energy centre to use wood chip and providing supply security of the not insignificant amount of wood fuel needed. This expertise and experience has reduced the cost of conversion significantly.

Pioneer Energy converted the 45 year old coal boilers to wood fuel allowing the co-firing of the boiler house. This has resulted in an increase in boiler performance, efficiency, cleaner handling, and reduction in ash. The collaboration within Pioneer Energy's personnel across all aspects of the operations and fuel handling system was pivotal in obtaining an effective conversion, with reduced capital, and an efficient fuel specification.

Pioneer will supply University of Otago with 90,000 GJ of seasoned wood chip fuel annually, offsetting the equivalent volume of coal. The wood is sourced from local FSC certified forests, helping to support sustainability and the local economy

The Dunedin Energy Centre supplies energy to several large users including the University of Otago, Cadbury and the Southern District Health Board. The Energy Centre's boiler house is located on the edge of Dunedin's CBD, in Castle Street.

Pioneer would like to congratulate the University of Otago for their commitment and leadership in this project.

The transition path began in July 2017 and will be completed by July 2020

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