



# University of Tasmania Proposal

## City of Launceston's position

### Why does the City of Launceston support the University of Tasmania inner-city campus proposal?

1. We believe the University of Tasmania is vital to Northern Tasmania's future educational, cultural, social and economic prosperity.
2. The current University of Tasmania campus at Newnham is unsustainable, losing an estimated \$23m each year.
3. The proposal will allow the University to create a new sustainable business model, by expanding its current courses and creating new options, such as associate degrees. The University would be able to create a new platform to offer contemporary subjects and qualifications, provide modern and vibrant buildings, attract expert academic staff, and to increasingly attract prospective students from across the globe.
4. The proposal would see a capital investment of \$260m in Launceston. Such investment would be an economic boost for Launceston, where wages and salaries fell by nearly \$100m in the last census period.
5. Modelling from the University of Tasmania indicates that the economic impact of a relocation to Inveresk and Willis Street could top \$290m annually.
6. The presence of a University of Tasmania inner-city campus adjacent to our CBD would clearly demonstrate the importance of higher education to our city. It would create a new student population on the doorstep of our CBD who will live in Launceston, work in Launceston, and shop in Launceston.
7. Improving educational attainment is vital to lifting the productive capacity of the State's workforce. Lack of skilled workers is currently holding back key economic pillars such as food, agriculture and aquaculture.
8. To advocate for the status quo does nothing to progress our city, and nothing to secure the future of the University of Tasmania in the North of the State.

## **Why did the City of Launceston vote to transfer two parcels of land at no cost to the University of Tasmania?**

- 1.** The Council is elected to safeguard the future of Launceston. We believe a strong and sustainable UTAS is critical to Launceston's cultural and economic growth. Should the \$250m-300m proposal proceed, the Council believes the relatively modest investment of \$4.5m in land to secure the future of the University in the North and an economic impact of \$290m per year is a sound investment in the future prospects of Launceston and the region.
- 2.** The Council believes strongly in the positive transformational economic and social impacts that the injection of \$260m adjacent to the CBD will have on our city and region, and the resultant private sector investment that is likely to flow from the project. We believe that it is a high priority for the Council to partner with the University, the State Government and the Federal Government to deliver the intergenerational benefits that will arise from this proposal.
- 3.** The Council believes that expanded course offerings and new associate degree flagship programs will grow participation rates in Northern Tasmania and attract new students to the inner-city campus. This in turn will provide economic and social benefits to our city and region. Socially, it will enable the students at the campus to interact with the city on a far more effective basis as a far more visible part of our community.
- 4.** The City of Launceston voted to make an investment of land in the project with a number of conditions. Those conditions include that before any land is transferred, the University must be able to secure funding to allow its development to proceed. Another condition is that the development shall be undertaken by the University in line with the commitments it has made in writing. Yet another is that should the relocation not be complete within five years of a Development Approval issued by the Council, the land will either transfer back to the Council or the University will have to pay for the land at a price judged by an independent valuer.
- 5.** The Council believes a University campus is a high-order use for the two proposed sites that will benefit the city and the entire region for generations to come.

## **Busting myths**

- The University of Tasmania's Northern campus expansion proposal has generated a lot of community debate.
- That's a good thing. But before you are swayed by misinformation and conspiracy theories, we'd urge you to look at the facts and reach your own conclusions.
- Both the Tasmanian Ratepayers Association and Launceston Concerned Citizens group have published a number of untrue claims about the University proposal. These claims have been published online and circulated with the petition itself.
- Both groups have published claims online that the land could be worth \$20m. This is untrue. The land has been independently valued at \$4.5m.
- The Council is aware that many copies of the petition contained handwritten additions to encourage people to sign, including claims that the Council would increase rates by \$100 to \$150 if the proposal went ahead. These claims are untrue.
- Interviewed on Southern Cross Television on November 16 last year, a representative of the Tasmanian Ratepayers Association claimed that Big W was interested in the Willis Street site. This is untrue.

## **Conclusion**

The campus expansion proposal is a legitimate topic of debate in Launceston. However, we owe it to each other as a community to deal in facts and logic.

The City of Launceston, on all the evidence, believes this decision is in the best interests of both Launceston and Northern Tasmania in its actions to progress the University of Tasmania's inner city campus proposal.

We are pleased that the proposal has also been supported by a number of secondary school principals, the State Government, the Federal Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, the Property Council of Tasmania, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, Bell Bay Aluminium General Manager Ray Mostogl, prominent Launceston businessman Errol Stewart and many others.