



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Open to Talent
GREEN PAPER
PROPOSING FUTURE
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
FOR UTAS 2012-2022



The Green Paper

This Green Paper outlines a proposed vision and the strategic priorities for UTAS over the next 10 years and is an important step in the development of *Open to Talent*, UTAS's new strategic plan. It has been informed by extensive formal and informal conversations, both within and outside the University, following the release of the *Open to Talent Discussion Paper* in August. Feedback on the Green Paper will inform the development of a draft of *Open to Talent*, which will be released for comment in early 2012.

Introduction

The foundation of the University of Tasmania in 1890 was a crowning achievement in a remarkable period of creative and intellectual endeavour for the fledgling island colony. The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens were laid out in 1818, the first scientific society in Australia started in Tasmania in 1829 and the first Australian scientific journal began publication in Hobart in 1842. Performing and visual arts flourished. Henry Savery's *Quintus Servintus*, the first Australian novel, was published in Hobart in 1830-31. In 1837, the colony's first theatre was built in the Wapping district and by the 1840s, colonial landscape artist John Glover was presenting new and innovative interpretations of the Australian landscape from Tasmania to the world. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was clear that many Tasmanians shared the confident belief of the times in the intrinsic value of the pursuit of knowledge. They were also keen to link understanding with economic and social development, and to communicate discoveries and connect ideas with the wider world.

The University of Tasmania was established to take stewardship of this agenda for the State and it has done so for over 120 years. The University takes great pride in its commitment to the creation, preservation, communication and application of knowledge, contributing far-reaching educational, cultural, intellectual and economic gains to Tasmania and the world.

In this paper we articulate a future for the University of Tasmania, building upon the significant achievements of our past and setting a course for the next decade. The UTAS motto *Ingeniis Patuit Campus* or 'the field is open to talent', adopted nearly 75 years ago, captures our mission, reflecting our vitality and confidence in our identity and openness to our communities and the world.

The outlook for higher education: Why UTAS must be open to talent

The vision proposed by this paper has been informed by the views of the greater UTAS community and influenced by our history and the context in which we operate. Australian higher education – and higher education across the world – confronts intellectual, social and economic change and we must be skilful in discerning how we respond. We cannot be complacent, yet we should not over-commit energy and resources to often fleeting trends or policies that distract us from our broader mission.

2011 sees UTAS well positioned for the coming decade. The last seven years, guided by the EDGE strategic plan focussing on Excellence, Distinctiveness, Growth and Engagement, brought significant growth in student numbers, and increased diversity of the student body. More students from non-traditional and international backgrounds chose to study with us, the Cradle Coast Campus expanded to over 1,000 students, and we established a successful Sydney operation focused on health. In Launceston, integration of the Australian Maritime College into the university and invigoration of the Inveresk campus extended our footprint, while development adjacent to the ancestral UTAS site on the Domain restored a UTAS presence in Hobart after an absence of more than 50 years.

Strategic investment in the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies saw medical and environmental research flourish and expand. Coinvestment with government provided impressive new facilities for these researchers in Hobart. Quantum Leaps and New Stars recruitment programs brought to the university outstanding new researchers and research leaders.

Our commitment to collegial interactions was reaffirmed through the *Your Voice at UTAS* process and the development of our Statement of Values, aligned with the *Magna Charta Universitatum* at Bologna.

We enter a Higher Education environment marked by change and uncertainty. Increased competition for students nationally and internationally will be balanced by ambitious national targets for university participation, both a result of legislative change. Research excellence, a hallmark of the best universities and a determinant of student demand, increasingly requires international collaboration in a world where competitive rankings, nationally and internationally, influence funding and reputation. The global financial outlook appears vulnerable and volatile, although we are buffered by local economic strength and endowments.

The enduring success of universities within Western civilisation, over nearly a millennium, inspires confidence that UTAS will continue to prosper. Interpretation of our traditions and values in the context of contemporary opportunity will ensure the ongoing regard of staff, students and society. At their heart universities are about people, what they can become, what they can create and how they can inspire. *Open to Talent* remains a fitting description of our intent.

To know ourselves is to determine our future - the defining character of UTAS

As the only university based in Tasmania, UTAS has a unique and distinctive position, nationally and internationally. It is the closeness of our relationship with Tasmania, in all its senses, that defines us as an institution.

The opportunities and responsibilities that flow from this are broader and more profound than exist for other universities and are intensified by our island location. Our access to the resources that are Tasmania – environment, people, culture, government and industry – transcends what can be achieved elsewhere. Benefitting from these connections, our research and teaching has real social and economic impact in a way that eludes most universities, and a potency which attracts global attention. We sit at the heart of social, intellectual and cultural life in Tasmania, adding knowledge and intellectual verve to research, public debates and policy. Our education programs provide global reach and we are an important economic driver for the State.

At the same time we are a fine University, by definition part of an established and esteemed collective of global institutions and strategically global in all that we do. The impact of our work gives us a confident voice, which we take to national and international stages. Creative and enthusiastic, we collaborate across industries, disciplines, borders and cultures, attracting and holding the world's talent and attention. We are deliberately unaligned, maintaining a distance from society that brings to us the authority of independence.

Our Statement of Values, which captures institutional tradition and wisdom, asserts that:

"[w]e work in a unique setting and actively partner with the communities in which we live, in support of a healthy, civil and sustainable society. At the same time, we are outwardly focused and part of a global community, engaging with the rest of Australia and the world"

It is this that encapsulates our distinctive opportunity and informs our future.

Our Priorities: Opening UTAS to Talent

Over the next 10 years, UTAS will recapture the energy of our founding spirit, harness the momentum of recent achievements, tackle areas of weakness and make the most of our defining characteristics through a focus on three priorities.

- **Research:** the creation of new knowledge, new ideas and new approaches to the issues impacting our society. Programs that contribute to economic development and the future prosperity of Tasmania.
- **Students:** sharing our knowledge and the world of ideas, understanding lessons from the past and building opportunity and capability for the future.
- **Community:** drawing on our rich local resources to work with local, national, international and global communities, acting as a catalyst for change, demonstrating leadership and serving the public good.

These priorities naturally intersect and cohere, each strengthening the others. Together, they resonate with our distinctive mission, productively influencing all that we do.

Research

Tasmanians deserve a world class university, in which education programs that prepare graduates for global participation are informed by an intellectual environment that places high value on the creation and dissemination of knowledge. It is research, a creative pursuit, that distinguishes universities able to make this claim, and we reassert our ambition to rank within the top 10 Australian universities in terms of research quality and output. We recognise this as a bold undertaking, requiring our research productivity to more than double over the next decade.

As the only university based in Tasmania we recognise a responsibility to breadth of research coverage, but respect a tension between this and the benefits that can accompany focused and targeted investment.

Special research prospects emerge from distinctive local advantages, our geography and history, our partnerships with industry and government and our ability to apply world class innovation to regional problems. Exploitation of these through strategic targeted investment has met with success.

For example the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Science (IMAS) recognises our proximity to the Southern Ocean and Antarctica and historical strength and partnerships in marine science and oceanography, the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania (MRIT) takes advantage of distinctive aspects of Tasmanian epidemiology and genetics, and the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), a partnership with the Tasmanian State Government, brings solutions to an important Tasmanian industry. This strategy will be broadened through investment in a small number of new activities to better represent the breadth of our research endeavours. Sustainability and environment, broadband and communication, community and place, advanced manufacturing and creative industries have emerged as areas in which local advantage may be parlayed into international excellence.

We will continue to support excellence wherever it is found, recognising the contribution of outstanding individuals and endeavours such as the Australian Centre for Research on Separation

Science (ACROSS), the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre and the Centre for Ore Deposit Research (CODES) to our mission and profile.

We will pay particular attention to the development of high profile, high impact endeavours that create special opportunity for our researchers. Centres of Excellence, Cooperative Research Centres, Laureate Fellows, Program grants and the like attract the attention of the world and add lustre to our research reputation.

The creative endeavour of individuals is ever the driver of outstanding research.

To achieve our goals we must ensure that the research performance of the majority of UTAS staff is at international standard. The articulation of research expectations for all staff, calibrated against international norms and respectful of disciplinary practice, will assist us to align individual performance with university aspiration.

Individual excellence and application must be matched with adequate resources. While infrastructure is important, so too is access to research students, and time for contemplation and discussion.

Recruitment, retention and support of the best researchers and research students will ensure that our performance is maximised. Renewal of our research leadership and establishment of the next generation are priorities, with investment guided by well-articulated strategic plans at University, faculty and institute level. Expansion of the research higher degree cohort, the engine of much of our research, requires targeted scholarships linked to excellence. We must inspire confidence in the value that we place on high quality research, and ensure that UTAS provides an outstanding environment for the development of a research career.

People and ideas are the raw material of research and we must configure ourselves in a manner that best supports the emergence of innovative, even challenging, concepts. Universities alone in society possess the breadth of disciplinary expertise required for meaningful engagement with the most pressing problems of our time. Institution-wide conversations will enable us to harness our capabilities in the service of such issues, and promote the cross-disciplinary approaches, based on disciplinary excellence, that are most likely to lead to success

Our research must be recognised to achieve greatest impact and there is more that we can do to bring it to the attention of the world. Partnerships, especially international partnerships, and increased accessibility of publications will enhance the recognition and citation of our work.

Students

At UTAS, we partner with our students to create opportunity and prepare them for future accomplishment. In a world in which higher education is increasingly competitive and deregulated, and in which curriculum content is widely available, we must identify those experiences which will draw students to us as a destination of choice.

UTAS will, over the next decade, cater to an expanded and increasingly diverse student cohort, distributed more evenly across our campuses. In this way we will create the scale and efficiencies that underpin viability in the context of Australian Higher Education. International standards will continue to be embedded in all aspects of our curriculum and delivery to ensure a world class education.

As befits an institution with international aspirations we will continue to provide a traditional university education to students who are well prepared for the rigours of university life. The articulation of a distinctive and high value UTAS experience, the availability of programs that are internationally eminent, generous scholarship support for high achievers, and an elevated international profile provide scope for expansion of this cohort.

Ambitious national participation targets enable us to open the University to Tasmanians from a wider spectrum of backgrounds, including those who may not have traditionally considered higher education. Increased tertiary participation will greatly advantage Tasmania, lifting economic performance and invigorating the intellectual and cultural life of the island.

Postgraduate degrees are appealing to those challenged by changing workplaces, unfulfilled ambitions and new circumstances, and increasingly these degrees are an entry point to the professions. Targeted expansion of postgraduate programs designed for those chasing opportunity and valuing flexibility will draw a new and experienced cohort of students to our campuses.

International students comprise a relatively small proportion of our student body when compared to other Australian universities and there is room for significant growth in partnership with our schools and our state. We will rebalance our focus, prioritising onshore tuition and the associated cultural, social and financial enrichment of our university and community environments. More UTAS students will benefit from exchange programs, enriching their experience through education overseas.

A renewed curriculum, infused by the UTAS identity and expertly taught – building on our strengths in learning and teaching – will be a drawcard for future students.

We celebrate the richness of our disciplinary breadth and the availability of choice for all students. The acquisition of vocational, professional and disciplinary knowledge, while remaining core to our education, will be augmented by a breadth of curriculum engagement that better prepares students for a complex and changing world. Exposure to different traditions of thought - the scientific method, design thinking and the humanist tradition - and appreciation of cross-disciplinary approaches to problem solving will equip UTAS graduates with the intellectual agility required for success.

Our curriculum will also champion skills such as capability in modern languages and entrepreneurship that are already in demand and likely to be of premium value to graduates.

Distinctive curriculum strengths aligned to our expertise and local advantage can position us as a premium destination. The Australian Maritime College is a good example, with a high quality brand

that draws students from around the globe. Investment in a small number of similar initiatives will strengthen our profile internationally and enrich our student population.

Partnerships can help us to expand our offerings in areas where we may be constrained. Innovative pathways designed in collaboration with schools and the VET sector will ease the transition of students with non-traditional preparation into Higher Education. High demand but high cost programs such as dentistry, veterinary science and allied health also have a place at UTAS, potentially through articulation arrangements with universities at which the requisite infrastructure is established.

Compared to those at other institutions UTAS students spend less time at university. We must communicate the benefits that accompany tertiary study of at least four years, and design attractive and useful pathways that lead into and from our undergraduate degrees, better preparing graduates for the worlds of employment and research.

Early rollout of the National Broadband Network in Tasmania positions us to embrace technology as a key component of the learning experience, and to deliver curriculum with the flexibility required by students who may be restricted by geography or the demands of work.

A Curriculum Futures Team will be established in 2012 to make recommendations on the shape of the new curriculum and how it will be introduced to UTAS.

The student experience, beyond curriculum, is a critical component of university life and determinant of student demand.

UTAS students will have access to excellent student support and guidance services, regardless of their location and mode of study. Students gain much from interaction with peers and staff outside the classroom; as such our campuses must be designed to create the intellectual and social milieu that will facilitate informal interaction. Inviting spaces for group study and socialising, expanded and improved student accommodation, and high quality catering will restore vibrancy to our campus life. Clubs, societies and social activities facilitate the development of interpersonal and leadership skills. Increased participation in volunteering, overseas experiences, work integrated learning, and engagement with the unique Tasmanian environment and community will encourage students to make new connections, moving into unexpected spaces where the most exhilarating learning often takes place.

Community

Our position as the sole university in Tasmania brings with it exceptional potential for engagement with the economic, social, cultural and intellectual life of the island. We must configure ourselves to facilitate meaningful partnerships with government, industry and communities in Tasmania and across the world recognising that from relationships flow opportunity.

We aspire to participation in, and, where appropriate, leadership of, authentic conversations of local significance with a focus on collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. UTAS is already a catalyst for democratic conversation in Tasmania and beyond, and, by drawing together our key players in this space, can be positioned as a forum for ideas, debate and discussion, open to all members of the community and courageous in tackling difficult topics. As a catalyst for analysis and change, central to Tasmanian intellectual and cultural life, UTAS can become an exemplar of how universities can best interact with the communities they serve, sharing what we learn with the rest of the world.

Our privileged relationship with the island state of Tasmania, a microcosm of contemporary society, provides excellent opportunities to inform research questions, to test research solutions at systemic scale, and to extend the learning context to accessible, real life environments. Tasmania can provide an instrument for translating research models into solutions for modern society in Tasmania, Australia and the world.

Our education programs, too, can be enhanced by integration with Tasmanian society and environment, increasing local participation rates, expanding the horizons of students beyond UTAS, fostering skills that extend the curriculum and providing real world experiences.

Engagement must also bring the world to us and us to the world. Carefully selected strategic partnerships with organisations and individuals that share our aspirations will bring impetus to our teaching and research, leveraging resources and ideas. By attracting scholars and thought leaders from around the world to UTAS and supporting UTAS staff and students to spend time at other institutions, through visiting scholar schemes and affiliations, we can strengthen these relationships, expand our sphere of influence nationally and internationally and provide a vibrant and progressive environment for our staff and student cohort.

The intellectual and social environment of our campuses is at the heart of our endeavour and there is more that we can do to welcome current and former students from Tasmania, Australia and the world into the life of the university. Volunteering, employment on our campuses and engagement in outreach activities will foster lifelong allegiance between UTAS and our student body and capture the real-life skills and experience of our alumni.

Supporting *Open to Talent*

Open to Talent's three priorities bring a clear purpose to our work. Realisation of our ambition will depend on authentic, sustained and focused engagement with the vision, and judicious alignment of our people, infrastructure, resources and processes.

People and culture

UTAS can only ever be as good as the people who choose to work with us; our staff and students are our most important asset. Realisation of the vision outlined in Open to Talent is dependent on a talented workforce, committed to the innovative thinking required to conceptualise and operationalise the strategy, and the high levels of achievement required to accomplish our objectives.

We are a complex organisation, reliant on individuals with a range of abilities and roles. Communication of objectives and clarification of responsibilities and classifications will assist staff to understand how their endeavours contribute to UTAS. Clear articulation of performance expectations, including definition of the 'UTAS academic', will provide guidance for confirmation and promotion, aligning the efforts of individuals with the goals of *Open to Talent*.

A formative performance management framework will help staff to be the best they can, supported by an institution committed to holistic development of individual capabilities and a healthy leadership culture.

Our culture will be underpinned by mutuality and reciprocity as referenced in the UTAS Statement of Values. Collegial debate, respectful of a diversity of views, has served university governance effectively for centuries and will be our preferred approach to decision making. We will value contributions that embrace the interests of the entire UTAS community.

Campuses and infrastructure

We reaffirm commitment to campuses located within the South, North and North-West of Tasmania, supporting regional communities through access to world class education and research.

Campus-specific strategies that complement the broader UTAS mission will inform distinctive research and teaching programs at each of these locations, leveraging local potential and matching local needs.

Fragmentation jeopardises efficient operation and complicates provision of support. Our ambitions to enhance the vibrancy of our campuses and the vitality of the student experience demand that we consolidate our infrastructure at each of our locations, seeking effective integration of learning and research facilities, student accommodation and social spaces. Physical expansion outside Tasmania, successfully trialled in Sydney and elsewhere, will be restricted to endeavours justified by student access or business opportunity.

As a geographically dispersed institution we must pay special attention to the integration of distinct sites and activities through innovative approaches to communication and the deployment of equipment and services. Technology and the creation of virtual linkages will be facilitated by emergent broadband connectivity, but the safe and efficient movement of people must assume equal priority. Sustainability will be a hallmark of our planning.

Social, cultural, economic and intellectual liveliness associated with university activity is a feature of many of the world's most liveable cities. Tasmanian communities can be invigorated by injecting the energy of student life, especially at the Domain campus in Hobart and the Inveresk campus in Launceston. Close partnerships with urban planners will guide the placement of accommodation, research and teaching facilities.

The intensity of campus life and the richness of our intellectual environment can be augmented by bringing to our campuses partners who share our aspirations and complement our capabilities. Collocation with other education institutions, companies and research providers will enhance student opportunity, inform our research programs and provide a real-world context for our activities.

World class research demands infrastructure of the highest international standard. Local investment aligned with our research strategy will be augmented by partnerships with other organisations to secure access to facilities beyond our reach. Key to our mission is the generation, storage and transmission of information, a defining feature of great universities. Balanced provision of traditional library resources, commitment to high quality collections and development of eResearch capabilities will benefit our students and researchers and ensure effective dissemination of our findings.

Resources and planning

Careful stewardship and application of resources is critical to the achievement of our ambitions, a foundation for the future reputation and profile of UTAS.

Effective delivery of services, unencumbered by internal boundaries and aligned with our aspirations, requires us to balance the benefits of local decision making with the efficiencies of centralisation. Resources must be distributed via a budget model that serves *Open to Talent* and encourages the behaviours and outcomes to which we aspire.

Institutional profile and branding will assume particular importance in a globalised and increasingly competitive world. Our achievements must be recognised nationally and internationally, ensuring our attractiveness as a destination for staff and students.

An institution-wide cycle of planning and performance evaluation will articulate the vision and strategies flowing from *Open to Talent* through a suite of high-level academic, support and enabling plans. UTAS – its faculties, institutes, divisions and schools; its staff, students, alumni and partners – will have a clear sense of what is required over the next 10 years.



DECEMBER 2011
Our.Plan@utas.edu.au