POLICY STATEMENT

1 Intent

The University is committed to strengthening and coordinating its community engagement activities, in order to undertake its functions as outlined in the University of Tasmania Act 1992 (Tas) s6, cl.(g):

“(g) …activities which promote the social, cultural and economic welfare of the community…”

and meet its targets as outlined in the University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007.

2 Scope

For the purposes of this policy, ‘community’ refers to any individual or group associated with UTAS, including:

- those internal to the University via involvement with Faculties, Schools, Centres, Institutes and Divisions, as well as the University as a whole; and

- those external to the University via interaction with individuals, community groups, professional bodies, business and industry, schools, government agencies and non-government organisations at local, state, national and international levels.

Community engagement is thus multilateral in nature, and should be characterised by diversity in methods of action and interaction.

3 Objective(s)

This policy is intended to enable the University to meet its commitments as set out in the University of Tasmania Act 1992 (Tas), to support organisational development, and to improve performance against the ‘Engagement’ targets outlined in the University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007:
Vision Statement:

“By 2010, the University of Tasmania will be ranked among the top echelon of research led universities in Australia. The University will be a world leader in its specialist, thematic areas and will be recognised for its contribution to State and national development. As Australia’s “natural choice for study” UTAS will be supported by its high quality academic community, its unique island setting and its distinctive student experience.”

Mission Statement:

“…The University will provide leadership within its community contributing to the cultural, economic and social development of Tasmania.”

and the fourth cornerstone of the ‘EDGE’ agenda in particular:

“Engagement - UTAS must serve its communities and become a sought-after local, national and international partner across all its fields of endeavour”.

UTAS has been seriously involved in community engagement for many years. It has a wealth of experience to draw upon in the development of a more systematic approach to community engagement in the future.

This policy provides a framework within which the University will be well informed about, and give sound and appropriate recognition to, its community engagement activities; provide sufficient support for those activities; and effectively manage and integrate those activities with other core priorities, in particular research and research training, and teaching and learning.

4 Definitions and Acronyms

The Act

Means the University of Tasmania Act 1992 (Tas)

Community engagement

There is no universally accepted definition of community engagement; this policy endorses the ACU definition of ‘community engagement’ but does not confine it to the non-university world:

“…a strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: first, setting universities’ aims, purposes and priorities; secondly, relating teaching and learning to the wider world; thirdly, the back and forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and fourthly, taking on fuller responsibilities as neighbours and citizens.” (The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), 2003:7)

In light of this international definition, at UTAS community engagement is typified by:

“sustained, dedicated, thoughtful, reasoned and substantive interaction among the members of the University’s diverse communities of place and interest. It is mindful of diversity and difference, as
well as the ‘commonwealth’ of shared interests. It warrants flexibility, resilience, accountability, transparency and trust. Community engagement gives effect to the University’s visions, mission and priorities. It fosters strong links between the public interest and activities in research and research training, and in teaching and learning. It facilitates meaningful and respectful conversations and relations that build individual and collective capacities in active citizenship, and that enrich social, intellectual, environmental, economic and cultural capital.” (Stratford, 2005)

EDGE

Means the University’s EDGE agenda as articulated in the University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007, comprising four cornerstones – Excellence (‘Ex’), Distinctiveness (‘D’), Growth (‘G’) and Engagement (‘En’).

UTAS

University of Tasmania

5 Policy Maker

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

6 Policy Provisions

6.1 Engagement activities should benefit both the Tasmanian community and the University. Through its engagement with the University, the Tasmanian community should benefit in cultural, economic and/or social terms. Community engagement should also build the University’s reputation and standing in the community, and increase the community’s knowledge, understanding and awareness of the University and its activities.

6.2 Every opportunity to engage in meaningful ways with communities should be factored into other core business because community engagement is integral to the University’s mission – all the more so given its unique role in the State. Moreover, just as teaching and research overlap with and reinforce each other, community engagement overlaps with and reinforces teaching and research activity.

6.3 Key elements in the University’s community engagement have a direct bearing on its primary purposes and capacity to function effectively. These include:

- research and research training;
- teaching and learning;
- public relations (including promoting the achievements and impact of the University in the community) and general public accountability (including advisory mechanisms);
- promoting the University in Tasmanian schools, and ensuring good relations with principals, student counsellors, students, parents and community groups associated with the secondary system;
• supporting partnerships, linkages, strategic alliances and networks to ensure close, mutually supportive relationships between the University’s key ‘stakeholders’ in politics, industry, business, the professions, the media and the community generally;

• fostering regional engagement aligned with deliberate research strategies that are both community and industry driven;

• providing access and opportunity for all students and staff, and the wider Tasmanian community to participate in cultural activities presented by the University of Tasmania; and

• encouraging all areas of the University to increase their awareness of and participation in cultural and other activities that benefit the community.

Community engagement activities should involve appropriate collaboration and cooperation with constituents both internal and external to the University in accordance with the following:

• observance of all administrative and statutory frameworks that govern teaching and research activities;

• acknowledgment of the demands of other activities on University personnel (including students) by virtue of their role as members of the University; and

• cognisance of work that draws upon skills, knowledge and expertise that is specific to the University.

6.5 This policy is intended to complement existing and future partnerships and MOUs – including, but not limited to:

• University Business Enterprises;

• State Government Partnership initiatives (Partnership Agreement & Taskforces, Partners in Health, Brand Tasmania, Tasmania Together);

• Collaborative Funding Agreements; and

• MOUs with local government bodies, education providers, national / international partners or other agencies.

7 Supporting/Related Documents

• University of Tasmania Act 1992 (Tas)
• University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007

8 Key Words

• Capacity-building
• Collaboration
• Community
• Engagement
• Linkages
• Participation
- Partnerships
- Planning
- Responsiveness
- Sustainability
- Third stream

9 Supporting Procedures/Guidelines

- Community Engagement Procedures

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Divisions / Faculty Heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and/or Review</td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director, Policy and Development Director, PRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty / School / Centre / Institute Heads &amp; Executive Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UTAS Theme Area Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation and Advice</td>
<td>Deputy Vice-Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director, PRUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division / Faculty Heads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO NEEDS TO KNOW THIS POLICY?**

- Council
- All staff
- Student bodies
- Alumni
- Other stakeholders as appropriate

**EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY**

*Suggested Initial Approach*

In many Australian Universities, measurement of ‘community engagement’ is less developed than the stated commitment to engagement. The same is true at UTAS. It is suggested that during the first two years of the operation of the Policy, UTAS selects the most appropriate key performance indicators from a range of indicators that currently include:

- partnerships that address community need and aspirations and match UTAS mission and capacity, measured through an annual review of one key community;
the number of projects, per annum, that meet community needs and strategic directions;

- data on expansion of access and participation of UTAS equity groups;
- number of courses that demonstrate industry/profession input;
- number of promotions involving engagement performance; and
- number of staff involved in community engagement based on survey every three years.

University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007

A number of Goals, Strategies and Performance Indicators in the University of Tasmania Plan 2005-2007 relate to ‘Engagement’ (‘En’), with some overlap with other EDGE cornerstones - ‘Ex’=Excellence, ‘D’=Distinctiveness and ‘G’=Growth). These provide a useful reference point for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Key Headline and Operational Performance Indicators from the plan are:

- SPI:9 Increasing the number and range of activities in which the University engages with its communities of interest [En]
- OPI:17 Collaboration indicators and highlights [En]
- OPI:18 Community Engagement indicators including resources used, sharing of facilities and number and effectiveness of community events; annual highlights; summary of media reporting [En]

**POLICY HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved / Rescinded</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>18/11/2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>University Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution Number</td>
<td>05/7/54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>