

Monday, 17 May 2021

University releases draft masterplan for inner-city campus

A conversation about the University of Tasmania's future campus in Hobart resumes this week with the release of a draft masterplan, based on staff and community consultation.

In 2019, the University conducted workshops with University staff and the broader community to imagine how an inner-city campus could deliver student and staff experience, and enhance the qualities that people value in the city.

"We needed to pause last year because our focus was on meeting the challenges presented by COVID-19," Vice-Chancellor Professor Rufus Black said. "We're very appreciative of the efforts of our staff and students in doing that, and are now well placed to resume this process as a result.

"We've brought together what we heard in those earlier conversations in a draft masterplan. We want to use it to test what we heard, and see if the current thinking about the future of our campus reflects, preserves and enhances the values that are important to people.

"The draft masterplan is not the end of a process. It is the start of the next stage of the conversation about what we want our future to be."

The draft masterplan steps out the principles that people identified as being important in the delivery of a new campus: honouring **place, sustainability, accessibility and community**.

This preliminary design of the Hobart campus honours the rich history and culture of Tasmania's First People. It has a vibrant heart, respects the heritage of the city, and proposes green spines along Melville and Campbell streets. In workshops, and in broader community visioning processes, students, staff, and members of the community stressed the need for sympathetic, human-scale design that brings nature into the heart of the city.

"We've listened carefully and what we've heard is how passionate people are about Hobart and the things that are special to them about the city," Professor Black said

"We heard about the concerns people have with the University expanding its presence in the centre of the city – from challenges with transport and access to services to the nature of our workspaces.

"Just as importantly, we learned what people don't want, and what we haven't gotten right in the past. We have developed ideas about how to address these issues, which we are keen to get feedback on and to hear what other ideas people have."

Under the current proposal for the future of the Sandy Bay campus:

- sections of environmentally important bushland will be protected
- sporting facilities on the lower part of the Sandy Bay campus will be kept and upgraded
- student accommodation at the top of College Road will be retained

There would be a careful, staged 10-year transition between the current University operations at Sandy Bay and the CBD, with a focus on maintaining the quality of staff and student experience at both.

“Our next step is to get people’s feedback and reaction to the principles, our strategies and on the plan itself,” Professor Black said.

The draft masterplan can be found at www.utas.edu.au/southern-future.

Members of the public can also explore the proposal and provide feedback at an exhibition in the foyer of the Hobart Apartments, corner of Melville and Elizabeth streets, which will be open from 9am tomorrow (Tuesday, 18 May 2021).

A similar exhibition space will be available at the Student Hub on the Sandy Bay Campus adjacent Lazenbys Café.

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BACKGROUND

The project would be worth about \$550 million over 10 years and would be funded through a combination of sources including:

- Finance at historically low interest rates
- Money saved by creating a contemporary, fit-for-purpose campus
- Value generated over the long-term through the sensitive development of the current Sandy Bay campus as a sustainable mixed-use community including residential, commerce, educational and social services

Under the masterplan five Hobart precincts will create neighbourhoods of academic learning and research, dotted with community-focused facilities such as playgrounds and pocket parks:

- **West End** (the site of the former K&D Warehouse): engineering and technology.
- **Midtown:** Riawunna, Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Business & Economics, University College, Library, Student Centre, University Club and Administration.
- **The Domain:** shared University and community space; psychology, pharmacy and nursing,
- **Medical Sciences Precinct (MSP):** existing facilities along with a new allied health clinic.
- **Wapping** (Hedberg performing arts centre and Hunter Street): creative arts.