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University of Tasmania's future direction for its Hobart campus

Following the completion of the new Launceston campus at Inveresk, the University of Tasmania has today outlined the future direction for its campus in Hobart.

The plan, which is contingent on securing significant government funding, is for a Hobart campus with four key sites each providing students with experiences built around the best the city has to offer.

These sites would be a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Campus at Sandy Bay; a City Campus encompassing existing facilities and a fully occupied Forestry Building; a Historic Campus on the Domain, the University's original home; and a Waterfront Campus comprising the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at Salamanca and Taroona.

To achieve this plan, the next major steps for the University are to:

- Work with the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to develop a plan to fund new STEM facilities at Sandy Bay, which would involve complete retrofits of some existing buildings, the construction of some new buildings, and the enhancement of the natural landscape of the campus
- Locate, from Semester 1, 2026, the Schools of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics in the Forestry Building
- Sell the former K&D site and the corner property encompassing 33 to 37 Bathurst Street and 65 Argyle Street, which are now surplus to requirements
- Engage with the Tasmanian Government about the future of the land above Churchill Avenue and seek support from the Parliament to ensure it is unencumbered so it can be developed to provide a funding contribution to new STEM facilities.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Rufus Black said the University had been investing in fit-for-purpose campuses around the island for over a decade, so students and staff had access to education and research facilities needed for Tasmania's future.

"Our top priority now is contemporary STEM facilities in the South. These facilities are urgently needed for students and staff, for the future of STEM education in Tasmania, and for our state's ability to meet workforce needs," Professor Black said.

"Developing a specialised campus at Sandy Bay provides opportunities to create a STEM precinct that enables other education providers and industry to co-locate and collaborate. We have to work together to inspire future scientists and teach the skills and create the knowledge that will support a better future for Tasmania."

The University has an existing business case for a new STEM precinct in the Hobart CBD, which was approved by Infrastructure Australia in 2017. Work has been underway to update this business case, informed by engagement with College of Sciences and Engineering staff and students and key stakeholders, since the Tasmanian Government made its preference for STEM on Sandy Bay clear earlier this year.

“The new STEM facilities that Tasmania needs will cost in the order of \$500 million and we will require support from all levels of government, as we saw in Burnie and Launceston,” Professor Black said.

“This is an urgent priority for the State because unless we get started in the next 12 to 18 months, Tasmania won’t have new STEM facilities until well into the 2030s, putting us decades behind the rest of the country.

“STEM facilities really matter when so many new jobs and the competitiveness of our existing industries are dependent on science and technology.”

As planning and engagement on the future of STEM was underway, the University was finalising who would get to move into the former Forestry building, which is due to welcome students and staff for Semester 1, 2026.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Campus Life (Southern Tasmania) Professor Nicholas Farrelly said the building would be a thriving hub of cross-disciplinary education and research and home to the Schools of Business and Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences.

“This will be a truly incredible teaching and research space in the heart of Hobart,” Professor Farrelly said.

“Filled with state-of-the-art, flexible teaching facilities, the Forestry building is perfectly located for students and staff who are studying and researching the ways our society works economically, culturally and politically.”

Two sites in the CBD – the former K&D and a corner property encompassing 33 to 37 Bathurst Street and 65 Argyle Street – are no longer required to support future teaching and research and will be put on the market in the coming months.

As a strong supporter of Swisherr and its important community engagement, the University will work closely with them and other users of the former K&D site to plan for their future.

The proceeds from the sale of the two sites will be invested in upgrading the University’s facilities including the ongoing project to redevelop the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies facilities at Tarooma and the soon to commence research facility for the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture at Newnham.

Professor Black said the future direction for the Hobart campus was formed as the University Council reflected on important matters including the educational needs of Tasmania, staff and student requirements, community feedback, the major new policy and funding directions for higher education set by the Federal Government, the State Government’s legislative plans and stated desire to see STEM remain at Sandy Bay, and the City of Hobart’s planning directions.

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