

Minutes of a public meeting held on Wednesday 11 May 2022 at 7:00pm at the City Hall, Hobart, in response to a petition submitted by the Save UTas Campus.

1. City of Hobart Welcome and Context Setting

The Lord Mayor Councillor Anna Reynolds opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.

The Lord Mayor introduced the Chairperson for the meeting Mr Alex Johnston.

2. Introduction from the Chairperson

The Chairperson, Mr Alex Johnston opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance and provided a brief overview on how the meeting was to be conducted and of the public meeting rules.

3. Noting of Summary of Submissions Received on the Subject Matter of the Meeting

A copy of the summary of submissions received is attached.

Moved: *Councillor Mike Dutta*

Seconded: *Lord Mayor Councillor Anna Reynolds*

That the meeting receive and note the summary of submissions.

Motion Carried

4. Speakers/Questions/Motions/Discussions

The Chairperson invited members of the audience to address the meeting.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairperson put the following motions received at the meeting to the vote:

Motion 1

Moved: *Michael Foster*

Seconded: *Professor Pamela Sharpe*

That

1. This public meeting calls upon the University of Tasmania to suspend all action in relation to its proposed relocation from its Sandy Bay campus until the proposal has been subject to a public inquiry as to its merits.
2. This public meeting calls upon the Premier of Tasmania, Jeremy Rockliff, to initiate an urgent public inquiry into the merits of the proposal by the University of Tasmania to relocate from its Sandy Bay campus.
3. This public meeting calls upon the councillors of the City of Hobart to cease cooperation with the University of Tasmania in relation to its proposed relocation from Sandy Bay except in relation to statutory obligations.

Motion Carried

Motion 2

Moved: *Judy Tierney*

Seconded: *Maureen Robinson*

That:

An open and transparent inquiry be held to fully explain to the people of Hobart why there has been such the lack of public consultation and provision of information to allow informed debate on the University of Tasmania's and the Hobart City Council's support for the proposed move of the current Hobart university campus to the city.

Motion Carried

Motion 3

Moved: *Joseph Bugden*

Seconded: *John Hamilton*

That:

Any proposed development of the University of Tasmania site at Sandy Bay be rejected on the basis of broad and relevant community concerns and that, further, the site be retained and used for public education, as was the basis on which the site was provided by the Government of Tasmania on behalf of the people of Tasmania.

Motion Carried

Motion 4

Moved: *Louise Bloomfield -
Chairman of Confederation of Greater Hobart Business Ltd*

Seconded: *Paul Daniels*

That:

The Hobart City Council reconsider its responsibilities to small business owners and ensuring that the parking supply is maintained at healthy levels so they can continue to trade.

Motion Carried

Motion 5

Moved: *Paul Daniels*

Seconded: *Louise Bloomfield*

That:

Elected members list the relationships they have with UTAS, and those of their 'close associates' with the latter being as defined in the Local Government Act.

Motion Carried

Motion 6

Moved: *Louise Elliot*

Seconded: *Denis McLoughlin*

That:

1. The Council advise the public what, if any, studies have been undertaken directly or initiated by the Hobart City Council solely or in partnership with UTAS about UTAS relocation and make these studies available in full to the public within fourteen business days of this meeting.
2. The Council make available to the public the meeting agendas, papers and minutes from the Hobart City Council and UTAS Governance Council meetings for the past eight years within fourteen business days of this meeting.
3. The Council write to the Premier asking that he support the undertaking of a comprehensive, independent, and public review of UTAS relocation at the State Government level.
4. The Council formally request in writing to UTAS that:
 - a. UTAS withdraw or pause the applications they have submitted to the Hobart City Council and submit no further applications until a response from the State Government regarding a public review is received or until Local Government elections are held and finalised and a new Council appointed in around October this year (whichever is later) and;
 - b. UTAS cease and rewind relocation activities that have already made into the city in recent years, with some reasonable exceptions, given the strong and widespread community support against their move and indicate that the Council is making this request on behalf of these community the Council represents.

5. The Council develop a policy that governs Council's relationships with other parties when the other party is seeking (directly or indirectly) to influence the strategic direction and vision of our City and that the draft policy be made available for public consultation within 14 calendar days of this meeting.

Motion Carried

Motion 7

Moved: Marcos Gogolin

Seconded: Nigel Legge

That:

It be acknowledged that back in 2012/3 the Tasmanian TAFE Department of Creative Industries South, along with its staff and its 300 enrolled students, were invited by UTas to move to the UTas Centre for the Arts at Hunter St. This move came with many promises (e.g. advanced fabrication lab; multimedia lab; workshops for wood design; for jewellery; for ceramics; car parking etc.) especially towards engaging with younger students via articulation programs for VET towards a UTas bachelor degree. As students were co-enrolled by TAFE and UTas it allowed double dipping on government funding. Articulation was never consolidated towards students' qualifications thus the initial promise became only beneficial to UTas and TAFE managements' budget at the time. UTas made promises which became an opportunity grab, jobs for mates with TAFE and the VET sector becoming a casualty, this must not be allowed to occur elsewhere.

Motion Carried

Public Meeting Summary of Submissions

109 submissions were received.

Three were in support of the proposed move of UTas to the City and the redevelopment of the Sandy Bay Site.

106 were against the proposed move of UTas to the City and the redevelopment of the Sandy Bay Site.

Against the move into the City

Parking

Of those against, there was a strong view, 54%, that a move into the city would increase demand on current parking provisions and would cause significant parking and congestion issues.

There were concerns that proposed developments within the city did not include provision for additional parking to compensate the increased number of staff and students.

There was a view that current transport habits of staff and students would not change as a result of the move into the city with many still needing to utilise private vehicles for reasons such as carer duties, to transport teaching and learning materials, to travel to and from employment commitments.

There were concerns that as a result of staff and students not being able to access on-site parking, the need to move cars between time-limited parking spaces would impact on productivity and collaboration because less time would be spent in buildings and more time moving cars.

There were also concerns for the safety of staff and students, particularly during winter months, where those who could not afford parking would need to walk to outer areas such as the Domain for parking.

Impact on businesses

There was the view that as a result of student and staff competing for parking there would be a negative impact on CBD businesses by reducing parking accessibility for customers and city workers, ultimately forcing small businesses out of the CBD.

29% of submissions also mentioned the negative impact on CBD businesses with concerns the city would be deprived of its shopping precinct in favour of office type buildings. There were the views students, who are typically cash poor, would not spend money in the city.

Planning and development

37% of submissions also raised concerns about the impact of a micro suburb that exceeds current density limits on the Sandy Bay site.

There was a view that there would be increased pressure on infrastructure and services such as roads, parking, childcare, schools, shops and doctors.

Social and health impacts

40% raised concerns about the loss of the heart, centre and social fabric of the campus.

There was a view that the current campus provided a location for connection and interaction across a congenial mix of students from various faculties. The green spacious environment, quiet meeting locations, access to support services, recreational and social activities enhancing the learning experience.

21% also mentioned that the green outdoor spaces, gym and sporting fields provided enrichment to both student and staff providing a balance to academic demands commenting these would be more difficult to access from a City based location.

Suitability of Sandy Bay campus

There was a view a spacious green campus (28%) is a modern campus and the envy of other universities. Nearby bushland provides a point of difference and additional learning locations.

27% of submissions were of the view that the Sandy Bay campus was still fit for purpose, with many purpose built facilities not being replicated in the city.

There was a view that funding would be better spent refurbishing the current site and would be less costly than refurbishing buildings within the city. The cost of refurbishment could be off-set through the sale of some CBD properties.

Some questions were put as to how the campus was left to deteriorate to its current state.

There was also the view that refurbishment of the current site would be more environmentally sustainable with concerns expressed around the carbon emissions produced should the site be demolished and rebuilt.

There was also concern for the loss of habitat at the Sandy Bay campus with many significant trees being removed and concerns for the Swift Parrot.

A number of submissions, 22%, also raised the question of ethics, if land that was gifted to UTas for education purposes could be sold and re-zoned for development.

Access and bus services

There was a view that the current site was sufficiently accessible for students being only five minutes by bus from Franklin Square and within walking distance from the City.

There was a view the bus services from the northern and eastern suburbs were also good noting there were many factors to enrolment decisions and to claim the current location is barrier to enrolment is a disingenuous motive.

There was also a view that access for students could be improved, by increasing bus services or providing free shuttle buses to and from the area, a service many universities provide.

There was also a view that a move into the city could introduce some access issues.

There were concerns that students who undertake mix degrees in different disciplines will be spread across the city and unable to get between lectures.

Students located in the residential colleges at Sandy Bay, who come from state-wide, interstate or international locations, would have further to travel.

There was also concern raised for students with a disability and access issues navigating their way between different locations within the city.

Lack of consultation

There was a view there had not been a proper consultation process undertaken by UTas with 29% of submissions raising this as a concern.

There were comments that staff and students had not been consulted and were fearful of speaking out against the project. There were concerns for staff cuts with a view the proposal was geared towards a shift to on-line learning, reduced face to face contact and a shift to unsupported teaching.

Lack of planning and vision

There were views that UTas has lost its way and forgotten it is there to teach, that it is now more focussed on property development.

There were views UTas were steamrolling businesses and residents with its size, political influence and buying power forcing a move into the city.

There were views there was an absence of a coordinated planning approach for the entire project and that the existing planning scheme was not adequate to assess the move.

There was a view there was a lack of evidence based research to support the viability of the project and calls for an independent objective public inquiry to all aspects of the proposal be undertaken before it proceeds any further.

Relationship with Council

There were views the Council was biased in its decision making and had formed an improperly close relationship with UTas appearing to work together as a joint project. There were also concerns the Council is not supporting the need for more information to be shared by UTas.

In favour of the move into the City

Unsuitability of the Sandy Bay campus

Of the four submissions in favour of the project, there were views the Sandy Bay campus is no longer fit for purpose, is old fashioned and does not provide the contemporary facilities needed for higher education. There was also limited opportunity for expansion with current land holdings not being suitable for the scale of development required, making a move to the City more economical.

Benefits for the City

There were views that cities which form partnerships with universities, creating structures to identify opportunities for collaboration that builds on both their strengths and responds to their needs, are the cities, and the universities, that will be most successful in the global competition for talent and innovation as the basis for future business and social development.

Movement and parking

There were views the Master Plan centralises UTas activities and removes the need for time wasted travel from the city by students to the north and east.

There were views parking generated by a move into the city would be more than adequate with more access to public transport options available.

Housing

There were views a move to the city will bring life into the city with a critical mass of staff and students being located there and the development of 2,700 residences at the Sandy Bay site would introduce much needed, low cost housing.

Consultation

There were views, UTas has provided the opportunity for everyone to have their say during extensive consultation processes.