

Attachment B: Responses to Save UTAS Public Meeting – Questions to Council

Speaker 6 – Peter Bicevskis	
Question	Response
<p>How can the HCC be responsible for the independent assessment of the Sandy Bay rezoning and UTAs move when it has already committed in its Hobart Planning Schemes to support the move?</p>	<p>The Council has two functions in relation to the UTAS move to the City.</p> <p>One function is the need to consider and provide strategic direction for the City of Hobart and develop plans for infrastructure and services for the future. The Central Hobart Precincts Plan (CHPP) is part of that function in shaping the future of the City of Hobart and acknowledges the importance of access to education in the heart of Hobart. The statement in the directions paper is a potential future direction that has been determined in consultation with the community. It is important to note that the discussion paper states that the paper has been 'endorsed by Council for engagement purposes only.'</p> <p>Further, the future indicative UTAS footprint in the draft CHPP is 4.8% of the CBD. There are numerous other strategic priorities the City must consider in planning for the future, UTAS is one of many stakeholders that the City engages with.</p> <p>The Council also has a function as a planning authority in which it must consider individual development applications and make decisions based on legislation, the provisions of the planning scheme and the evidence it has before it. Ultimately, any application when finalised and the qualified advice from Council officers on the merits or otherwise of an application, is provided on the public record. Furthermore the determination of the application by elected members is conducted in open Council. There is also opportunity for members of the public to provide a representation on the merits or otherwise of the proposal when amendments are publicly notified. All this information is taken into account when making a decision on individual applications.</p>

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	<p>The Rezoning Application will be determined by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The City will form its view on the rezoning application – and has currently requested further information on the first draft application, yet ultimate authority to determine any scheme amendments and rezoning will be the Tasmanian Planning Commission.</p>
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Speaker 7 – Louise Elliot	
Questions	Responses
(a) In 2017 HCC agreed to research the socio economic impacts of the move of UTAs to the City but this research 5 years later has never happened.	A 2018 UTAS report “Potential socio-economic impacts report” will be tabled in the Notice of Motion (NoM) report scheduled for the Council meeting on 30 May.
(b) Despite having no evidence that the move is in our best interests the Council has multiple times provided their blanket support for UTAs relocation a few months ago the Council stated they would support and facilitate the UTAs relocation, this is a massive statement to make and this statement is made repeatedly with no evidence that it's in our best interests how can Councillors vote against an application or even question a concept when blanket support has already been given.	<p>“Blanket support” has not been provided for the relocation of UTAS to the CBD, as each Development Application submitted by UTAS is considered on its planning merit. The Council in its role as a planning authority considers individual development applications and makes decisions based on legislation, the provisions of the planning scheme and the evidence it has before it. Ultimately, any application when finalised and the qualified advice from Council officers on the merits or otherwise of an application, is provided on the public record.</p> <p>Furthermore the determination of the application by elected members is conducted in open Council. There is also opportunity for members of the public to provide a representation on the merits or otherwise of the proposal when amendments are publicly notified. All this information is taken into account when making a decision on individual applications.</p> <p>The City of Hobart and UTAS have a long-standing relationship as Tasmania's only tertiary institution, with a focus on how teaching, learning and research is vital to Hobart's future.</p>

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<p>(c) We have major transparency issues for years the Lord Mayor has been meeting regularly with UTAs but no information about what has been discussed and agreed is publically available. The Council knows this is a sensitive topic and is intentionally hiding it from the community, Matters which should be dealt with in the open are hidden away in Closed Council meetings.</p>	<p>The material proposed for release by this question is currently the subject of an application for assessed disclosure pursuant to section 13 of the Right to Information Act 2009. It is therefore not appropriate that it be released prior to that application being assessed.</p>
<p>(d) The Councils submission about UTAs plans for Sandy Bay was dealt with behind closed doors.</p>	<p>Following the consideration of confidential Concept Plans at a closed council meeting, Council's submission was made publicly available on the HCC website. https://www.hobartcity.com.au/Projects/Sandy-Bay-UTAS-redevelopment-submission</p>
<p>(e) The Council should not have provided blanket and unconditional support to a property developer to support and facilitate their wishes with zero evidence that it's in our best interests.</p>	<p>"Blanket support" has not been provided for the relocation of UTAS to the CBD, as each Development Application is considered on its planning merit. The Council in its role as a planning authority considers individual development applications and makes decisions based on legislation, the provisions of the planning scheme and the evidence it has before it.</p>
<p>(f) In my opinion what we have is a Council with an improper association with a property developer and has failed to act in the community's best interests.</p>	<p>The Council has the need to consider and provide strategic direction for the City of Hobart and develop plans for infrastructure and services for the future. The Central Hobart Precincts Plan (CHPP) is part of that function in shaping the future of the City of Hobart and acknowledges the importance of access to education in the heart of Hobart. The statement in the directions paper is a potential future direction that has been determined in consultation with the community. It is important to note that the discussion paper states that the paper has been 'endorsed by Council for engagement purposes only.'</p> <p>Further, the future indicative UTAS footprint in the draft CHPP is 4.8% of the CBD. There are numerous other strategic priorities the City must consider in</p>

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	<p>planning for the future, UTAS is one of many stakeholders that the City engages with.</p> <p>Elected members also have obligations around the declaration of interests in Part 5 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (“the Act”). Section 48(2) of the Act requires an elected member to declare any interest that the elected member has in a matter before any discussion on that matter commences. In accordance with the requirement in section 54 of the Act, the CEO maintains a register of interests of elected members where the elected member has notified the CEO of that interest.</p> <p>It remains a matter for each elected member to determine whether they have an interest in a matter and fulfil their obligations to declare it.</p>
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Speaker 8 – Judy Tierney	
Questions	Responses
<p>(a) Where’s the money coming from for the City proposal? How much will be taxpayer and ratepayer funded? Will Council be paid full rates for any new UTas structures, once contributing to Council coffers? Or will its charity status see it clear of this community responsibility?</p>	<p>Under section 87(1)(d) of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (Tas) (LG Act), all land [in the Hobart municipal area] is rateable except land or part of land owned and occupied exclusively for a charitable purpose, which is exempt from general rates (the charitable rates exemption). Under the Charities Act 2013, education meets the definition of a charitable purpose and therefore the University, as an education provider is not required to General pay rates to the City of Hobart on such land and buildings. It is however required to pay service rates and charges.</p> <p>While UTAS is not required to pay General rates for those buildings, the Rates Equivalency Agreement between the City of Hobart and UTAS provides that UTAS will pay in the circa of \$3.8 million to the City of Hobart for the 10-year</p>

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	<p>life of the Agreement (excluding annual CPI increase and future developer contributions). This figure is an approximate equivalent of the General rates that UTAS would have paid on buildings that they are now using and developing in the City of Hobart.</p> <p>Should the University purchase any additional land which is charitable rates exempt it will also attract the rates equivalency payment. UTAS has also agreed to pay development contributions in situations where Council intends to undertake works near land owned by the University and those works will directly benefit the University.</p>
(b) Has the HCC had open discussion and regular meetings with the UTAS Council and if so to what effect? and if not why not?	<p>HCC has not had meetings with the UTAS Council. HCC and UTAS Governance Forums have included the Lord Mayor, Vice Chancellor, Hobart City Council Elected Members and officers, but not the UTAS Council.</p>

Speaker 12 – Denis McLaughlin	
Questions	Responses
(a) Car parking and easy access should be the HCC's number one priority.	<p>Parking is a high priority for the City of Hobart and Council recognises this is an important access issue for business owners.</p>
(b) HCC has abandoned its support of shops and businesses in the CBD and is working against our interests, even though these businesses pay massive rates each year.	<p>Council has committed to a new Economic Development Strategy for the City of Hobart, commencing with a series of round table discussions held in March 2022 with eight separate stakeholder groups represented, including retailers, tourism and hospitality, NGO's, creatives and Developers and commerce. The feedback from these sessions, in conjunction with future consultations and research will be used to inform our new Economic Development Strategy,</p>

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	<p>aimed at increasing investment and ensuring we make the most of our strengths as a small but vibrant, creative, liveable capital city and visitor destination.</p> <p>Some of the program initiated over the last two years to support local businesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our iconic Salamanca Market was quickly established as an interim 'Tasmania's Own Market' established within evolving COVID restrictions to allow up to 5000 people to regularly support hundreds of stall holders and many surrounding businesses. • Developed and rolled out two rounds of the Passport to Hobart Campaign offering promotions and digital rewards with over 5000 customers signed up and almost \$30,000 worth of vouchers issued and around \$133,000 of value added to local business. • Grown the Hello Hobart Campaign 'City-wide' to help visitors rediscover Hobart's City Centre and access on online directory of business and shopping opportunities, which also included 90 minute and 3 hour parking periods, with around \$1.45m of free parking provided over the duration of the pandemic. • Introduced \$4.6m relief package to waive penalties, initiate a zero per cent increase to fees and charges from 2020/21 and applied hard ship support to waive fees and charges for food licences, outdoor dining and refunds of those fees for cancelled events. • \$3.5m assistance to ratepayers and businesses experiencing hardship. • Providing advice and support, connecting business to available resources such as Business Tasmania, Public Health and development of Resilient
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	<p>Hobart – our emergency response and recovery program for community members and businesses linking them to resources and information such as grant funding opportunities, working from home etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trialling a Business Concierge model to streamline business enquires to Council. • Roll out of around \$250,000 in Artistic support grants, shopfront improvement grants and \$10,000 quick response grants and a further \$350,000 during the pandemic as business support grants. • Piloting new outdoor dining platforms to expand business customer capacity around the city. • Creating more appealing public spaces through our Trial Busking and Street Performance project, thus expanding opportunities for performers from 3 to 27 locations around the City and improving the city scape for business owners. • Instigate a 'transition' period for businesses in the up-take of the Single Use Plastics By-law from April 2020 until July 2021 to reduce transition impacts. • Held a total 6 Hobart Economic Recovery Business Consultative Group meetings from December 2020 to November 2021 to sense check policy decisions, receive feedback and inform future strategic decisions. The Consultative Recovery Group included representatives from a broad range of sectors and representative industry bodies. • At the onset Covid 19 (April to June 2020) conducted a telephone survey of over 200 local businesses to gain insight form businesses owners of how best to support them. This data resulted in the establishment of a range of business grants and the development of the Covid 19 Economic Recovery Framework and Action Plan 2020-22.
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	<p>During the remainder of 2022 and beyond the City of Hobart will be seeking to build further relationships with businesses and business networks to test assumptions in our economic strategy for the city.</p>
<p>(c) The CHPP is a disgraceful document purported as the work of the HCC and State Government that we believe has UTas fingerprints all over it and strongly it's a smokescreen for UTas to destroy the city by closing Melville Street.</p>	<p>The CHPP Discussion Paper brings together issues and ideas to reflect a range of policy positions adopted by Council in various strategies and agreements or being proposed.</p> <p>These ideas are relevant to the purpose of the precincts plan which is to identify the infrastructure, open space, transport and commercial opportunities required to meet the needs of a growing residential population, the region's largest employment centre and Central Hobart as a popular visitor destination.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Council endorsed the discussion paper for engagement purposes only. Feedback from the community is being considered in drafting the actual precincts plan which will be subject to further consultation.</p>
<p>(d) The CHPP does not mention one thing about the existing shops and businesses or their needs.</p>	<p>Statements about businesses in Central Hobart are made under the various sections of the discussion paper, for example under the section for <i>Idea One: A strong city heart</i> which states: "Interconnections between state and local services can enhance economies, coordination and convenience. Similarly the proximity of business, retail, educational and cultural activities creates an 'ecosystem' that thrives on and generates interaction".</p> <p>During consultation on the discussion paper the community asked Council to strengthen statements about existing shops and businesses. This request is being reflected in the draft precincts plan which will be subject to further consultation.</p>

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Speaker 15 – Fletcher Clark	
Question	Response
<p>It is high time for the HCC to greatly scrutinise and provide comprehensive review of this relocation proposal the University has failed as part of its culture of a lack of transparency accountability and internal review to provide this mechanism student voices continue to be overheard and proper oversight now.</p>	<p>The Council in its role as a planning authority scrutinises individual development applications and makes decisions based on legislation, the provisions of the planning scheme and the evidence it has before it. Ultimately, any application when finalised and the qualified advice from Council officers on the merits or otherwise of an application, is provided on the public record. There is also opportunity for members of the public to review or provide a representation on the merits or otherwise of the proposal when amendments are publicly notified. All of this information is taken into account by the Council when making a decision on individual applications.</p> <p>The City of Hobart scrutinised the first proposed Sandy Bay MasterPlan and provided a submission https://www.hobartcity.com.au/Projects/Sandy-Bay-UTAS-redevelopment-submission</p>

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Speaker 21 – Robin Banks	
Question	Response
<p>I understand that UTAS has committed to paying to Hobart City Council the equivalent of rates as part of the proposed move. Rates it does not pay for the existing campus. That appears to be a windfall gain to the council should the relocation go ahead. In that circumstance how can Hobart City Council make decisions about the campus relocation given the conflict of interest this windfall gain represents?</p>	<p>Under section 87(1)(d) of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (Tas) (LG Act), all land [in the Hobart municipal area] is rateable except land or part of land owned and occupied exclusively for a charitable purpose, which is exempt from general rates (the charitable rates exemption). Under the Charities Act 2013, education meets the definition of a charitable purpose and therefore the University, as an education provider is not required to General pay rates to the City of Hobart on such land and buildings. It is however required to pay service rates and charges.</p> <p>While UTAS is not required to pay General rates for those buildings, the Rates Equivalency Agreement between the City of Hobart and UTAS provides that UTAS will pay in the circa of \$3.8 million to the City of Hobart for the 10-year life of the Agreement (excluding annual CPI increase and future developer contributions). This figure is an approximate equivalent of the General rates that UTAS would have paid on buildings that they are now using and developing in the City of Hobart.</p> <p>Should the University purchase any additional land which is charitable rates exempt it will also attract the rates equivalency payment. UTAS has also agreed to pay development contributions in situations where Council intends to undertake works near land owned by the University and those works will directly benefit the University.</p>

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Speaker 22 – Paul Daniels	
Question	Response
<p>University has promised some 1200 car parks in the CBD when Forestry proposal went through they were spruiking some 1600 car parks.</p> <p>F&G Committee list 8 car parks providing 2544 off street parking spaces.</p>	<p>At the City Planning Committee deliberation of the UTAS proposal for the redevelopment of the former Forestry building in Melville Street, a UTAS representative advised that there was scope for significant car parking provision at their future development sites within the city.</p> <p>The UTAS representative did not nominate a specific number that the University would provide until such time as they had spoken to relevant Council officers and undertaken a detailed analysis of need and importantly what impact such carparks would have on the road network and streetscapes of the city. The City of Hobart is keen to ensure that any provision of car parking by UTAS within the CBD is built on sound evidence based analysis of this need and impact.</p>

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Speaker 25 – Robert Hogan	
Question	Response
<p>I have lodged 7 RTI's, 5 to UTAs, 1 to HCC and 1 to Dept Premier and Cabinet.</p> <p>No satisfactory informative responses have been received.</p> <p>To the LM, has the HCC undertaken or commissioned any surveys or reports on the views of residents, business operators and or ratepayers of Hobart regarding the proposed move of UTAS in the CBD , if not why, given the seminal importance of this issue has it not done so.</p>	<p>The City of Hobart has not commissioned any surveys or reports regarding the proposed relocation of UTAS into the CBD. Residents, business operators and ratepayers can provide submissions to the development approval process as each building is proposed for redevelopment in the CBD.</p> <p>The City does not commission surveys on behalf of planning applicants.</p> <p>The City consults with community members and stakeholders on city-shaping projects led by the City of Hobart such as the Central Hobart Precincts Plan.</p>