



University of Tasmania

# Stakeholder Engagement Report

Southern Future Project



**3P**  
ADVISORY

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## Executive Summary

The key message from the consultation was that the university needed to work harder to win the hearts and minds of Tasmanians, it needed to more clearly articulate its vision, and had to tell its story in a simple, engaging way.

While it is not always obvious in the public discourse, Tasmanians are proud and love that their home state has its own university. Tasmanians want the University of Tasmania to be world-class in planning and designing the central business district campus in Hobart. Expectations are high.

The hype in announcements around the move into the CBD has raised the hopes, aspirations and expectations of many stakeholders.

People want to be closely involved in its planning, through consultation and a better understanding of the benefits to the wider community. Many asked to be considered for ongoing consultation over the next five years.

As a matter of state pride and in understanding the importance of tertiary education, Tasmanians want the university to be successful. They want to share in its success for them, their children, their grand-children and future generations. Much of the emotion surrounding the university is the sense of ownership and pride so many people interviewed clearly had for the institution.

However, the consultation revealed a limited foundation of trust in the university among those interviewed and those who completed the online survey.

This was reflected in the comments -- by those who supported the concept of a CBD campus -- that the university was an elite institution, that there were too many barriers to entry, and that regional Tasmania, in particular, was poorly served by the university. Many were waiting to see the actions of the university match the words.

It also revealed an underlying mistrust on the university's overarching motivation for the move. Some put this down to a revenue grab through more overseas enrolments. Others described their concerns at a large institution which was not living up to its corporate responsibility. And a few described the university in a similar vein to other Tasmanian monopolies, large organisations that the general public perceived had got their own way to the detriment of the overall population.

Very few respondents were against the move. There was a minority – 12 out of 100 people surveyed online – who opposed the move to the CBD and only one of the interviewees who held the same view.

With over 200 respondents through face to face interviews, focus groups and surveys combined with the majority of participants at the Appreciative Inquiry Summit in 2019, this was a strong indication the move is supported by many.

The consultation focused on the six principles agreed to by the Summit in November last year:

- A sustainable campus characterised by bringing nature and green spaces into the city.
- A campus that is welcoming to all and that builds community.
- A campus that enables us to work better together with our many partners.
- Reimagined traffic and transport options.
- A campus which preserves the Domain as a special place.
- Architecture that enhances the city.

It was strongly agreed that good design was critical to an open and welcoming campus, that the architecture needed to sit within the scale of the city yet be innovative with a strong "Tasmanian-ness" and be part of telling the university story. Transport within the city and from the out-lying southern regional areas was regarded as a critical element in ensuring the success of a CBD campus.

Participants in the consultation clearly grasped the opportunity to paint their picture of their university on a wider canvas.

As mentioned, there was overwhelming majority support for the move to the CBD and of the principles to drive that.

But there was also a strong and consistent current sweeping through the conversations that dragged the focus towards the relationship of the university with the Tasmanian community.

Participants wanted greater community engagement from the university, stronger partnerships with business and community organisations, and a greater focus on the vocational elements of its course offerings as part of its partnerships with business.

Overall, Tasmanians want to see their family and friends reach higher levels of education attainment. And they want to work together with the university to make it happen.

Across Churchill Ave, on an overpass leading to the university's Sandy Bay campus, was a banner. "At the University of Tasmania, the whole island is your campus," it proclaimed.

The whole island could not be your campus if the university had no presence where you lived, had no means of communicating locally on the value of education at every level, and had no partnerships with local government, communities, local schools and business to reinforce that message.

The essence of what the many voices captured by this consultation are saying is that the welcoming banner needed to extend far beyond the campus doorstep. They want the message in the banner to be seen and experienced where it is most needed.



## Introduction\*

The University of Tasmania is undertaking an institution wide transformation aimed at putting students at the centre of all its decisions, increasing higher education participation and attainment throughout the State, and leveraging the unique distinctiveness within the curriculum to attract students from Tasmania, the mainland, and from international sources.

This transformation is being designed to realise the mission and goals set out in the University's Strategic Direction and Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

The Southern Future project focuses on the development of a city-centric campus in the Hobart CBD which supports the transformation of the University's academic operating model in the South.

The aim of the project is to create a highly distinctive campus which provides contemporary research and teaching spaces, and outstanding staff and student experience.

In 2019, when the University announced its Council had endorsed the decision to develop a city-centric campus, the University promised to build a shared vision of the University in Hobart.

In November 2019, they brought together 200 community, industry, government and University representatives for a strengths-based Appreciative Inquiry summit to help dream and design the future campus.

This summit – held over two days – captured those qualities which people deeply value about Hobart and explored how those in the room wanted it to be different and better, to inform the master planning process.

The key principles which emerged from the AI summit were that we should create:

- A sustainable campus characterised by bringing nature and green spaces into the city
- A campus that is welcoming to all and that builds community
- A campus that enables us to work better together with our many partners
- Reimagined traffic and transport options
- A campus which preserves the Domain as a special space
- Architecture that enhances the city

The University has appointed Gensler, an integrated architecture, design, planning and consulting firm, to lead the master planning work.

\*this introduction is an adapted version of the original request for proposal provided by the University of Tasmania.

In addition, Realm Studios have also been appointed to simultaneously undertake a landscape master planning exercise. Representatives of both organisations were at the AI Summit and are currently reviewing the outcomes to inform their planning.

For a variety of reasons including timing, duration and lead up notice to the Summit, the University were not successful in attracting a diversity of the community to attend as originally hoped. Young people, prospective students, disadvantaged members of our community, local government and stakeholders for the broader region were conspicuous by their absence. The University recognise the need to improve their engagement with these stakeholders and to engage with them in a way that is tailored to them, especially since these groups are key future target markets for increasing the number of Tasmanians in learning pathways which is central to the overall mission of the University.

In 2020 the University have committed to delivering a **program of community outreach** to consult with sections of the community which have not had the opportunity to engage with the University's intention to develop a city centric campus or to offer their perspectives.

The plan is for the University to also work internally with their Student Services team and Schools Engagement team to engage with students, prospective students and current school students throughout Southern Tasmania.

The stakeholder engagement undertaken to inform the Southern Future team provides the initial input from those not in the room at the summit to ensure their voices are heard.

## Methodology

The University of Tasmania appointed 3P Advisory to engage with key stakeholders as part of the formulation of the UTAS master plan for its Hobart CBD campus. These stakeholders, for a range of reasons, were not able to participate in the Appreciative Inquiry Summit in November 2019. Stakeholders targeted included:

- Southern regional councils outside of Hobart City Deal group of councils.
- Community organisations
- Stakeholders from the broader region
- People living with disadvantage or vulnerability

An extensive series of face-to-face interviews and an on-line survey were conducted to allow organisations and individuals to give full vent to their views about the future of the university.

The consultation canvassed the impact of the university's master plan on the wider community, the benefits and the challenges identified by the participants, their ideas to enhance the plan, and how, through co-operative engagement, the university can deliver on the key principles at the heart of the Southern Future Transformation Project.

Those principles, as outlined to the participants interviewed, are:

- A sustainable campus characterised by bringing nature and green spaces into the city.
- A campus that is welcoming to all and that builds community.
- A campus that enables us to work better together with our many partners.
- Reimagined traffic and transport options.
- A campus which preserves the Domain as a special place.
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All organisations and individuals were sent an email outlining the purpose of the interviews and a link to the results of the Appreciative Inquiry conducted by the university in November 2019.

It was explained that the consultation was an extension of the Appreciative Inquiry and that the principles outlined above were the result of that summit.

They were also informed that a draft master plan, incorporating their stakeholder feedback, would be made public in the second quarter of 2020.

Approximately 170 individuals participated in the consultation through either face-to-face individual interviews, focus groups or through the online survey.

The full report outlines the list of participants.

## Common Themes - Architectural

### **Principle one – A sustainable campus characterised by bringing nature and green spaces into the city**

Expectations are high for a world class university campus across the CBD that provides an exemplar for sustainability and enhances Tasmania's energy reputation. Some suggested the "world first" building design would, in itself, attract students from all over the world to study within its building to experience first-hand the cutting edge sustainability design.

That the buildings incorporate the use of smart technology while also ensuring the personal contact with people, both staff and students in a face to face environment is given equal consideration.

As much as is possible, the abundance of green spaces on the Sandy Bay campus are incorporated into the city design.

### **Principle two – A campus that is welcoming to all and builds community**

The campus should be for all and provide an integrated service and learning mix. This means opening the campus up as a multi-purpose site with community, community organisations, business people, students and academics working together.

The move into the city "disarms" the university. It removes the sense of elitism, prestige and privilege.

It's where everyone can be, not just some people because it's no longer located where privileged people live. It creates a space where people say "this is where I belong, I'm meant to be here".

### **Principle three – A campus that enables us to work better together with our many partners**

Everyone wants a partnership with the university! There are multiple and diverse examples and ideas for partnerships. "Educating about education" – setting up partnerships in the regional communities so local people understand what is on offer and how they can participate.

More practical connections between research/academics and the business community to enable collaboration, problem solving and breaking down the current internal focus of the research for shared value.

### **Principle four – Reimagined traffic and transport options**

Responsive, affordable and practical transport to and from regional communities. Creating and being the catalyst to change the culture in the Hobart CBD to enable bikes, scooters, walkable areas and a transit corridor from the northern suburbs. Break-through transport options for Hobart by leading the way with trackless trams and ferries.



**Principle five – A campus which preserves the Domain as a special place**

An important historical site that needed to be respected and preserved

A large green space so close to the city that it should not be built on

**Principle six – Architecture that enhances the city**

Definitely not concrete blocks and nothing like the current accommodation buildings. Sympathetic to the heritage of the city, but not trying to duplicate it. Architecture that aligns with the period in which it's built, is sophisticated and "the best design for the age that it is in – cutting edge, beautiful and challenging all at once."



## Common Themes - Non-architectural

Tasmanians overall feel a strong sense of ownership, commitment and loyalty to the university– even though they are frustrated and often critical of it.

There is a strong sense that local success is critical – if the university succeeds in attracting local students then Tasmania succeeds. Interviewees expressed a desire for the university to prioritise local students with (what they perceived as) the same commitment and energy as the perception on interstate and international.

*“If UTas put the same budget to attracting our local young people as they did international students, we could turn the corner on low education outcomes in this state.”*

Potential students (and their families) expressed that they have insufficient knowledge of the university and also do not know where and how to get it. They described limited and adhoc contact with schools and thought it was too late by the time they were well into secondary and senior secondary education.

The planning support online is regarded as complicated and is not personalised.

*“We have transition to work programs but we don’t have transition to university programs”*

Consultation participants (including Mayors) expressed feeling mentally/emotionally intimidated engaging with the university as a student. “I’m not worthy” “I’m not smart enough” “really smart young people can be really intimidating to mature-age students” . One Mayor described driving into the Sandy Bay campus carpark on the weekend, prior to needing to attend a learning program the following week, to try and settle his nerves.

Many interviewed and survey respondents used the word elitist to describe the university. This was varied in context - its buildings, processes and culture of teaching staff once on campus.

The university culture and structures were described as making it very difficult for low-income students to attend with direct examples given by interviewees in the focus groups and survey participants. Direct examples of comments made by lecturers to students were provided. (this is also linked to the perception of not being worthy and also feeling overwhelmed and intimidated).

Some interviewees strongly expressed the view that the relocation focus needs to explicitly understand the challenges of the regional/rural communities in southern Tasmania outside of the greater Hobart council areas.

Local success stories promoted locally are seen as critical. For example, the Brighton Mayor, GM & senior staff outlined stories of many local people who had been to the university and who live in their community. They tell these stories with pride and admiration.

Student experiences on campus across a range of ways – from day-to-day interactions through to access to support and the social/campus life experience – challenges with access to support in a timely way through to feeling socially isolated "it was the loneliest three years of my life".

A need for explicit, planned strategies that are well communicated externally that acknowledge the barriers and what the university is doing to address them i.e. transport

A minority of interviewees used the word "monopoly" to describe the university. They expressed a view that the actions of the university aligned with other Tasmanian monopolies such as Federal Hotels and Gunns Ltd. These comparisons were used within the context of "too big to fail" and a perception that government pandered to these monopolies – including the university.



## Online Survey - Key Themes

This section provides a brief overview of common themes and sample comments from the online survey. The total survey comments and themes are provided in full in the final report document.

One hundred people, using the Survey Monkey tool, were asked five questions based on the principles agreed to by the A.I. Summit in Hobart in November 2019 and four supplementary questions on their age, gender, postcode and education attainment.

The key themes to emerge were greater involvement by the University of Tasmania with the wider community, stronger partnerships with business and community organisations, a campus open to all, and the challenges of transport already apparent in Hobart.

Of the 100 responders, 12 indicated they were against the university moving parts or all of its campus to the Hobart central business district.

Eleven others were unsure of the benefits of the move but offered a range of views on how the move could deliver positive benefits to the community and the university.

The questions, and a summary of responses, are as follows:

### **Q1 When you think about a welcoming university campus in the city, what would you like to see?**

There was strong majority support for a campus that is eco-friendly, sustainable, low-rise with more car parking, green public spaces, easy access for the public, plenty of hospitality venues, incorporated in stylish buildings.

Ideas included:

- Safe rooms for prayer, meditation and chilling out.
- Rooftop terraces.
- Public art.
- Gagebrook-University social enterprise on site.

### **Q2 What are some examples of how UTAS can create and build a sense of community on a university campus located in the city?**

There was a strong theme supporting the need for public consultation on planning and design issues and a consistent, transparent process.

There was also majority support for public events and open access for the public and for integration with CBD businesses.



Ideas included:

- A new public library for Hobart at the heart of the CBD campus to be used by the university and the wider community.
- Retro-fit existing buildings to maintain the Hobart character. University in Savannah, Georgia, was cited as a good example.

Potential challenges or issues cited:

- The "Balkanisation" of student groups.
- Concrete high-rise.
- Poor connections between campus buildings because of the existing Hobart street plan.

### **Q3 What are your ideas on innovative transport options to and from a university campus in the city?**

There was strong support for more frequent bus service, using smaller buses with a hop-on hop-off capability. A free university bus service was well supported as was infrastructure to make walking and bike riding easier and safer.

Ideas included:

- The university establishing its own Uber-style transport service.
- City monorail linking campuses.

Potential challenges cited:

- Greater CBD congestion.

### **Q4 What are some examples of how UTAS can work to build partnerships across Southern Tasmania to enhance the university experience for students?**

A very strong theme emerged around building relationships with business and the community, including work experience and mentor programs, working with social enterprises, and engagement more with people with low education attainment and from lower socio-economic areas.

Ideas included:

- Study hubs across city and in regional towns.

### **Q5 Are there any other ideas, thoughts or comments you would like to ensure are considered about the University of Tasmania's move into the Hobart city centre?**

Car parking and better public transport was regarded as a top priority. Zero waste and carbon positive should drive the design. A CBD campus would increase the visibility of learning and interaction with the community.

Ideas include:

- Using the state school system to better engage with prospective students.
- Appointing City University ambassadors to promote the benefits of a CBD campus.

Potential challenges cited:

- Disruption of normal city life.
- Housing shortages.
- Risk of social isolation and impact on mental health.
- No strategic plan.

#### **Quotes from respondents (verbatim)**

*"To put it bluntly, the elitism displayed by utas locks out those who would benefit most from further education opportunities simply by making the front door seem inaccessible and unapproachable."*

*"My son earned an IT cadetship during his undergraduate degree, and it meant that when he graduated he already had substantial work experience and was eminently employable. We need to bring these systems back."*

*"The university is the visible catalyst of the demographic renewal that Tasmania needs—but this change needs active and careful management and support. If Tasmania does not maintain its reputation as a welcoming place, all this will be for naught."*

*"UTAS needs to get out into regional areas and talk with students and their parents/carers about access to university and options for them. Currently the number of regional/country students accessing university is low and we need to improve that outcome. There has been little change for decades."*

*"More workplace experience components for almost all types of courses -- not just science and other technical areas, but political science or history, as well as law and medicine."*

*"The University should be building partnerships with the community sector to enhance the research capacity of that poorly funded sector by providing honours, masters and PhD research support which is integrated into teaching programs."*

*"Be an unimpeachable teaching and research institute that doesn't pander to the greed of business, subtle demands for easier courses and shamefully generous marking that lowers standards, or pushes from governments to do their policy work for them."*

*"Work with regional areas such as the Huon Valley to develop study spaces in those areas so students do not have to commute, but can access studies online from a dedicated space."*

*"Ensure that older students and disabled are not excluded or disadvantaged in an environment that is primarily geared for youth."*

*"This is a good move that increases visibility of learning and interaction with community. I hope it is an us space for everyone and not an 'us the privileged' space."*

"I think if utas steps out of Hobart and looks at the context of their institution in the lives of real Tasmanian's they might see that actually what this project is doing is locking out a significant portion of the state."

"It would be a disaster to go into this without appropriate transport options to stop the city being clogged with students in cars trying to find parking."

"With UTAS building new infrastructure it is vital that they take this opportunity to become leaders in environmentally conscious design - incorporating energy production, sustainable design principles, water saving for gardens and natural spaces etc. "

"STOP this madness now!"

There is a risk that the move will be seen as a 'takeover' of the city if the community does not see the benefits. I wonder if the Hobart CBD is large & diverse enough to incorporate the planned numbers of UTas buildings, students and staff without being overwhelmed?

"I wonder if the Hobart CBD is large & diverse enough to incorporate the planned numbers of UTas buildings, students and staff without being overwhelmed?"

"Tasmania is bigger than utas and its educational sector - and whilst the buying power of international and interstate students is a benefit to Tasmania's economy - every day Tasmanians don't want to live in a university state when the university is presented in a way that implies it isn't for them. Every day Tasmanians may be welcome at utas in theory but in reality, utas doesn't do anything to encourage or support this - especially for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Through utas opting to cut back pathways and options to regional Tasmanians - by reducing courses and classes in these regions and centralising a vast majority of services in the south of the state, utas is isolating and locking out locals. Hobart isn't accessible to everyone - and I think utas needs to step away from its big picture vision for a minute and look at the day to day realities of their potential local students. I can guarantee you that a 17 year old student from the north west coast who might be the first in their family to attend university, looking to study law whilst working part time at coles, coming from a single parent family/income with 2 younger siblings - they do not care about a new campus in Hobart. They can't afford to live there. What they care about is their ability to pursue something which has felt out of reach their whole life, only to realise that they are the forgotten ones of this project. I think if utas steps out of Hobart and looks at the context of their institution in the lives of real Tasmanian's they might see that actually what this project is doing is locking out a significant portion of the state. You're the only university in Tasmania and you have a responsibility to be accessible to the next generation of Tasmanians."

## Social Licence to Operate

The term "social licence to operate" is used regularly by many – politicians, industry for example. The research demonstrates the definition of social licence is broader than the single term and contains at least four key elements:

- Institutionalised trust
- Interactional trust
- Socio-political legitimacy
- Economic legitimacy

These four elements are used to measure an organisation or project's social licence.

The stakeholder engagement work undertaken by 3P Advisory did not specifically measure social licence against these elements. However, the themes emerging from the interviews and surveys provide some indication against each element as summarised below.

### **Institutionalised trust**

*Definition: The perception that the relations between the stakeholder institutions (e.g. the community representative organisations) and the project/organisation are based on an enduring regard for the mutual interests of each other.*

The consultation showed that the relationship between university and community does not meet the definition of institutionalised trust. Those interviewed surveyed want the university to be successful and they want to share in that success. There is a sense of ownership and pride in the university. However, they believe the university does not harness that to its benefit and therefore fails to have that "enduring regard for the mutual interests of each other." In urging new partnerships with business, the community, and the education sector, interviewees are wanting to build on those mutual interests, particularly in the southern regional communities.

### **Interactional trust**

*Definition: The perception that the organisation and its management listens, responds, keeps promises, engages in mutual dialogue and exhibits reciprocity in its interactions.*

A strong theme from the consultation is that the university talked a lot, but action was slow or at times, it didn't follow through with partnership opportunities. There was a strong theme from the interviews that if the university did everything it was promising to do – basically matched words with actions – then interactional trust would be improved.



There was also a sense that the university needs to consult widely and regularly on the CBD campus project to ensure that each stage is well informed. The need for wider consultation and communication also applied to the wider community concerns raised by interviewees and those surveyed. For example, a strong theme was that the university needed to have a greater presence in regional Tasmania and in the primary and secondary education sectors and to communicate its vision more widely. The community wants more interaction and wants to see feedback translate into changes and action.

### **Socio-political legitimacy**

*Definition: The perception that the project and/or the organisation contributes to the wellbeing of the region, respects the local way of life, meets expectations about its role in society and acts according to stakeholder views of fairness.*

There is recognition that the university contributes wellbeing but feedback from the consultation makes it clear there is work to do on respecting the local way of life, society's expectations about its role and whether it acts fairly. This applies both in terms of the CBD campus plan and wider issues raised by participants. The matter of fairness was raised in the context of access to tertiary education for those living in the southern regional areas of Tasmania, and the image of the university as an elite organisation not open to all.

The community expectation of the university's role is high. It is highly valued, and Tasmanians want to see it succeed. The bar is set high and the consultation shows the university struggles to clear it, notwithstanding the strong majority support for the CBD campus project. However, it has considerable regard, support and good faith through partnerships to help it take that leap and that new partnerships and better communication will provide that power to clear the bar.

### **Economic legitimacy**

*Definition: The perception that the project and or organisation offers an economic benefit to the perceiver.*

In terms of the CBD project, there was strong majority support but that those who back the plan still need more information and expect greater ongoing consultation with business and community organisations.

The majority of respondents want the project to succeed and the key to success will be explaining the benefits and listening to the feedback. The economic legitimacy in terms of the CBD project is therefore not fully realised, and in some cases, is seen only to benefit the financial position of the university, at great cost to the residents and taxpayers.