

## **Speech by Lewis Ringwaldt at the 2 October Vote No Rally**

The proposed city move is at once both a symptom and a cause of a lack of investment in teaching and research and students themselves, and a University administration forgetting about its core function.

When I was at University the nature of the Sandy Bay campus provided a quality opportunity to participate in events – both educational and social.

As a student from Dodges Ferry – the first in my family to go to university – the collegiality of University, the social aspect of on campus learning and the location of the University itself, kept me at University. At no point did I 'dread' - in Professor Black's terms - catching two buses, or the name Sandy Bay

The experience that Sandy Bay campus provides is like no other. If it wasn't for the sports, the activities, the late nights and the shenanigans, the scavenger hunts and the outdoor parties, students from all backgrounds and nationalities put on in vast grounds of the Sandy Bay campus, I probably would not have continued.

In my various roles at TULS and the TUU, the nature of the Sandy Bay campus made it so much easier to organise events and to bring students together. We organised cross faculty events with the medical society, utilising the facilities of the Sandy Bay campus – those from other campuses would lament the lack of open space for their own activities.

The city move will quite literally cement a lack of space and a lack of engagement for staff and students, as administrators, marketers and planners have forgotten what makes the heart of a university tick.

UTAS's recent track record is becoming less and less aligned to fostering the engagement and encouragement of students and the dedication to teaching and research it has come to be known for.

It provides a circular and reverse-engineered justification for moving into the city, as it has contributed in a large part to the gradual degradation of student life at the Sandy Bay campus by forgetting to invest in the built environment and the student experience.

The argument in part relies on a bizarre piece of propaganda dressed up as research, equating the UTAS 'Sandy Bay campus' as somehow an 'elite university' with the same access problem as elite universities like Cambridge and Oxford.

But somehow it gives a pass to the same University moved 7 minutes up the road but without proper student facilities as now magically a beacon of access - this is so desperate and ludicrous that by itself it reveals that Utas have not put any proper thought into the wellbeing of students in this plan.

The University are paternalistically using future students' own disadvantage against them, having not emphasised prioritising that group of students in the past.

These are students who will be eager to learn and participate in University after having done so in person at school – students whose enthusiasm is reduced to sitting in their bedrooms participating

in tutes and lectures increasingly online due to the lack of lecture theatres in Hobart – how demoralising is that? How bad is that for retention?

Access to a full and satisfying on-campus experience is crucial to local student retention and much more important than the 7 minutes' extra distance from the University to your place of residence.

The University of Tasmania has created opportunity for so many Tasmanians. The past and future prosperity of our state owes in large part to the University. That is why it is so important to focus on the product: the students, the lecturers, the research, the noble commitment to free inquiry – all the things that a university worth the name should embody. UTAS, recognising this and saving the Sandy Bay campus will go a long way to getting this right.

And I encourage those that have had the benefit of the Sandy Bay campus as recently as I have to come out and fight for a better future for students at Utas by supporting the save Sandy Bay campus movement and vote no. We won't have a second chance.