

Partial Transcript of Mel Bush (ABC) Interview with Rufus Black

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Mel Bush

When, Rufus Black, did the University Council authorise the total relocation of the Sandy Bay campus into the city?

Rufus Black

In 2019 was when that, was when that, decision was made.

Mel Bush

And did the decision support the move completely, the complete move of the Campus?

Rufus Black

Yes, yes. That's, I mean that people would remember back then, you know, in *The Mercury* and other places, there are kind of the picture of all the different parts of that, all the different parts of that move. You know, very clearly kind of set out. We ran a kind of consultation room for a considerable period; set out both sides of that. And then we actually held back then a community summit, a large multi-day community summit with representatives from right across the community, exploring what it would be and giving us really good guidance about what it would take. We then went on and developed again, with wide consultation, an urban development framework in order to shape the city moves. So this next round of consultation we're doing is actually part of what has been quite a long journey of consultation, but it really matters to keep hearing from people in Hobart. So that we ensure this doesn't just create great, great, teaching and research facilities, but adds amenity to the city.

Mel Bush

And in terms of that meeting that you held back into 2019 that you're talking about, the decision, have the minutes from that been published?

Rufus Black

The um, which?

Mel Bush

Of the University Council.

Rufus Black

I think we've released those under a freedom of information request relatively recently.

Mel Bush

And how many members of the University Council were at the meeting at the time, which was in Burnie, I believe?

Rufus Black

Yes, I can't recall the exact number. There was a full, it was a full Council, a full Council meeting. All Council members were there at the time.

Mel Bush

And where were those minutes published?

Rufus Black

Um, ah, it's a good question Mel. I'm not sure where they've ultimately, ultimately, ended up but look, if you go to our website you'll find the kind of very extensive documentation around all of the different aspects of the move and the decisions, decisions around it.

Mel Bush

And you've confirmed that there will be an educational component that's going to remain in Sandy Bay as part of the master plan. When will you be able to confirm or announce what faculties or faculty will remain on [Sandy Bay]?

Rufus Black

We haven't, we haven't said anything specific is remaining. Consultation is about actually listening to staff, about as we consolidate all of our research and teaching in the city. What are the best locations for any particular parts of facility, we noticed that, we know of course the sporting facilities are staying there. We have flagged as part of that conversations an innovation hub that would be there.

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Mel Bush

Have you been surprised by the internal and external pushback against the redevelopment of Sandy Bay, the sale of the Sandy Bay campus, and the move into the city?

Rufus Black

People are passionate on both sides of that, both sides of that, both sides of that question. People love their city, they want a better city and that's really what we're working to do is to make sure that we hear those concerns and that what we do creates not just great research and teaching facilities, but actually adds amenity to, amenity to, the city.

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Mel Bush

....But can I ask you first Rufus Black were the academic staff, the students and the professionals consulted before the motion to move the campus was taken?

Rufus Black

Yes. So we had a very substantially, so there's back in 2019 we had an entire room set aside with all of the material about the both sides of that discussion. We have hundreds and hundreds of staff and students visit that, a wide range of feedback. We actually ran, ran, detailed surveys on what people

thought about all the different aspects of the, aspects of the, argument. So a really extensive process which was very open. So you know, big, big involvement.

Mel Bush

And has the University Council expressly authorized the University to build those 2700 [sic] dwellings for private residence?

Rufus Black

No. The University Council has to respect the city process, which is to apply for a planning scheme amendment and that's what we've paused, those. In order to apply for planning scheme amendment you have to provide a picture of the kind of things you might do with it, and we've paused that process.

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Mel Bush

Should, Rufus Black, the relocation of the campus, the complete relocation, should that be paused until the legislative inquiry into the provisions of the University of Tasmania Act until that's completed?

Rufus Black

No, that's an inquiry into our governance, governance structure. It's not an inquiry into the move.

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Mel Bush

And just another quick question for you. This texter says 75% of the NTEU members on your staff oppose the move into the city. How would you respond to that? Are you aware of those numbers?

Rufus Black

So that was, that was, a small survey the NTEU did back in back in 2019 of southern staff. The much larger survey that we did of staff indicated very interestingly, that staff who are already in the city were significantly majority in favour, of the, of the city move; and staff on Sandy Bay were not so much in favour of, the city, the city move. So, same set of questions, same evidence in relation to it. So a lot of it had to do with, you know, what was, your lived, what was your lived experience. So actually, it's much more diverse, richer picture of where people are at. And a lot of it has to do with what their, experiences, experience has been.

Mel Bush

And when was that survey done?

Rufus Black

So that was done in 2019 as an integral part of that consultation process that we did, where we asked people on all of the different criteria for the city move, what they thought, and where they, and where they concluded, and that's all in the public information that we've got there on our website.

Mel Bush

And back to what's happening in the city and, those, those assets that you have already how much of that is accommodation?

Rufus Black

Well two, two of those pieces are, currently, currently accommodation.

Mel Bush

Okay, and how full are they?

Rufus Black

Ah, they're well full. Yes. It's a really important thing we, we, in terms of looking after the housing in the city ensuring we are housing students as you know is a critical part of helping the overall housing stock situation in in Hobart. So yes, our accommodation is, is happily well occupied.

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Mel Bush

And when you say well occupied, what do you mean by that?

Rufus Black

I mean 90%, 90% is well occupied.

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[after being asked about Invermay]

Rufus Black

It's showing what is possible when you actually put a university in the heart of the city. You make it more accessible to a much wider range of people and for a much wider range of purposes that adds amenity; it's exactly the kind of thing that Hobart, cities, need life, vibrancy, access to high quality educational facilities for the whole community.

Mel Bush

And Oberon Court, can we just talk about that for a moment, near the Sandy Bay site; well resourced, potential homes. What's happening with Oberon Court at the moment?

Rufus Black

I'm not sure what the question is, sorry Mel.

Mel Bush

So, so with that site, Oberon Court, is that open potentially to being able to house people from the community?

Rufus Black

Well, it's used for housing students.

Mel Bush

And that is full?

Rufus Black

I was advised it's sitting about 90% also.

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[in regard to the 80-person panel]

And I think Mel this is part of a continuing process. It's not a starting again. That group will see the huge amount of work that's come from, from, all of the previous consultation as a starting point, so that they can see all the work that's happened to date. And people are very welcome to visit our website to see all of that.

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