

to reform processes relating to e-petitions. This will ensure that we better meet the parliament's and community's expectations. Ms Johnston, I do apologise for the delay. We expect to be able to table any outstanding responses to petitions at the earliest convenience.

UTAS - Relocation and Course Quality

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.45 a.m.]

While the vote is not finalised, it looks increasingly likely that the people of Hobart have rejected the UTAS takeover of the city. There is also growing alarm amongst students and staff about the university's move to cut courses, gut the Law faculty, move its lectures online, taking the heart out of campus life, and not negotiate in good faith with the union representing staff. Are you, as Premier, also concerned about the direction UTAS is heading in? Do you agree that while UTAS management has been focused on a divisive, unpopular city move, there is a question mark over the quality of higher education being delivered at our only university? What will you do to help UTAS refocus on delivering high-quality higher education and restore public confidence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is important that Tasmanians have their say. I am very proud of the reform we have introduced. I commend Mr Street for leading that reform on compulsory voting, which has seen above 84 per cent of people on average, across Tasmania, participating in that process. It was 58 per cent last time. We said, when introducing the reform, that we wanted to increase the participation of Tasmanians in local government democracy. I congratulate the 348 000 Tasmanians who have had their say and made their voice heard through that process. I thank the Tasmanian Electoral Commission for the work they have done as well.

It is great that we have had a very active, engaged community for the first time in many years when it comes to our local government elections. It has encouraged more candidates to come out and have the courage to want to represent their local communities. I commend every single one of them - those who have been elected or re-elected and those who have had the courage to stand to ensure they were bringing their voice and the community's voice to the public arena. That is a reform I am very proud of. I commend, in his absence, Mr Street for leading that reform.

To the question: the decision to relocate the southern UTAS campus and how that may align with the university's educational priorities is a matter for the University of Tasmania as a private organisation. We support and encourage UTAS to continue to engage in a comprehensive and thorough consultation process. We encourage all those interested to participate in the consultation process through the established processes already in place under the planning system.

Since UTAS first announced its intentions in 2019, the Tasmanian Government has maintained visibility of its plans and progress through the Hobart City Deal, given the focus of city-shaping actions like transport, housing and precinct planning.

There is also now an inquiry into the provisions of the UTAS Act through the Legislative Council which can consider a wide range of UTAS activity. The Government will consider the outcomes from the inquiry in due course.

Education - Infrastructure Investment

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUTH, Mr JAENSCH

[10.49 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how this Government is securing the future of Tasmania by investing in education infrastructure?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr Tucker, member for Lyons, for his question. Regardless of their background or circumstance, every young person in Tasmania deserves a quality education. Our teachers and staff in schools and the department work hard to provide this for every student and our Government has provided record investment to support schools and teachers to do this.

Since coming to government in 2014 we have prioritised investment in education from the early years through to year 12, because education is the single most powerful driver for improving economic and social outcomes in Tasmania, including health, life expectancy, happiness and productivity.

We are strengthening Tasmania's future with record funding for education, skills and training in the 2022-23 state Budget with \$8.5 billion over the forward Estimates. We know that the physical environment in which learning occurs has a major impact on student access, engagement and participation in learning. The Tasmanian Government's current allocation for capital works totals \$250 million over the forward Estimates, including \$69.7 million in 2022-23.

Our current capital works program includes:

- exciting new builds in Legana and Brighton and for the North West Support School;
- major redevelopments at schools such as Penguin District School, Sorell School, Hobart City High School, Cambridge Primary School, Exeter High School, Lauderdale Primary School, Montello Primary School and Cosgrove High School;
- the construction of six new child and family learning centres at East Tamar, Waratah-Wynyard, Glenorchy, Kingborough, Sorell and West Ulverstone;
- supporting the development of facilities for agriculture in schools at Bothwell District School and Campbell Town District School;