

Department of Premier and Cabinet

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Robert Hogan
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Dear Mr Hogan

Thank you for your letter dated 27 September 2022 regarding a number of concerns you have about the outcomes of your Right to Information (RTI) requests to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), the Department for Education, Children and Young People, and the Department of State Growth which all relate to the University of Tasmania's proposed relocation to the Hobart CBD. You have also raised a number of issues concerning the University of Tasmania and the RTI applications you have made to the University. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

You have requested an internal review under section 43 of the *Right to Information Act 2009* (the Act) of Ms Bridget Hutton's decision letter to you dated 25 August 2022. Your request for an internal review is accepted, and a delegated RTI Officer for DPAC has been assigned to review the original decision and a fresh decision will be provided to you as soon as possible.

Ms Hutton's decision letter relates to your application to DPAC for assessed disclosure seeking the following information for the period from 1 January 2015 to 4 May 2022 inclusive:

- 1) *All briefs to senior officers (Executives) and the Premier/Ministers of the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Education and Infrastructure (or such names as these Departments were known) in relation to the proposed move of the University of Tasmania into the Hobart CBD and/or redevelopment of the Sandy Bay campus;*
- 2) *All analysis undertaken by the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Education and Infrastructure in relation to the proposed move of the University of Tasmania into the Hobart CBD and/or redevelopment of the Sandy Bay campus;*
- 3) *All records relating to the inclusion of the University of Tasmania in the Hobart City Deal; and*
- 4) *All briefs and correspondence relating to the appointment of University of Tasmania councillors by the Minister for Education under ss 8(1)(d) and 8(5) of the University of Tasmania Act 1992.*

In your letter you raise a number of issues, of which some are related to your request for an internal review of Ms Hutton's decision. The internal review will address any issues concerning your RTI application to DPAC.

Also, in your letter you make a number of observations in your opinion that:

- the University of Tasmania lacks accountability and transparency;
- there are gaps in documentation provided under RTI within and between the three Tasmanian Government agencies, as well as variations in the types of documents provided and level of factual information redacted;
- there is little or no documentation provided under the RTI process in relation to Ministerial appointments to the University of Tasmania Council;
- the status of the Hobart STEM precinct proposal between November 2021 and May 2022 is left unclear from the information released under RTI;
- there are few documents originating from the University of Tasmania that have been identified or provided by the three Tasmanian Government agencies during the RTI process;
- there are inconsistencies in RTI practices between the three Tasmanian Government agencies;
- there is little analysis undertaken by the three Tasmanian Government agencies about the University of Tasmania's proposed move to the Hobart CBD and its inclusion in the Hobart City Deal; as well as a lack of briefing information to senior officials; and
- queries concerning the purpose of my appointment and the appointment of Ms Jenny Burgess to the University of Tasmania Council.

The additional issues you raised above are being considered and will be the subject of a separate response from me as soon as possible.

In relation to your suggestion that I conduct a review of all of the University of Tasmania's responses to RTI requests it has received over the last three years, my response is that I have authority under the Act only for internal reviews as principal officer of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Only the Ombudsman has powers to conduct external reviews of the University of Tasmania's RTI decisions under section 44 of the Act. For more information see <https://www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au/right-to-information>

Should you have any questions in relation to the matter of the internal review, the contact officer is Ms Carmen Kelly, delegated RTI Officer. Ms Kelly may be contacted by email at Carmen.Kelly@dpac.tas.gov.au or by telephone on (03) 6232 7018.

Kind regards



Jenny Gale
Secretary

23 November 2022