

Department of Premier and Cabinet

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Mr Robert Hogan
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Dear Mr Hogan

I refer to your letter dated 27 September 2022 regarding your Right to Information (RTI) requests to several departments and my response dated 23 November 2022 in which I undertook to provide further advice on several additional matters raised in your letter; this letter provides a response to those matters.

You make a number of observations about inconsistencies in RTI practices between the three Government agencies subject to your request. Steps are being taken across Government to better standardise assessment procedures as part of wider efforts to enhance transparency in Government. However, delegated RTI officers in each department retain some discretion to make judgments based on their assessment of the documentation before them and the guidance set out in the *Right to Information Act 2009*. This can lead to some variation in the types of documents provided and level of information redacted.

I note your observation that there appears to be little analysis undertaken by the Government on the proposed move of the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to the Hobart CBD. Analysis has been undertaken, some of which has been provided to you by the Department of State Growth as part of the RTI assessment process. Where some documents are assessed as exempt under the legislation this has been highlighted in the response provided to you.

More broadly, on the proposed transition of UTAS into the Hobart CBD and its inclusion in the Hobart City Deal, I have provided a brief background on its inception below.

As you may know, City Deals are partnerships between the Australian, state and local governments to help position Australia's population centres for the future. The proposal by UTAS for an enhanced science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) presence in the Hobart CBD was recognised as a priority project by Infrastructure Australia in 2017. As a result, this proposal was included as a deliverable action within the Hobart City Deal which was signed in February 2019.

As the University of Tasmania's priorities and approach shifted to include a broader transition into the Hobart CBD, the City Deal provided a mechanism to establish a reference group to ensure a coordinated approach between the University and the Hobart City Council's Central Hobart Precincts Structure Plan.

It should be noted that the University of Tasmania has the power to make decisions in relation to the educational and strategic directions of the University, independent of the Tasmanian Government.

Additionally, there are formal mechanisms and opportunities in which members of the public can engage with the University and the Hobart City Council to provide feedback on any decisions made or proposals tabled in relation to the proposed transition. As you may also be aware, the Legislative Council is conducting an inquiry into the provisions of the *University of Tasmania Act 1992* and, as per convention, a report will be made publicly available once finalised.

You also raise queries concerning Ministerial appointments to the University of Tasmania Council. These appointments are managed by the Department of Education. I understand you are seeking an external review of material provided by the Department of Education so the provision of further general information on this matter would need to be assessed through that process.

Please note, as I advised in my correspondence dated 23 November 2022, your request for an internal review has been accepted and an RTI delegated officer has been appointed to this task which will involve an assessment of all available documentation. I understand that this review is being progressed and will be completed as soon as possible.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenny Gale".

Jenny Gale
Secretary

04 January 2023