

MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget could do more for knowledge economy

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew has welcomed the State Government's support for a range of UTAS programs in this year's State Budget, but believes more can be done to build Tasmania's knowledge economy.

"This Budget contains significant funding for the Save the Tasmanian Devil project and reaffirms the State Government's commitment to other joint projects in the Menzies Research Institute, the Tasmanian Institute for Agricultural Research and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, so we are pleased to see the Bartlett Government continuing to support UTAS in the same way as previous governments," Prof Le Grew said.

"We are also delighted to see the establishment of the position of a Chief Scientist and State Architect - both of which were initiatives developed jointly by UTAS and the State Government.

"Clearly we can see the potential for developing these positions through the State-UTAS partnership and capitalising on the fact Tasmania has more researchers and scientists per capita than many other Australian state," he said.

However Prof Le Grew said there was still room to further improve the State's approach to building a knowledge-based economy in Tasmania.

"UTAS looks forward to discussing with the Government a more innovative approach to State Development that sees new industries based on the knowledge economy, including far greater support for research and development to add value to existing industries and, more importantly, to create new industry clusters around new knowledge brought forward by UTAS," he said.

"We also look forward to further discussions on improving the advanced skill base of Tasmania beyond compulsory education and into the university so the full potential of the state's talent can be realised in the future."

Prof Le Grew said UTAS supported the literacy and numeracy agenda contained in the Budget, but noted it was not matched with support for improving capacity and quality of existing teachers and new teachers coming into the profession.

"Long-term improvements in the literacy and numeracy rates for Tasmanian students will certainly depend on having high quality teaching capacity, a forward looking curriculum and an approach to Tasmania Tomorrow that sees UTAS and the schools and colleges working hand-in-glove to improve pathways through the new academies and polytechnics."

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