

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **New approach to West Park precinct follows extensive consultation**

The University of Tasmania has listened to feedback and is taking a different approach to plans for the Makers' Workshop and Burnie's West Park precinct, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Development) Professor Janelle Allison announced today.

Professor Allison said UTAS consulted with a range of community leaders and interested parties about the West Park proposal in recent months and had responded to key concerns.

"We have amended the Heads of Agreement (HoA) with Council so that ownership of the Makers' Workshop remains in Council hands," Professor Allison said. "Instead, UTAS will take a long-term lease, offering us the necessary security around our plans.

"Also, we fully understand the community wants to see the potential of this site explored further.

"As a result we are proposing that a prime portion of land at West Park be offered to interested parties with a view to develop something which enhances and complements the University's presence at West Park. This would be done by a public Expression of Interest process, run by the University in due course."

The amended HoA between the University and council was ratified at a meeting last night and will be available to the public once it is finalised.

Professor Allison said the University would submit its development application for a 40-unit accommodation block and educational precinct to the Council on Friday.

The West Park arrangement was initially proposed as a handover of West Park land and the Makers' Workshop from council to the University, a proposition which caused concern in sections of the community.

Professor Allison said the University wanted to meaningfully address such concerns as part of an ongoing process to develop a master plan for the West

Park site, along with an overriding strategy for the University's operations in the region.

"The integration of UTAS at the Makers' Workshop will create more value for the city and the region around this exciting, iconic site," she said.

Once the development application is lodged, plans for the UTAS development and associated works will be on display at the Makers' Workshop and the University's Mooreville Road campus.

There also will be an associated public engagement process related to the project.

The West Park development application will include:

- A \$4 million accommodation block.
- Creation of a computer lab and teaching spaces in the disused School of Domestic Arts building, respecting the educational heritage of the building.
- A mezzanine floor in the existing Makers' Workshop for teaching and tutorials, with lift access.
- Those works would cost an additional \$4 million, taking the total project cost up to about \$8 million.
- Landscaping across the site, connecting the boardwalk area with the Makers' Workshop and the University buildings.
- Paths linking the precinct to Burnie's Central Business District and to the walk and cycleway heading west to Cooee.

Professor Allison said she believed the new arrangements created a genuine win-win outcome for the University and the community.

"The imperatives that were driving the University's thinking about the West Park project remain the same," Professor Allison said.

"To create a bright future for the Cradle Coast campus we need to be in a position to offer a unique and compelling student experience; to become a true part of the regional landscape.

"What we have been able to produce, as a result of countless conversations in recent months, is a way of doing that which we believe deals with community concerns about the ownership of the public asset and the potential to develop West Park further.

"We also will continue to engage with the Makers of Burnie about how that important group will continue to play a vital part of the Makers' Workshop operation."

**Information released by:**

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