

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Landmark performing arts and creative industries academy proposed for Tasmania

The University of Tasmania is leading the charge to establish a state-wide Academy of Creative Industries and Performing Arts (ACIPA), leveraging Tasmania's artistic acumen and the advances in technology offered by the National Broadband Network.

The proposed \$75.2 million project is set to drive a cultural and creative revitalisation of regional cultural precincts and remote communities across Tasmania, with the potential to generate more than \$660 million in direct and indirect economic benefits over the next seven years.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the project will deliver a signature building and associated infrastructure supporting creative industries including performing arts, new media, events management and digital technologies.

"This is a world-class opportunity for the whole of Tasmania," Professor Peter Rathjen, said. "This will help formalise a cultural precinct that will energise Hobart's CBD, enhance the lifestyle of an emerging cultural capital, and build synergies with the North and North West of the state.

"It is being driven by UTAS, in partnership with the Theatre Royal and the State Government, but we are delighted by the state-wide support that it has received. The Launceston, Burnie and Hobart councils – in addition to major performing arts organisations such as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, MONA and the Festival of Voices – are all united in their enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by this concept.

"Tasmania has 2.5 times its share of national festivals activity and this is growing; currently event developers have to import expertise. Breath of Life, Ten Days on the Island, Burnie Shines, Festival of Voices, MONA FOMA and a range of high-quality regional festivals all combine to provide a rich community context within which the cultural industries and learning, teaching and research can flourish."

UTAS is currently awaiting a decision by the Federal Government on its Stage 2 (final stage) application for \$37 million in funding for the project under the Education Investment Fund Regional Priorities Round.

Professor Rathjen welcomed today's announcement that the State Government will commit \$15.2 million towards the development – contributing \$12 million in funding, \$2.3 million in land and \$900,000 towards related archaeological works.

Included will be a new home for the University's Conservatorium of Music linked to additional facilities for Hobart's historic Theatre Royal. The high-tech education facilities will enable students to access programs across the state.

It is intended that ACIPA will link directly to the Inveresk Cultural Precinct in Launceston, which includes the UTAS Schools of Visual and Performing Arts and Architecture and Design and that it will facilitate innovative teaching delivery, with simultaneous streaming of performances to any location; and development of digital resources showcasing top-quality professional practice. It is expected that this development will attract up to 3,000 new students over seven years.

"This ambitious project will deliver transformative benefits for Tasmania in terms of student participation in tertiary education particularly in the North and North-West, further development in creative programs and importantly, address key areas of need in employment and skills in the creative industries, such as events management; audio engineering; audio design and a range of other discipline areas," he said.

Professor Rathjen said the project will be an exemplar of how to utilise NBN to speak to a digital generation and transform learning (streaming and sharing of rehearsal, performances) and community wellbeing emphasising Tasmania's advantage as first NBN implementation state.

"Many of these students will also be drawn from interstate and overseas, attracted not only by the high quality of the University's performing arts teaching staff but also the opportunity to study in a state-of-the-art facility, located within a major cultural hub," he said.

Information released by:

The Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: (03) 6226 8518; 0429 336 328 (Peter Cochrane)

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au

