

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2013

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## New heart of Hobart to bring life to the city

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) has unveiled the first designs of a \$75-million development that will see the construction of 430 self-contained student apartments in Hobart's CBD, under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

NRAS is a long-term commitment by the Australian Government, in partnership with the Tasmanian Government, to invest in affordable rental housing.

The project will redevelop the Melville Street car park into a vibrant cosmopolitan precinct, injecting life into the city centre and creating a new heart for Hobart, as well as generating significant flow-on economic benefits and employment opportunities.

The designs, created by Hobart-based consultants Terroir and Fender Katsalidis Architects, respect the character of the surrounding streetscape, with a retail edge to the street frontages, while the higher level apartments and car park are set back from the street front.

Public access will be encouraged through a landscaped area extending from Brisbane Street to Melville Street.

The dynamic designs form part of a Development Application for the project, submitted to Hobart City Council this week.

The UTAS investment through NRAS will total some \$120 million, delivering 770 self-contained student apartments across the State.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the statewide investment in the NRAS project would bring significant economic benefits to the State during and after construction, as well as providing UTAS with an opportunity to attract new students from across Tasmania and overseas.

"The Melville Street development aims to create a new heart – a cultural, economic and social hub – for the city, representing a significant economic injection to the construction sector and employment, at a time of economic challenge for Tasmania," Prof Rathjen said.

"The project is a crucial piece in the UTAS-led revitalisation of Hobart, along with other recent and planned developments: the Medical Science buildings 1 and 2 (MS1 and MS2); the Academy of Creative Industries and Performing Arts (ACIPA); and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)."

Prof Rathjen said the NRAS project addressed key elements of the University's strategic plan, *Open to Talent*, offering a unique place-based experience for students in one of the truly magnificent harbour-side cities in Australia.

"UTAS is maximising the opportunity with this development by adapting to the way students live and study in today's world," he said.

“Just imagine living and shopping in an area that’s within walking distance to academic buildings, the State Library, retail outlets, the public transport system and downtown Hobart.”

Prof Rathjen said a key feature of the NRAS project was to help relieve pressure on the supply of affordable housing.

“Socio-economic disadvantage, including the availability of suitable, affordable housing, presents a significant barrier to many students accessing tertiary education,” he said.

“The University will reserve apartments for the most disadvantaged students and will assist these students by significantly subsidising their accommodation costs.

“Five per cent of all apartments will also be access-compliant for students with a disability.”

The first stage of the NRAS project is being developed on the Newnham campus in Launceston, where 180 apartments are being constructed to be ready for students at the start of the 2014 academic year. There is a second stage earmarked for the North of 120 apartments, worth around \$20 million.

In addition, a \$4 million development is underway in Burnie.

The Melville Street NRAS project will see the redevelopment of the existing Melville Street car park as well as the Black Prince Hotel, Brown and Banks Real Estate and the Tassielink bus terminal in Brisbane Street.

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