

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Major student housing project to bring vibrant development to Inveresk

The University of Tasmania has agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Launceston City Council for the transfer of a parcel of land at Inveresk, earmarked for a \$20 million plan to build 120 self-contained apartments under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

The MoU is a vital step towards UTAS and Council's long-term vision to create a vibrant multifunctional centre in the Inveresk precinct, providing first-class sporting, educational, entertainment and cultural facilities that contribute significantly to the city – and the region's – high quality of life.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the NRAS project, with an investment of around \$120 million statewide, would bring significant economic benefits to the State both during and after construction, as well as providing the University with an opportunity to attract new students from across Tasmania and from overseas. UTAS already contributes an estimated \$500,000 to the northern economy.

"The University has stated its intention to do more to welcome students from Tasmania, Australia and the world into the life of the University. Living in student accommodation is one part of the great university experience," said Prof Rathjen.

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

"The Inveresk precinct will establish strong linkages to the Launceston CBD area and will engage actively with the Invermay Road frontage, forming an important part of an iconic corridor route of tourist features incorporating Cataract Gorge, Kings Park, Seaport and North Bank."

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

"Providing a diverse selection of living options is an essential part of developing the quality of student life at UTAS. 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. Up to 10 per cent of all apartments will be fully accessible to students with a disability."

Prof Rathjen said the Inveresk development would provide yet another boost to the State's building industry, and further strengthen the University's commitment to the Launceston campuses.

"One of the critical elements of this development is that ownership of part of the site will transfer to the University. This cements our position at Inveresk and underlines our commitment to the North and Launceston in particular.

The investment in NRAS will total some \$120 million, delivering an expected 770 self-contained apartments for student accommodation across the State.

The first stage of the NRAS project is being developed on the Newnham campus in Launceston, where 180 apartments designed by Tasmanian architects Morrison and Breytenbach are due to be constructed by early February, to be available for students for the start of the 2014 academic year.

A \$4 million development is also planned in Burnie.

Prof Rathjen said the NRAS project, as with the other recent developments, would reflect the University's commitment to best-practice sustainability.

"The University's sustainability credentials were recognised at the annual 2012 Green Gown Awards, which honour excellence in environmental sustainability in the tertiary education sector," he said.

"We received the Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability Award of Excellence. Shortly afterwards MS2 became the first educational building in Tasmania to achieve a five-star Green Star rating for environmental design."

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