

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Powerful glimpse of future contained in northern Memorandum

A small but confident step has been taken toward the establishment of a new University of Tasmania campus in central Launceston at Inveresk, which could house an additional 8000 students more than the existing site at Newnham.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been agreed between the University, State Government, Launceston City Council and TasTAFE, paving the way for formal discussions around a series of changes which could transform the northern city.

The changes – if realised – could create a platform for a massive expansion of associate degree places in Launceston delivered more intensively, more affordably and with strong industry alignment.

“The signing of the MoU is without doubt the initial step to realising this new future with the partner institutions signalling strongly that we will work together with shared purpose and intent,” University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said.

“Our vision for Launceston is one of a regional economy built around knowledge and learning, underpinned by a more affordable education founded on a strong regional campus. This will provide a skilled workforce and address poor educational performance, youth unemployment and social mobility.

“The MoU shows these critically important partners are prepared to talk about providing the foundations for change which could provide massive direct economic benefits and profound impacts for the region for many decades to come.”

The MoU contains several discussion points including:

- Freeing up land and buildings to pave the way for University expansion;
- The expansion of existing University programs in the North, such as Nursing, Business and Education;
- Increasing the number of Associate Degree places in Launceston teaching required skills such as aged care, allied health, aquaculture, agriculture and LEAN Business;
- Removing the requirement that land occupied by the University at Newnham be used for educational purposes; and
- Greater collaboration between the University and TasTAFE around the delivery of post-school teaching.

In late 2013, the University and TasTAFE signed a memorandum agreeing to work more closely, investigating co-operative arrangements, including shared facilities in Launceston's Central Business District (CBD).

Professor Rathjen said the nature of the educational challenge in Tasmania was such that the University and TasTAFE need to align their efforts to make optimal use of resources and avoid duplication.

"The idea of change this profound is going to create a great deal of community conversation and interest," Professor Rathjen said.

"The MoU spells out very clearly that the partners will spend the ensuing period communicating with stakeholders as things progress.

"We encourage our community – both within the University and city more broadly – to take part and guide how this vision takes shape."

Professor Rathjen said the proposal, if it was realised, would not only underpin the future of the University's Launceston operations, it would completely revitalise and reenergise them.

"We have a vision of a University which brings new life and energy to the hearts of the communities we serve," he said.

"We see the capacity of this proposal to reshape and enliven Launceston's CBD, the city more broadly and the North's economic fortunes."

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