

UTAS 'has become too corporatised'

Benjamin Seeder

A PARLIAMENTARY review of the University of Tasmania has found that the higher education system has become overly corporatised, raising concerns that the Tasmanian institution is too focused on commercial priorities rather than its obligations to the Tasmanian community.

Chaired by Nelson independent MLC Meg Webb, the inquiry heard evidence earlier this year that UTAS finances had been severely

impacted by federal government migration policies.

This led to concern from some that gave evidence at the inquiry that UTAS management was overly focused on financial concerns.

The final report on the Provisions of the University Tasmania Act were released on Monday morning.

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strategy at the institution.

As the states sole university, UTAS holds a place of significance for Tasmania, Ms Webb said.

It is essential for the social, cultural and economic development of Tasmania

that the university is able to successfully deliver on its central mission of teaching and research to a level of excellence.

Among the legislation changes recommended by the review were that the

UTAS ACT be given a preamble, that casual staff be recognised as full staff members under the UTAS constitution, and that the University Council include at least two student representatives.

It also recommended that the Council include at least two members from the academic faculty, and two from the UTAS professional staff.

It also recommended the Act be amended to mandate management to consider the university's obligations to the Tasmanian community.

The university must also promote and protect academic freedom, according to another finding.

The review made a total of 19 recommendations and one overarching recommendation - that the government conduct a comprehensive review into the University of Tasmania Act.

Health Minister Jacqui Petrusma said the government would review the findings of the inquiry and make a "considered response" at a later date.