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Uni reform is long overdue

The parliamentary report into the legislative government of the University of Tasmania raises many interesting points. The Legislative Council Select Committee should be commended for the thoroughness of its work, despite being hampered by more restrictive terms of reference than many in the community would have liked. Nevertheless, the final product is the result of wide consultation and input and will be a useful resource for policymakers.

The inquiry was called amid community concern over plans to move the university's southern campus from Sandy Bay to the CBD. The committee's final report gives an interesting history of how closely legislation establishing the university governed its use of land that it was granted by governments, from the 1889 Tasmanian University Act which established teaching facilities on the Domain to the 1951 Tasmanian University Act which provided for the move to Sandy Bay, to land that was not to be 'sold, mortgaged,

or otherwise disposed of'. That provision disappeared when the current Act was passed in 1992.

While the initial legislation establishing the university was in place for more than 60 years, and the current legislation 32, it is clearly too long since the governing arrangements have been given a thorough review.

The committee report makes clear that the university management's vision for the future is at odds in many respects with staff, students, alumni and the broader community. It paints a picture of a somewhat autocratic management style, with a lack of tolerance for dissenting voices.

The government has rushed legislation into parliament which will have the effect of allowing the university to sell two large tranches of land above Churchill Avenue. In its haste, there was little time for public consultation. Hopefully, this latest committee report will start the conversation about a more considered process and a more widely supported approach to the future of our most important educational institution.

**Responsibility for all editorial election comment is taken by the Editor,
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