

## Legislative Council

### Hansard

Wednesday 18 March 2026

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

*[excerpt...]*

#### University of Tasmania – STEM Business Case

#### Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.46 p.m.]

Noting the November 2025 responses provided by the government regarding the UTAS STEM business case have yet to resolve a range of queries surrounding inconsistencies in decision-making processes, I have further questions. Can the government:

- (1) Confirm the Tasmanian Government does not intend to make a commitment of \$100 million towards the UTAS STEM business case?
- (2) Clarify if the government has no intention of making a commitment of \$100 million to the UTAS STEM business case. If the government has no intention of making a commitment of \$100 million to the UTAS STEM business case, why the government sent the Commonwealth business case in March 2025 predicated on receipt of \$100 million from the state for the land above Churchill Avenue, using a formulation of words that the government's Infrastructure Tasmania's own consultant, Paxon Group, helped formulate?
- (3) Why, in documentation provided to Infrastructure Australia by the Premier as late as 16 October 2024, did the Tasmanian government indicate the proposed STEM business case would be a refresh of the 2016 Hobart CBD STEM business case when UTAS's plans had already switched focus to the development of STEM facilities at Sandy Bay campus below Churchill Avenue.
- (4) The government's answer to my previous question about the \$100 million value ascribed to land above Churchill Avenue in the UTAS business case has not been validated in any way. It is a preliminary figure that appears in the business case. However, there's no substantiation in the document or its appendices, and all evidence indicates otherwise. What validation did the government seek of the figure, especially given the UTAS STEM business case states that the money would come from the state government?
- (5) The November answer to my question about the cost of replicating STEM facilities above Churchill Avenue to below Churchill Avenue totally misses the point. I will ask the question again, along with the request that, should the government be unable to provide a direct answer, please state that quite clearly, without misconstruing the

question. How much would it cost to replicate the STEM facilities currently above Churchill Avenue to below Churchill Avenue?

- (6) Is it correct that the cost of replicating the STEM facilities currently above Churchill Avenue to a location below Churchill Avenue would exceed the sale value of the land above Churchill Avenue, realisable by a market sale by a large amount? What figure has UTAS provided to the government on this?

## **ANSWER**

- (1) The Tasmanian government has not committed any funds towards the UTAS STEM business case.
- (2) The Tasmanian government has not committed any funds towards the UTAS STEM business case, nor has it committed to purchasing the land above Churchill Avenue.
- (3) At the time the submission to Infrastructure Australia for Tasmania's Infrastructure Priority List (IPL) was finalised on 16 October 2024, the UTAS Hobart CBD STEM business case was the only mature business case ready for submission. The IPL submission of 16 October 2024 did, however, identify a proposed STEM precinct in either Sandy Bay or the Hobart CBD.
- (4) The \$100 million figure advised by UTAS represents an estimated value of the land above Churchill Ave that has been identified for rezoning. Once rezoned as inner residential, this estimate reflects its potential market value. This figure will be validated when the land is sold.
- (5) This is a question for UTAS.
- (6) Again, this is a question for UTAS