

## 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

[2.58 p.m.]

I asked the honourable Leader for the Government regarding the UTAS business case appendices, which are now available online, in light of Slattery's cost estimate of the UTAS STEM business case in appendix B, the sole basis for the cost estimate for the project of \$501.5 million, which states that:

this cost plan is based on preliminary information and, therefore, should be regarded as indicative only of the possible order of cost or components of the cost plan will require confirmation once further documentation is available. Refer to the accompanying letter for details of basis of cost plan and exclusions from above costs.

Can the government:

- (1) Explain how the government interprets the phrase, 'possible order of cost', and detail any implications for the government?
- (2) Please make available the accompanying letter referred to as it will contain vital information of the validity of the \$501.5 million cost estimate?
- (3) Detail why the state government forwarded a business case to the Commonwealth in March 2025 which assumes an 80 per cent funding contribution by the Commonwealth when Commonwealth state infrastructure funding agreements have moved to 50-50 splits?
- (4) Explain why the state government sought an initial funding contribution of \$50 million from the Commonwealth in its covering letter to the UTAS STEM business case of March 2025 without offering any sort of matching contribution?

#### ANSWER

- (1) The phrase 'possible order of cost' provides an understanding that at the time this business case was submitted the calculated cost for this development were point-in-time estimates. Once final quotes are received, some variation from the initial estimates should reasonably be expected.

- (2) I'm advised that this was standard wording used by the third party on a summary document of this nature. A letter was not prepared in this instance and the reference to it was in error.
- (3) The University of Tasmania's proposed STEM campus at Sandy Bay is a significant project and as such is not restricted to a defined Commonwealth/state funding split. University capital works do not fall neatly under standard Commonwealth/state infrastructure agreements as roads and transport infrastructure do. The business case identified the significant estimated cost of the project exceeds UTAS funding capacity and it is normal for these significant projects to propose different funding splits between Commonwealth and the state.
- (4) The proposed UTAS Sandy Bay STEM campus would serve as an important tertiary education asset by training students in critical STEM capabilities an initial contribution of \$50 million would enable UTAS to commence stage one of the development.