

Legislative Council

Hansard

Tuesday 17 March 2026

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

[excerpt...]

University of Tasmania Act - Government Response to Legislative Council Report

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

[2.40 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Noting that during the Legislative Council debate held on 1 April 2025 on the report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on the provisions of the University of Tasmania Act 1992, the government stated it intended to respond formally to that report once the federal Senate Committee on Education and Employment had completed its university inquiry and further noting the Senate committee's final report, Quality of Governance at Australian Higher Education Providers, was released on 11 December last year:

Can the government please advise when it intends to provide a formal response to the Legislative Council Select Committee's reports, findings and recommendations?

ANSWER

Mr President, Tasmania is currently considering findings from several intersecting reviews relating to university governance, including the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the University of Tasmania's financial position, and the Legislative Council Select Committee on the provisions of the University of Tasmania Act 1992. At a national level, higher education governance has also been the subject of significant review.

The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee Final report Quality of Governance at Australian Higher Education Providers was tabled on 11 December 2025 following a year-long inquiry. Now that report made a number of recommendations relating to university governance, including that state and territory governments review university establishing legislation.

In addition, the Commonwealth's Expert Council on University Governance released its principles and recommendations in October 2025 and that was part of the broader Australian Universities Accord reform process. Education ministers have agreed that the Commonwealth in consultation with states and territories will prepare a national implementation plan and this work is still in progress.

The Tasmanian government intends to consider the findings of the Tasmanian inquiries alongside these national developments to ensure any response is aligned with the emerging national governments framework. For that reason, it would be premature to initiate a state-based legislative review of the University of Tasmania Act 1992 ahead of the completion of the national reform process. Once the national work is settled, the government will consider the most appropriate timing and scope of its response.

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[2.45 p.m.]

Just to follow up on that, the question was specifically about when would we expect a response and if the answer is, 'Once the national work is finished', when is the minister expecting, or what's her understanding of when, that national process will be at a point that is considered finished enough for the state government to even provide a response to the Legislative Council committee report given we've been waiting a year.

Ms PALMER - Mr President, as I've indicated, the government does intend to consider the findings of both of those Tasmanian inquiries alongside the national government's reforms that are currently being developed through the accord process, and once that national work is settled, we'll be in a position to determine the most appropriate timing and form for the response. As education ministers, when we meet with our Commonwealth counterpart and with other education ministers from across the country, there's certainly been many discussions on that. I will have to take on notice what the Commonwealth's timing is and I will see if I can get that information for you before the end of the week.