

TASMANIAN MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION DISCUSSION PAPER

Key Response Points

1. Higher education is becoming increasingly significant for the State's economic and social development.
2. Effectively both a sandstone and regional university, the University of Tasmania (UTAS) has to provide higher education for a rising proportion of Tasmanians. This means expanding the range of programs available, while simultaneously remaining prominent and successful in the core areas of teaching, research and community engagement.
3. This requires enabling UTAS to continue its emergence as being among the top ranks of the new generation of outstanding and successful regional universities.
4. The characteristics of Tasmania's higher education institutions (HEI) will include a quality reputation sufficient for attracting an increasing proportion of young and mature age students in an increasingly competitive market; ongoing achievement in its chosen research areas; and partnering locally, nationally and globally with university and non-university partners to deliver on outcomes improving Tasmanian life.
5. As part of the transformation of Tasmania's economy and major expansion of the post-year 10 skills base, higher education reform is part of fundamental education reform being implemented through Tasmania *Tomorrow*. Achieving participation, skills attainment and productivity outcomes demands a much closer interrelationship between the traditional VET and HE sectors and represented by a range of new Tasmanian institutions and integrated pathways, notably the Tasmanian Academy, Tasmanian Polytechnic and UTAS College.
6. There is a clear need for a better synthesis of national and State regional analysis of education and skills demands and provision of resources; including the improved guidance becoming available through the Tasmanian Government implementation of Skills Tasmania. For the State Government, a major attraction for the development of a compact between the University and the Australian Government is that the activity of UTAS can be clearly identified with regional needs and interests.
7. The closer interrelationship of UTAS, the Academy, Polytechnic and Training Tasmania, is not patterned on a US-type systems model, however a regional integrated relationship offers potential benefits for the geographically defined region of Tasmania, including greater local cooperation and resource sharing, facilitation of staff movement, increased participation by low SES, Indigenous, and rural students and mature aged workers and increased applied local research and partnering.
8. There are apparent benefits in developing higher education compacts, including with the Tasmanian Government, participation in forming clear expectations about what UTAS would be contributing to State goals, and a

stronger expression of the roles of UTAS' regional mission and roles, including those of its local campuses.

9. Whereas the Tasmanian Government is keen to pursue the benefits of cooperative federalism for the HE sector and to continue the implementation of financial and regulatory reforms, the Government does not support the transfer of powers to the Commonwealth in relation to higher education.
10. Given the requirements of UTAS by the Tasmanian community, there is no useful purpose in such HE institutions being considered as teaching only institutions.

Functions and characteristics of higher education

The Tasmanian Government is committed to the strengthening of higher education because continued development of skills provision, research capacity, innovation, knowledge transfer and community engagement is vital to the realisation of Tasmania's future economic, social and cultural prosperity.

Tasmania and Tasmanians will have access to world class education and training research and to the knowledge which sits within and is developed by higher education institutions.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of higher education in the realisation of this State's future. Tasmanians expect that education provision will be suited to their needs and aspirations and with the interests of individual learners, communities, regions and businesses at the forefront. Higher education should lead the intellectual development of the State and must be a key component in creating opportunity, overcoming disadvantage and supporting social inclusion. Higher education must meet these needs; reforms to functions, structures or resourcing should be predicated on meeting practical, regional needs.

The significance of higher education to Tasmania is recognised in both *Tasmania Together*, the community developed blueprint for Tasmanian development through to 2020 and in *Learning Together*, Tasmania's education strategy that aims to ensure Tasmanians will have a world-class education and training system. Currently the Tasmanian Government, through the *Qualification and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow* reforms is transforming post-Year 10 education through the replacement of senior secondary colleges and TAFE institutions with Tasmanian Academy, Tasmanian Polytechnic and Training Tasmania. Expanding and strengthening higher education in Tasmania will help achieve the goals of *Tasmania Together* and *Tasmania Tomorrow* most particularly in higher education's ability to create a culture of lifelong learning that encourages people to learn and develop new skills throughout their lives and in ensuring that education and training provides the Tasmanian workforce with the skills to support our business and industry.

The Tasmanian Government, through its Partnership Agreement with the University of Tasmania, supports the University in its pursuit of teaching, and research excellence and fruitful community engagement. It works closely with the University

to ensure that its national and international reputation for scholarship and research is matched by its distinctive contributions to Tasmania's community and industry.

The University plays a significant cultural and intellectual leadership role in the Tasmanian community, and further contributes to Tasmania's economic and social development, for example, by:

- increasing participation in higher education and improving the State higher education qualification profile;
- placing an emphasis on commercialisation of research effort, supported by a close relationship with Tasmanian industry; in areas such as forestry, aquaculture and agricultural developments;
- increasing the scope of international education and training services as an essential and central aspect of higher education in Tasmania; and
- increasing opportunities for students to move between the VET, senior secondary and university systems.

The Tasmanian Government expects UTAS to continue to play a key leadership role in all areas appropriate to Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government is working to ensure that the University's role is fully integrated into the general community and industry development objectives of the Government. Ongoing evolution of the higher education sector is necessary.

The State Government is keen to address its response to the *Discussion Paper* particularly in regard to current and future expectations of a higher education institution which must attain excellence in national and international contexts but also deliver on rising local and regional expectations.

Effectively both a sandstone and regional university for Tasmania, UTAS has to embody the functions and characteristics presented in the *Discussion Paper*. The practical, cultural and iconic status requires that UTAS has to provide access for Tasmanians and a comprehensive range of programs for the State and continue to be highly prominent in each of its targeted areas of teaching, research and community engagement.

UTAS has been evolving rapidly this decade in terms of the future competing requirements of a successful regional HE institution, including, maintenance of its quality reputation to attract an increasing proportion of young and mature age students in an increasingly competitive market; that it continues to strongly achieve in its chosen research areas; and partnering locally, nationally and globally with university and non-university partners to deliver on outcomes to improve Tasmanian life and inspire local participation in higher education, research and economic and social partnering.

Meeting national and local needs for high level skills

Central to *Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow* are the formation of Skills Tasmania policy and strategy and new institutions for delivery. Higher education skills development planning and delivery must mesh with evidence-based and outcomes driven models and supportive purchasing models which can deliver effectively for local and regional economies. Students must also be provided with appropriate skills sets for careers/career beginnings in national and international employment markets.

In optimising outcomes, integrated State and national mechanisms are crucial to recognise, interpret and allocate funding and support provision of VET and HE high level skills to meet current and emerging workforce needs. As demonstrated by, for example, the increasing emphasis on transparent pathways and integration of the Australian Maritime College (AMC) with UTAS, these local and national mechanisms for ensuring high level skill demands are met, should enable more integrated VET and higher education provision.

Many Australian universities and vocational education institutions are taking more ownership of their strategic direction and setting individual missions, recognising their current and future local community needs and leveraging the capabilities they have built up over decades. A particular aspect requiring a new approach in this State is and the development of more reliable mechanisms for monitoring and responding to labour force skill needs

The closer integration education, training and industry in skills formation is a continuing direction nationally. In Tasmania, this emerging approach is exemplified by the recent appointment of David Hind, President of the Business Higher Education Round Table (BHERT) as Chair of Skills Tasmania, an independent statutory authority on skills development reporting to the Tasmanian Government.

The State Government is keen to exploit UTAS capacity to partner, regionally and locally, in processes to increase innovation across the breadth of Tasmanian established and emerging industry and economic activity and contribute to improvements in the low level of Tasmanian productivity, including the particular challenges posed by the State's demographic trends. There is a clear need for a better synthesis of national and State regional analysis of education and skills demands and provision of resources; including the improved guidance becoming available through the Tasmanian Government implementation of Skills Tasmania. For the State Government, a major attraction for the development of a compact between with the University and the Australian Government is that the activity of UTAS can be clearly identified with regional needs and interests.

Effectively responding to demographic change

Over the coming years, Tasmania will face significant challenges and opportunities in relation to its skill needs. Businesses will increasingly have to compete to build and retain a skilled workforce; certain industries will face skills shortages; new skills will be needed for emerging industries and to use new and emerging technologies;

individuals may face challenges acquiring the right level of skills needed for employment or to become engaged members of their community; and service providers will increasingly need to become more flexible and adaptive to anticipate and find new ways of meeting the future needs of industry.

The nation is experiencing an ageing population and in Tasmania this process is occurring at a faster rate than all other states and territories. There are two new, imminent sets of population-related conditions that have not previously occurred in this state: within two years more people are expected to leave the labour market than enter it; and within seven years there will be more people over the age of 65 years than those between the ages of 0–14 years.

It is clear that compared to the past, there will be a greater proportion of the community in the older age groups. Increasingly, there will be more people aged over 45 years than under, which is a new experience for the labour market. Inevitably, the result of this shift in the age profile of the Tasmanian community is there will be a greater proportion of the population who will be seeking goods and services, and who are no longer in the labour market.

This demographic trend poses particular challenges for our labour market. Young people entering the labour market for the first time will have a greater choice of employment and experience greater mobility between jobs, while older people will be looking toward retirement from the workforce. Employers will need to look at innovative strategies for attracting and retaining employees across all ages to build and maintain their workforce and to consider re-training older people to generate the skills they need. In relation to higher education, responses will include optimising the availability and quantum of postgraduate work necessary to support skills deepening and career change requirements for older workforce participants.

The Tasmanian Government and community are keenly aware of the need to attract back many of the young Tasmanians who have left the State and acquired skills and experience elsewhere. An appropriately structured higher education sector and supportive community of interest is an important attractor for their reintroduction back into Tasmanian society in ways which are both personally and economically productive.

In formulating a skills strategy for Tasmania against population trends, identifying the means to encourage people to remain longer in the labour market is an important area of focus. In tandem with this approach, and also as a result of population trends, skill development will be considered in supporting the delivery of goods and services to older people, and the consequential growth of service sectors.

Participation, Productivity and Skills

At just over 60% of the working age population participating in the labour market, Tasmania has the lowest participation rate of all states and territories. Around 150,000 Tasmanians over the age of 15 years do not participate in the labour market. This large number of Tasmanians includes around 50,000 over the age of 70 years, around 45,000 providing domestic duties, 20,000 who are students, and around 24,000 Tasmanians marginally attached to the labour market.

The Tasmanian Government is especially interested in the ongoing role of UTAS in raising the skill level of the workforce; and the take-up of technology and adoption of innovation.

If Tasmania's population trends and capacity to attract people to participate in the labour market are seen as diminishing inputs, then increased productivity lies at the heart of the economic and skills equation. In formulating a skills strategy for Tasmania, productivity should be seen as growing wealth and well-being across the community, and in the process, use strategy to include as many people from the broad community as possible.

For policy to be successful skills acquisition has to align with the economy, the labour market and have a major contribution from employers. This is especially so in the case of VET and higher education. The best results will be achieved from a coordinated government approach and State Government leadership in ensuring all parties to skills development understand and act on the opportunities available to them and maximize the benefits from the substantial investment in skills. The higher education and the vocational training system need to be closely interrelated if providers are to improve capacity to meet current needs and anticipate future trends.

In playing its part in addressing provision, UTAS faces considerable challenges in increasing higher education participation and outcomes, inter alia:

- Tasmania has the lowest apparent retention rate, from Year 10 to Year 12, at 65.3%;
- The proportion of Tasmanians aged 15-64 with post-school qualifications is lower than the national rate;
- The proportion of Tasmanians with higher level qualifications is much lower than the national average;
- Tasmania has a high proportion of 15-29 year olds leaving for interstate or overseas for 12 months or more.

Low performance in retention from Year 10 to Year 12, and the proportion of the population with post-secondary qualifications and higher level qualifications places a large proportion of our population at risk of becoming or remaining disadvantaged. Together with a growing number of jobs in the future that will require higher level skills, including emerging industries, Tasmania's skills base must be raised.

Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow is the key initiative for encouraging all Tasmanians to obtain post-compulsory education and training qualifications. It is specifically aimed at significant increases in the retention rate to 90% and to significantly increase qualification levels, especially higher level qualifications. There is a particular focus upon equity groups. The higher education sector has a key role in research in these areas and in collaborating with schools and the VET sector in increasing skills levels.

From 2009, the school, training, higher education systems and employers will be brought closer together to equip Tasmanians with the skills they need to participate in the workforce and society. Of particular importance, is bringing industry and the VET and higher education sectors more closely together to build on our higher level skills through strategies such as improving credit transfer arrangements and increasing usage rates.

Tasmania is experiencing widespread skills shortages, which are likely to continue throughout this decade. A key response is in achieving better alignment between our employment and skills agendas, and to build stronger partnerships between government, industry and service providers to identify areas of current and potential skills shortages and deliver targeted training. We also need industry to work more closely with the schools, Polytechnic, Academy, Training Tasmania and the higher education sector to match individuals and their qualifications to employers and their skill needs.

There is general acceptance that innovation holds the key to our State's economic sustainability. Employers realise that new technologies, capital investment and innovative work practices are essential for improvements in productivity. New and emerging industries will need to find the workers with the right skill sets. Environmentally sustainable work practices are increasingly becoming an important business focus. UTAS will have a significant role in enabling the development of sustainability and innovative technology in areas such as water, agriculture, energy and forestry. This includes exploiting the business and employment opportunities arising from sustainable industrial practices and consumer services and the potential for skilling people to take advantage of these

Enterprises will need to be supported by a skills development system that provides the right training to workers to enable them to use new technologies, to adapt to new processes, to apply sustainable principles to existing business practices, as well as being innovative, flexible and responsive. Tasmania will establish greater collaboration between industry groups, employers and our higher education and training sectors to develop a regional approach to skills development.

Opportunities to participate in higher education

Given the lower improvement of outcomes in Indigenous and low SES participation, the Tasmanian Government belief is that national and local approaches have to be systematic, flexible and locally focused. HE teaching should be delivered in culturally sensitive ways to ensure outcomes. There is a significant role in ensuring that there is widespread access for, and encouragement of all Tasmanians to learn about indigenous culture and history and that there is HE research in these areas.

Beyond adequate planning, resourcing and monitoring, this entails the enmeshing of HE approaches within State Government policy and action in education reform from early childhood education to tertiary entrance. These local approaches consequently must complement national strategies in education, health, and income support for low SES and Indigenous participation.

Apart from focus on national approaches including increased income support directed to individual students, elements associated with HE institutions [such as funding for specific local programs/approaches; monitoring and evaluation of outcomes] could form an essential and identifiable element of compacts which should also include community engagement aspects. This approach should reflect State strategies dealing with Tasmanian underachievement and low aspirations [educational attainment in schools; low completion rates &c] leading to low participation rates and completions in higher education. This will build upon and strengthen the broad education and training response of the Tasmanian Government in partnership with UTAS reform agendas as evident in initiatives associated with UTAS' Cradle Coast Campus, Riawunna, and the new University College.

Connecting with other education and training sectors

The new post-Year 10 institutions being introduced through *Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow*¹ are intended to substantially increase Year 12 completion, or equivalents, completion rates and the skill levels of mature-aged Tasmanians, leading to improved individual opportunity and a change in productivity. This initiative addresses major challenges, including:

- Retention – keeping Tasmania's young people in education and training after Year 10 to enhance their employment and social potential
- Skill shortages – ensuring that both young and mature age Tasmanians can acquire the qualifications that employers are looking for, and
- Productivity – making sure that Tasmanian employers and enterprises can access the skills and people they need to make their businesses profitable and productive.

The Polytechnic, Academy and Training Tasmania will each be governed by an independent board. The Tasmanian Academy will focus on academic learning, with a curriculum and academic pathway for Year 11 and 12 students seeking university entrance. The Tasmanian Polytechnic will focus on practical learning, with a vocational pathway, supported by academic courses as well, for both Year 11/12 and mature-age students seeking employment outcomes or university articulation. Training Tasmania will focus on skills development for employees in enterprises, in line with their enterprise's skills needs. These new organisations will commence in January 2009.

In conjunction with these new arrangements, UTAS has commenced preparations for closer articulation and interrelationships with the new institutions, including the formation of direct pathways, credit transfer and integrated delivery arrangements enabling higher achievers to progress more quickly and similarly more flexible support for other students, including those from outside the Academy pathways and those requiring preparation for higher education.

¹ The *Tasmania Tomorrow* initiative outlines the Tasmanian Government's vision for post-school education and training.

UTAS College is based on principles that include increasing Tasmanians' aspiration to attend university, enhancing access to UTAS, with support structures to assist student success, capitalising on existing UTAS strengths, and providing mutual benefit for students, the University and the State.

UTAS aims to increase the number of programs shared between and jointly taught across the sectors, strengthen high-achiever programs to provide accelerated learning opportunities, improve entry pathways, with individualised personal and learning support and expand foundation programs for international students. Consequently the State Government is supportive of the UTAS bid to the Commonwealth Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund to undertake a comprehensive review of the relationships between school and university units with a view to reducing overlap and developing appropriate extension and acceleration arrangements.

The closer interrelationship of the UTAS, the Academy, Polytechnic and Training Tasmania, is not patterned on a US-type systems model, however a regional integrated relationship offers potential benefits for the geographically defined region of Tasmania, including greater local cooperation and resource sharing, facilitation of staff movement, increased likelihood of low SES, Indigenous, and rural students and mature aged workers and increased applied local research and partnering. There has been recent interest in models of regional delivery along the lines of US systems models which could be explored. For instance, UTAS might further enter into arrangements with other universities, at least for some disciplines or advanced course/degree elements, for which it does not have, and is not likely ever to have, a critical mass of students.

Resourcing the system

Extending this approach through broader regional partnering in fostering education, skills acquisition, research, innovation and productivity, allows easier access and increased quality of partnering between education and training providers, regional and local industry and business, government and government agencies, including national and international partnerships. For example, Skills Tasmania is supporting the UTAS Cradle Campus Coast Institute for Regional Development's international collaborative project *Small Campus Experience; Can Small University Campuses Drive Innovation in Rural Regions?* For the Tasmanian Government, the knowledge and practical outcomes likely to flow from this project should have utility in promoting Tasmanian economic and community growth.

Funding models that start with learners and enterprises in regions are another way of targeting increased numbers of qualifications attained and increasing higher skills levels, as well as delivering on equity outcomes. The Tasmanian Government is employing this approach through the Skills Tasmania 'Productivity Through Partnerships' in the VET sector. There is current budget provision for a pilot program with the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania to form a partnership with one or more Registered Training Organisations to increase the information and communication technology skills of tourism operators so that they can use a new digital platform to promote their business and take bookings online.

Much of the thinking and evidence, adduced directly or indirectly, through the Review *Discussion Paper* accords with current and emerging Tasmanian regional patterns and approaches.² The OECD [2007c, p. 15] *Higher Education and Regions* report closely corresponds with Tasmanian thinking:

Higher education can contribute to human capital development in the region through educating a wide range of individuals in the local area, ensuring that they are employable when they leave education, helping local employers by responding to new skills requirements, ensuring that employees go on learning by supporting continuous professional development, and helping attract talent from outside.

The State Government has a direct interest in the financial strength and delivery of outcomes by UTAS. In 2007, UTAS received 5.1% of its income from State grants [\$17.9m]. The closeness of this relationship is further reflected in the objectives of the new Partnership Agreement between the Tasmanian Government and the University of Tasmania are to:

- Provide a framework for a productive and open relationship between the University and the Crown;
- Increase collaboration on and co-investment in research that will have economic, social and environmental benefits for Tasmania;
- Promote greater innovation and commercialisation of research as a driver for economic development and employment in Tasmania;
- Achieve greater recognition of Tasmania's expertise, innovation and services in the national and international marketplaces; and
- Develop innovative policies and ways of working in the areas of education, training and workforce needs to improve Tasmania's productivity.

The current Agreement Priority Areas are indicative of the overarching UTAS objectives of teaching, research and community engagement:

Health

Improving the health of Tasmanians through preventative health, promoting healthy lifestyles and development of the health workforce.

² In particular:

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) 2008a, *Higher Education at Work, High Skills: High Value*, United Kingdom Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, Sheffield,

http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/documents/Higher_Education_at_Work.pdf.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2007c, *Higher Education and Regions: Globally competitive, locally engaged*, OECD, Paris.

Education

Lifting educational achievement, workforce participation and productivity in Tasmania for a prosperous future, including literacy and numeracy and workforce participation. Developing and promoting the skills and knowledge of the Tasmanian community for the economic, social and cultural advancement of the State.

Antarctic and marine studies

Expanding Tasmania's substantial marine and Antarctic research base as a platform for gaining additional benefits from the State's advantages in this field. Establishment of an Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies.

Climate change

Promoting a practical understanding of the impacts of climate change. Taking practical measures to reduce Tasmania's greenhouse footprint and translate research into solutions to climate change issues.

Island culture

Building on Tasmania's unique island identity for a range of projects in areas such as the creative industries and urban renewal.

Funding models

National public funding of higher education and research and development must be increased, in addition to philanthropic and private funding increases, if Australia is to remain competitive with like OECD countries. In Tasmania, for example, containing rises in HECS fees has been intended as a measure to increase access and participation of Tasmanians in higher education. While holding off for three years, the Vice-Chancellor Professor recently indicated to the Tasmanian community that surrendering to the 25 per cent increase, in line with all other Australian universities, was regrettable but unavoidable if the University was to remain fiscally responsible and maintain its standards of excellence.

The ongoing public under-funding of higher education and the current, less than inflation, funding model has had unfortunate consequences. Given the funding problems identified by higher education institutions [including the chronic under-funding of higher education institutions for teaching, research and capital funding and hence pressures on undergraduate teaching ratios; casualisation of teaching staff in undergraduate teaching; inadequate research funding; maintenance backlogs; dependence on international students], the Tasmanian Government is supportive of UTAS thinking on the potential for exploring and trialling individual funding compacts.

As yet there is no detail on how such compacts would work in practice although it is intended that they would give universities a greater role in setting priorities and allocating resources and assets in attaining outcomes. Compacts could allow for providing for additional teaching and learning and other support for students from targeted equity groups; or for teaching of low demand subjects for reasons of cultural or other high priority. There are several apparent benefits from the Tasmanian Government, including participation in forming clear expectations about what UTAS would be contributing to State goals and a stronger expression of the roles of UTAS' regional mission and roles, including those of its local campuses. As UTAS has indicated, benchmarking figures would help to keep the system balanced and transparent, looking at outcomes against stated aims, and performance against capacity to deliver. This is similar to the model for resourcing the Tasmanian Polytechnic, Tasmanian Academy and Training Tasmanian.

Governance and regulation

The State Government expects UTAS to continue to play a key leadership role in teaching, research and community engagement in areas appropriate to Tasmania. The Government is working to ensure that the University's role is fully integrated into the general community and industry development objectives.

Ongoing evolution of the higher education sector is necessary to ensure that the sector is delivering the highest possible teaching, research and learning outcomes consistent with the expectations of the Tasmanian Government and the Tasmanian community.

In the case of UTAS, the State Government is keen to address its response to the *Discussion Paper*, particularly in regard to current and future expectations of a higher education institution which must attain excellence in local, regional, national and international contexts. Against these diverse expectations, State Government will test calls for reform in finance and regulatory arrangements and where there are obvious benefits for students, community and UTAS, will continue to encourage and accept reforms [for example, National Governance and Higher Education Approval Protocols]. As with all universities, UTAS is burdened with input data provision and controls. In conjunction with any move to developing compacts, there should be very significant reductions in these input controls, an increase in the targeting and monitoring of outputs and outcomes; including those linked to State Government policy, notably *Tasmania Together*.

Given the capacity of UTAS to grow and innovate concurrently with implementation of financial and regulatory reforms, there is no enthusiasm for Commonwealth assumption of State powers in relation to higher education. Likewise with the need for UTAS as a regional university to successfully meet teaching, research and community engagement undertakings, there could be no thought of it becoming a teaching only university. The Tasmanian experience is that UTAS is increasingly successful in meeting the Tasmanian Government requirement that the university deliver on its core functions across its Tasmanian campuses.

International aspects of higher education

So too, the Tasmanian Government supports the continuing development of international education in the State, as there is widespread recognition of the economic and cultural benefits of attracting and maintaining significant numbers of students in schools, the Polytechnic and Academy, and especially, UTAS. Again, with Government and provider commitment to strategic planning for ongoing growth, a key thread for development is increasing collaboration of the full range of Tasmanian partners with UTAS in strengthening eastern hemisphere academic, research, cultural and economic relationships.

Considered in combination with the significant growth in UTAS transnational education [those students enrolled at UTAS but who remain in their home country for at least part of their UTAS degree] the preservation of the international image of Tasmania quality higher education remains a shared State Government concern.

The State Government and UTAS share a concern that more needs to be done in retaining the benefits of the education and skills development gained by international students, as there is strong evidence that local employers are not attracting and engaging completing students despite the apparent match between students' skills sets and Tasmanian skills shortages. A significant problem, already partially acknowledged by the Australian Government, is a lack of employment related language and cultural skill training for graduates, as well as the capacity of some employers to appreciate the skills of applicants.
