

MOTION

UTAS

[5.03 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - I move -

That the House:

- (1) Recognises:
 - (a) the significance of housing in Tasmania and the negative impact this has on rental affordability, home ownership and Tasmania's ability to recruit and retain key workers; and
 - (b) the vacant University of Tasmania (UTAS) land in Sandy Bay could provide nearly 2000 new homes, close to existing infrastructure, public transport routes and community facilities such as schools.
- (2) Expresses its concern about:
 - (a) the falling number of Year 11 and 12 STEM students in Tasmania;
 - (b) the programs being run by Victorian universities to poach Tasmania's top STEM students, which include flying students to Melbourne to view their superior STEM facilities;
 - (c) the inability of UTAS to fund a new, state of the art STEM facility, currently estimated to cost \$500 million, because of the Liberal's policy; and
 - (d) the harmful signal the Liberal's policy sends to investors across Tasmania, by effectively blocking a development process that has been underway for more than a decade.
- (3) Further recognises that constructing 2000 new homes at Sandy Bay and a \$500 million STEM facility would create thousands of safe, secure, well-paid jobs, and hundreds of apprenticeships.
- (4) Orders the Premier, the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP, to table copies of all advice received from relevant departments regarding the University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill' by 5pm Thursday 8 August 2024

Honourable Speaker, I rise today to talk about something really important for the Tasmanian community: the future of the University of Tasmania.

The University of Tasmania is Tasmania's only tertiary education institution, and it has been steadily working to revolutionise and modernise its facilities right across Tasmania. I have had the great fortune of seeing the facilities that it has updated - the new facilities at Burnie, which have been a massive success, and then more recently the shed in Launceston, seeing the work that is now almost complete in the city move into Launceston, which was supported by federal, state and local governments.

In Hobart, the university has also been undertaking its city move for a very long time, as it turns out - a very long time in which they have been supported by the Australian Government, the Tasmanian government, the Hobart City Council as well as the other city councils and the southern councils.

There was great endorsement of the city move, of building new STEM facilities, of making the University of Tasmania easier to get to, and that has been happening over a long period of time. Once the new forestry building has been completed, about 70 per cent of students and staff will already be in the city. I noted an interjection from the Leader of the House last week, he said, 'What do you mean by reverse?', or words to that effect. The university's move is already well underway. Most staff and students will already be in the city. However, we have a government that is looking to take the university back into the past through its policies, standing with people who are desperate to make the university something that it was a long time ago, but not something designed for the future. Education in this state needs to be ready for the future, not planning for the past.

In Tasmania, our education results have been letting Tasmanian students down. We have had NAPLAN results that were worse in 2021 than in 2008. We have had huge issues not just with retention of year 11 and 12 students, but also attainment, which I would argue is more important. Attainment for young Tasmanians leaving our education system has not been what we would like it to be. That has had flow-on impacts into the university. The university is dealing with a number of challenges at the moment. One of them is that there are fewer STEM students coming out of year 11 and 12 looking to study, and those students are choosing to travel interstate to Melbourne more and more.

Over the last few weeks, perhaps because I have been talking about UTAS a lot, I have been bombarded with ads from the University of Melbourne encouraging young Tasmanians to go to their expo in Hobart and then go to the University of Melbourne to study STEM. They are doing this not only through what they are doing here in Hobart, but they are also literally paying young Tasmanians to get on a plane and fly to Melbourne, putting them up in accommodation and then showcasing brand-new, modern STEM facilities for Victorian students.

What we have here in Tasmania are university facilities that desperately need updating. The University of Tasmania outlined a plan for the Tasmanian government, the Australian Government and for local government over many years where they explain exactly what they wanted to do. They wanted to move the university into the city for a number of reasons, most of which were to create modern facilities that were ready for modern learning for students. We have encountered resistance to that from people who, perhaps, have a more traditional view of learning, to put it politely, who want to see the university stick to a more traditional path. The University of Tasmania needs to accept that we are moving into the future, and young people certainly are.

Unfortunately, in Tasmania in 2024 it is very different to when I started university at the Sandy Bay campus in 2004. Twenty years ago, the rent I paid was \$90 a week. I had to work one shift at Woolies to pay the rent, another shift at Woolies to pay for the food, and another shift to pay for a couple of drinks with my mates. It was a pretty easy lifestyle compared with what students are dealing with now. There was time to sit around the university and chat to people, have a coffee or a beer at the Uni Bar.

These days things are really different and that is a real-life consequence of the cost-of-living crisis. Students today are paying massively more in rent. If I told a student today that I was paying \$90 a week in rent, they would scoff and be, well, presumably jealous. It is not the reality they are living in. They are having to work longer hours to make ends meet. We heard from the university only last year - one of the reasons for our policy around scholarships was that there are about 1000 young Tasmanians every year who are choosing not to study at

university because they simply cannot afford it. They cannot afford the cost of living, they cannot find enough hours to work and study, and they just cannot make it work anymore. This is the reality they are facing. Students are not able to sit around like they did 20, 30, 40 years ago, 50 years ago some people remember right back to. They need to work and change the way they work. Having a university in the city is more accessible for the vast majority of students. It is one bus ride away from places like Sorell, New Norfolk, Bridgewater, the Huon Valley, rather than Sandy Bay, which is difficult.

It was Kerry Vincent, the member for Prosser in the other place, who summed it up really well in his comments a couple of years ago, when he talked about how important it was for young people in his area at Sorell that the university moved into the city to make it more accessible. He talked about students saving up to 40 minutes a day if the university was in the city rather than in Sandy Bay. There is someone representing his community who stood up for the city move. When I was the mayor of Kingborough I also backed the city move. I signed up to support it through the City Deal process and in other forums. Based on my own experience of living in Kingston and studying, I thought it would be much easier to get to a university in the city than in Sandy Bay for many thousands of students like me.

Today's motion recognises that the university move is, fundamentally, a good thing. The motion recognises that this is also about housing. It expresses concerns about STEM facilities and the university's ability to fund that \$500 million potential cost for new STEM facilities.

We have made sure not to refer to legislation that is coming up, and I will not any further than that. What we do understand is that the University of Tasmania needs certainty for its plan. It is a very long-term plan because when the university started moving its assets into the city, it received support from the Australian and Tasmanian governments, and from the local council. To stop it from doing what it is doing now would put severe financial strain on the university and impact its operations right across Tasmania. This is the concern it continues to raise.

The motion also recognises the significant shortage of housing in Tasmania and the negative impact this has on rental affordability, home ownership and Tasmania's ability to recruit and retain key workers. It recognises that the university's land in Sandy Bay could provide nearly 2000 new homes close to existing infrastructure, public transport routes and community facilities such as schools.

I accept that our decision to back the university move has not been universally popular. One person who spoke to me the other day said, 'What a silly place to build homes. Why would you want to build homes there?' I was on a local planning authority for seven years and I do not think there is a better opportunity to build housing in greater Hobart than on that site above Churchill Avenue. I am getting scoffs from the member for Clark as I say that, but there really is not. No, not Mr Behrakis.

Ms Ogilvie - I did not scoff.

Mr WINTER - My apologies if that offends you.

Ms Ogilvie - I did not. You have offended me.

Mr WINTER - I apologise if I have offended, honourable Speaker.

It is an opportunity to build housing. It is a 100-hectare site and it is underutilised. When we were there, we saw the Medical Science building, which is completely unused at the moment. It could be retrofitted for housing pretty quickly if the zoning was changed. It is close to public services. It is close to a very regular bus route along Churchill Avenue, close to shops through the local Hill Street Store and Sandy Bay, great schools. Some of Tasmania's best schools are in Sandy Bay. It is close to health care. This is an opportunity not in the outer reaches of Hobart.

For planning, you want to do infill housing, and this is an opportunity to build more housing. The only reason you would not do so is if you did not support development or if you wanted to listen to loud voices that say no. Let us be very honest about it, that is what we have seen here. There are people who do not want to see more housing in the suburb of Sandy Bay and some of them are in the Chamber today.

I have a long record of supporting more housing in infill areas. When I was mayor down in Kingborough, we supported the Maryknoll development, which was very controversial at that time. It was an old nunnery and the nuns there wanted to convert the land they held. They were retiring from active work, and active work in the church, and they wanted to convert that to housing in a housing crisis. We received a lot of pushback from locals there who were concerned about some of the same issues in Sandy Bay. We held firm at our council and supported development.

That is why I have been surprised to see that some of the biggest proponents for development in the city of Hobart are sitting on the wrong side of this issue. Mr Behrakis, as a former alderman, initially strongly supported the City Deal. He endorsed the master plan around the Sandy Bay campus, if I recall correctly, and has also had such a crack at the Greens on council for not supporting development, relentlessly attacking the Greens for knocking back development. I do not know if a single Green on that council has ever knocked back 2000 homes though, like the former alderman and now member for Clark, Mr Behrakis, is proposing to do. Knocking back 2000 homes is an awful lot of homes to knock back during a housing crisis, because that is a real proposal. The University of Tasmania went to the City of Hobart with its plan. It has withdrawn the plan for now, but it still wants to build those houses because that is the plan that it embarked upon many years ago.

You have the Labor Party, which is supporting more housing and better education facilities in supporting a future for education. You have a Liberal Party, that has now decided it is against development in our city and in our state, and that wants to stand with those who oppose development to oppose more housing during a housing crisis. The housing crisis is not just about people sleeping in tents. It is not just about people who are homeless. It is about the cost-of-living crisis and rents that continue to grow and put more and more pressure on people in our state

Adding additional housing to greater Hobart in Sandy Bay will add to supply, and the basic economics of this means that it will take pressure off rents. It will be a good thing for the entirety of greater Hobart to have additional housing in that area, and through the motion before the House we have an opportunity today to support that.

The motion also recognises the falling number of Year 11 and 12 STEM students in Tasmania and the programs being run by Victorian universities to poach our best and brightest young people. We have seen this through anecdotal examples. I spoke to a young man who is currently studying at Hobart College last week. He tells me that he is interviewing and going

through a process to be accepted into a Melbourne university. I asked him and spoke to him about the reasons for that, and he just did not feel like the University of Tasmania was for him.

I despair at that, because we need to make sure that our best and brightest young Tasmanians stay here, and that they feel like they have the best possible facilities to operate from. Young Tasmanians want a university which is modern and has outstanding facilities, but they are not going to get that by using the existing facilities at the University of Tasmania. They have served us well for decades, but it is time for a change and time for a move into better facilities in the city. In the motion we have also talked about the inability of UTAS to fund a new state-of-the-art STEM facility currently estimated to cost \$500 million because of the Liberals' policy.

The university has a plan. The plan went through and was endorsed through the City Deal for a \$500 million STEM facility. What an opportunity for us to work together with the university around that. For them, part of that discussion around their ability to finance that is through divestment of land through sale or lease at Sandy Bay so that they can continue to invest more into the city and into their new STEM facilities.

The STEM facility might be in the city. They might choose - they are going through a process at the moment - to build it on that part of the Sandy Bay campus closer to Sandy Bay Road or below Churchill Avenue, and that is a decision for the university, which is our point. Labor believes that the University of Tasmania should be making decisions for the University of Tasmania. They have their own governance structure, and this place and the other place have largely decided to keep out of the weeds of what the university is doing until the government's recent policy announcement.

We do not believe that we should be getting in the way. We do not think we should be freezing the assets of our only university. We do not believe that we should be attacking them through the policies of this place. We think this place should be getting out of their way and letting them do what they have been doing.

They have either invested or are currently investing \$700 million worth of new facilities across greater Hobart. It has been part of the amount of construction work that has been going to support our economy over the last few years. I had a tour of the forestry building; there are 200 workers there on site most days at the moment constructing what will be a state-of-the-art facility. The artist impressions of what this will look like are extraordinary. This will be a place that I would love to study at, frankly, a place that far surpasses the experience that I had at the University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus, regarding the facilities, layout, and the technology associated with a brand-new building.

When I went to university, some of us were still attending lectures, but we were just starting to get tape recordings and downloads of audio from lectures, and people were just starting to transition from the very traditional learning of everyone turning up to a 101 lecture in the Stanley Burbury lecture theatre to people starting to migrate back to spending more time at home and less time at work. This university must be allowed to continue to modernise its facilities. It should not be sent back to the past by policies of this Liberal government.

The motion also recognises that the construction of the new STEM facility would create thousands of safe, secure, well-paid jobs. Like those 200 Tasmanians that have been working at the University of Tasmania's forestry building, there is an ability for the university to

continue to invest and continue to create jobs across Tasmania as it has been doing for a long time.

The Medical Sciences building was built back in 2009-11 in the city, which was a \$58-million development. The second development was \$90 million between 2011 and 2013. The IMAS at Salamanca - an incredible building - between 2012 and 2014. This is how long this has been going on for. The Centenary Building at the Domain was a \$17-million build. The Hobart Apartments, where the university has been building more housing in the city, helping to create better accommodation for their students.

The Podium Building fit out, a \$2.7 million build. The Hedberg, an absolutely incredible investment by a federal Labor government in that facility. The Philip Smith Centre, which I and other Labor members were able to go to recently to have a look at what they have done - absolutely incredible development. You also have what has happened down at Taroona with IMAS, and what is happening at the moment with IMAS, with those investments there. As I said, the Forestry building in the city, which will be an incredible place to learn and to teach.

The University of Tasmania has been on this path since at least 2009. The university move is not new. The university move is something that has been happening, and you cannot have your cake and eat it too. You cannot say that you support those investments in the city but say that you want to keep 100 hectares at the Sandy Bay campus. Everyone knew when they were doing this that as they invested more and moved more into the city that the university's footprint at Sandy Bay was going to be reduced. It had to be.

Everyone knew, including the Liberal members for Clark. They knew that this was happening and, as I said, we had all kept away from this until the politics of an election got in the way of that. We have had a very unfortunate situation where we have a government now that is intent on completely changing the sovereign risk profile of investing in this state with this decision. The decisions that they are making around the University of Tasmania's campus, as outlined by our business community here in Tasmania by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce, the Master Builders, HIA and the Property Council, are creating sovereign risk.

The message they are sending to anyone who invests here is that even if you have been investing in a move that has been going on for nearly 15 years, the government might decide to pull the rug out from under you and try to legislate to stop you in your tracks. That is what their legislation does and why it is so dangerous. It is a dangerous approach to policy that is going to put enhanced and increased pressure on the university's finances and, in fact, could lead to pressure that impacts not just study in the south of the state, but study right across Tasmania.

It is bad policy. It is a bad approach and that is why paragraph (4) orders the Premier to table copies of all advice received from the relevant departments regarding the University of Tasmania's protection bill by 5.00 p.m. tomorrow. I want to know what sort of advice they got from this, or whether this was another trick pulled out of the Liberal Party playbook during an election, because that is certainly what it looks like. You have a member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, out there saying that they were going to save the University of Tasmania, and then later on saying, 'Actually, it does not really do anything', and 'Actually, nobody is stopping anything.' That is what this legislation does and that is what we need to see the advice about. We need to

see what advice this government received about this absolutely reckless approach to housing, education and investment in our state.

Where else but in Tasmania would a government - this Liberal government - try and freeze the assets of its only university? What other government would have such a lack of regard for the education institution of the university that it decides to attack it by freezing its assets? I want to know what advice the government got around that, if they got any advice whatsoever. This House should demand that we see the advice to understand exactly where this reckless approach came from.

I am deeply concerned about the message this sends to every Tasmanian young person about the future of education in this state and about this government's commitment to housing during the housing crisis, which has been neglectful to say the absolute best. They declared a housing crisis in 2018, and since then have done almost nothing to resolve it, and things have got worse.

I also wanted to say two things. The first is that I have been critical of the Jacqui Lambie Network, but on this issue they have formulated a policy to support the University of Tasmania's move and I believe that is a good thing. It is a good thing that Tasmanians can see what they stand for, and on this occasion I believe they are standing up for what is right, which is a modern university, with modern learning in this state. This demonstrates that they have seen the arguments, and have seen through the ridiculous arguments of the Liberal Party on this. The arguments are incoherent and make no sense. Freezing assets is something that world leaders do to foreign dictators, to oligarchs in Russia. They have their assets frozen. Who would ever do it to their university? That is what this Liberal government is doing.

I am also looking forward to the Greens' contribution today. The Greens have been talking about housing federally and at a state level for a long time. We know what their record is at local councils. I have been on the local council with the Greens and listened to the arguments as they oppose housing. They oppose things like the Mary Knoll development that I referred to earlier. We have seen what they did. We have seen what Mr Behrakis, the member for Clark, used to believe. He used to believe in development in this city. He does not anymore, he now opposes 2000 homes. I want to know what the Greens think about this, because there is a 100-hectare site available there at Sandy Bay.

It is close to services, public transport, shops and health care. It has fantastic education services there. There is really no reason that I can think of to prevent development of housing particularly on that part of the site north of Churchill Avenue.

If the Greens want to have any credibility when they talk about housing in this state, it is important that they do support 2000 new homes. To say something positive, the Greens have now backtracked slightly and are saying they have not made their final decision on whether they are going to support the government's ridiculous bill, and that is good.

The Greens should oppose the government's ridiculous bill, because if they care about tertiary education in this state, and if they care about housing in this state, they should stop the government from freezing the assets of our only university. They absolutely should. The Greens have a responsibility here to protect Tasmanians from the diabolically bad policies of the government on this matter, and to protect our university from those who would freeze its assets during a period of significant change.

We are concerned, and I am concerned. This is one of those occasions in politics where you can back something that you passionately believe. I do passionately believe in the university's move. I am proud of the work that they have done in Launceston, impressed with the work that they have done in Burnie, and I am excited about them completing the university move in the city.

The worst thing that we could do to this university is freeze their assets. The worst thing we could do is enact the Liberals' policy, which might have made a few people happy during an election, but surely they understand how bad this will be.

The motion today gives the House the opportunity to send a message to the government that we are not going to tolerate policies like this. They are populist in a small section of the community, but do the complete opposite to what this state wants. The university's proposal gives us the best of both worlds. It offers us an opportunity to build 2000 new homes during an education crisis, and generate the funds that we need to upgrade and build great brand-new education facilities. I think those things are worth recognising and worth supporting. I am a passionate supporter of the University of Tasmania's move to the city. I wholly commend the motion to the House and I hope that the House will support this today.

[5.30 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Small Business and Consumer Affairs) - Gosh, that was a lot of words. It is very interesting to see how you can not only try to walk both sides of the street but all sides of all streets at the same time. Let me just unpack a little bit of what is going on here.

Firstly, we are all agreed that the university is marvellous. We want to look after it and support it. I have been well on the record for a very long time, particularly around ICT and the STEM and tech sector, saying that a STEM refit of the Sandy Bay campus is a great idea. It has been on Infrastructure Australia's radar since 2017, which is where the \$500-million figure that Mr Winter keeps latching onto comes from. Since 2017 there would have been an increase in the cost value of that proposal, and I note also that the Universities Accord has recently been published, so one of the questions that I ask Mr Winter is: has he picked up the phone to his colleagues in Canberra to seek the funding that is necessary for our beautiful university?

You know and we know that the Universities Accord talks about regional universities and talks about the sort of investment we need, not just the University of Tasmania, being the one university that we have in this state, but right across Australia for those regional communities that need more investment in education. I am pretty sure you have not picked up the phone, so that is fairly disappointing.

I want to talk about the political games that Mr Winter and his team are playing over there. He talked at some length about the experience he had at university. I will too. I was very fortunate to be able to attend the University of Melbourne as a Tasmanian student, luckily before HECS, so it was free to study arts there. Then I chose to come back home to the University of Tasmania where I studied law. As a third-generation law graduate of that university, we love it as a family and as a community. There are members of our family currently there. I say that by way of full disclosure so that people understand my passion and perspective on this.

The University of Tasmania is an iconic Tasmanian institution. It has educated generations of Tasmanians, and our Sandy Bay campus is an integral part of the university's appeal and offering. We support it. As the only university in our state, UTAS has an important role to play in the economic, social and cultural development of our state. Yes, there has been a concerted effort by the community to ensure the site's future is secure.

By way of background, let us remember that in October 2022, 74.38 per cent of respondents voted 'No' in the City of Hobart elector poll regarding the university's relocation from Sandy Bay into the Hobart CBD. These are the people the opposition claims to represent, but when they get their opportunity, they turn their back on them. Surprising? I think not.

Those opposite must remember that the land in question was gifted by the people of Tasmania to the university in 1951. The university is committed to ensuring that the University of Tasmania delivers positive outcomes for students, staff and the broader Tasmanian community and our very economy. It is very important. Through our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, our government committed that within the first 100 days we would introduce enabling legislation to prevent the disposal of land at the University Sandy Bay campus without the support of both Houses of parliament. We made an election commitment. We followed through on our election commitment. We tabled the bill within the first 100 days.

I will read you the operational clause so you can see that what we are doing is pretty straightforward and is about ensuring transparency. We say:

On and after the commencement day, the university must not dispose of all or any part of the vested land unless the disposal has been first approved by each House of parliament.

It is pretty straightforward; it is pretty simple.

The SPEAKER - Sorry, minister, are you referring to the detail of the bill? You cannot refer to the detail of the bill without pre-empting debate.

Ms OGILVIE - No problem.

The SPEAKER - The motion is permitted because it speaks broadly about the issue.

Ms OGILVIE - Okay, I can speak more broadly about the issue. What the people I have spoken to want is discussion in this place, and that is good. They want to know that our MPs from every part of Tasmania, from every electorate, are part of the discussion about this very important matter.

The Tasmanian government has kept our promise. The bill - hopefully I am getting it right?

The SPEAKER - You can speak about the bill broadly; you cannot go through any of the clauses.

Ms OGILVIE - The bill is not about whether the university should have a presence in the Hobart CBD, despite what Mr Winter has said and the opaqueness with which he has made his argument. We note that the university already has a presence in the CBD, including its

Creative Arts precinct across the waterfront, the Hedberg facility and the Menzies Institute for Medical Research. We welcome all of this.

We note our policy is not that UTAS cannot dispose of this land. The question must come through parliament. I am not surprised Labor does not understand. Labor does not understand transparency, clearly. Our bill simply ensures there is transparency and an opportunity for Tasmanians' views to be represented through their elected members before a final decision is made. It is pretty straightforward.

The fact is that Labor refused to state a position on UTAS during the campaign because they were fearful of the electoral backlash. Only now, comfortable in opposition with four years until they face the voters, have they revealed that they will defy the will of the overwhelming majority of residents of Hobart, which is very wishy-washy and reeks of the same old Labor nonsense that we are used to.

As I mentioned previously, Mr Greg Barnes put it perfectly in his 22 July *Mercury* piece when he said -

Mr Winter seems not to care for the fact that the university is not a private institution but is one that must be held accountable for its expenditure of taxpayer funds, and that it is not a property developer. Labor clearly does not care about UTAS students or residents, and their enthusiasm for this project is purely about votes.

Mr Barnes then goes on to say -

The Opposition Leader's rhetoric on this issue is overblown and even comic.

Then there is the recent commentary of Mr Barry Prismall:

Opposition Leader, Dean Winter, who so far in the new parliament reminds me of a limp whinger with no presence or stature.

Oh dear. Perhaps you will have to do some work on that. It remains to see that we are merely introducing an important check and balance for a vital community asset, nothing more. If the opposition leader is seeking - as I think he is - to stir up a storm in a teacup, then Tasmanians should think twice about this opposition's legitimacy and the legitimacy of their arguments. If Labor were supportive of Tasmanians then they would back our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future and advocate to their federal counterparts - pick up that phone for the \$500 plus million required to bring world-class STEM facilities to UTAS in Sandy Bay. Just pick up the phone. As each day passes without advocacy to their federal counterparts, the whinging continues and the Labor team are robbing Tasmania of our STEM future.

Our work with the university on a STEM-led plan for the Sandy Bay campus is practical, prudent and measured and will ensure that the site has a future ready to support and drive the careers of Tasmanians and attract investment and industry. The Tasmanian government understands that our important science and technology sectors offer great potential for economic growth together with global work opportunities, and that the ICT leadership is essential to bridge the digital divide for all Tasmanians.

We all want Tasmanian students to have access to the most contemporary tertiary education opportunities, and, equally, we understand the need to meet workforce demands in the STEM sector both now and into the future. This is precisely why we are acting to address this issue, and that is why I continue to have ongoing dialogue with the university and with STEM industry leaders and continue to work with our Commonwealth counterparts to support UTAS's enhancement and STEM-led plan. The University of Tasmania are also consulting with their expert STEM staff to understand how to deliver the best possible STEM education experience for our students, teachers, and broader community to ensure we cater for our future needs.

This idea of upgraded STEM facilities is not new. They have been on Infrastructure Australia's radar since 2017. Given that seven years have now elapsed, I look forward to working with UTAS to update the business case to pursue a Commonwealth investment for some \$500 million-plus into revamped STEM facilities at Sandy Bay. While Labor purports that UTAS was going to be funding this \$500 million project itself, I am advised that this is simply not true. Our bill in no way limits the advocacy for the university's fair share of funding to support its STEM future.

Perhaps the opposition leader should divert his attention to advocating to his federal counterparts rather than constant whingeing. We all know Labor cannot tell the truth and does not let that get in the way of a good story. When it comes to their aspirations about declining rates of enrolment in STEM subjects, let us remember that this is not just a Tasmanian issue. I am also advised that STEM enrolments have recently increased. Data on year 12 subject enrolments from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) show a national decline of enrolments in maths and science subjects when comparing 2018 to 2022 figures. It is in all of our interests to arrest that decline and get our kids learning STEM, and showing them the opportunities both in further study, tertiary education and jobs that they can have globally.

We know that having specialist teachers has a positive impact on enrolments. That is why our government has committed to recruit an extra 25 full-time-equivalent maths and science teachers as part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. After all, this is Tasmania's education future and it is why STEM is so important.

I will turn to housing, a topic our government is addressing for Tasmanians now and into the future. Before I do, I feel I need to address the Leader of the Opposition's misleading comments about 2000 homes. I am not aware of a current proposal for 2000 homes to be developed on that site.

Mr Winter - Pick up the phone to the University of Tasmania, minister.

Ms OGILVIE - Perhaps you would like to table it, Mr Winter. Fundamentally, there is nothing stopping UTAS disposing of the land that was gifted to them by the government. What we are doing is introducing an important check and balance for a vital community asset.

We are delivering on our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future commitments to provide more housing options for Tasmanians, to bring more housing supply online and to allow more Tasmanians to realise their dreams of home ownership. In our first 100 days we have expanded our MyHome shared equity scheme, helping even more Tasmanians to buy or

build a house, joining the more than 1000 Tasmanians who have already been supported into home ownership through the program.

We have increased our highly successful Residential Land Rebate program, offering eligible applicants a rebate of up to \$15,000 per lot to bring more affordable residential land to market for home ownership, bringing hundreds more lots to market over the next two years. A request for tender is now registered for our Apartment Development Purchase Program to support a suite of initiatives to stimulate housing supply, increase medium-density apartments and deliver more affordable rentals. We have expanded our Private Rental Incentive scheme to bring on an additional 200 homes into this highly successful scheme.

From October 2020 to June 2024, our government has delivered a total of 3620 social and affordable homes towards our goal of 10,000 social and affordable homes by 2032. That is a key part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. That is because our government recognises that every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head, which is precisely why our 20-year Tasmanian Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan 2023 to 2027 sets out our plan for safe, appropriate and affordable housing for our state.

Labor's implications that we are somehow stopping the development of the Sandy Bay campus site is false. Tasmanians expect checks and balances, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr Winter - What is the point in what you are doing if you are not stopping anything?

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition.

Ms OGILVIE - The opposition ought to stop playing politics with the lives of Tasmanians. They should respect the some 74 per cent of respondents who voted no in the City of Hobart's electoral poll. Those opposite should be offering their full support for Tasmania's STEM future, for the future of our young people, the attraction of new and innovative industries which create jobs and people. The negativity and rhetoric we are hearing from the other side and the conflation of separate issues - it never ceases to amaze us over here how opaque you can be. Tasmanians do not deserve the negativity of Mr Winter and his crew of anti-Tasmania's future people. That is why only our government has a 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, a future that sees this great state as the best place to live, work, raise a family and study.

[5.46 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this motion forward. It is good to have an opportunity to discuss these issues ahead of future debates, including public debates and debates in this House. The Tasmanian Greens have significant concerns about the state of the university which go above and beyond the issue of the move. Yes, we are concerned about the move and have a position on it. We also have concerns around the university's accessibility for students, the decisions and accountability of the university itself and, of course, the concerns of the community.

We have a clear position statement: we believe that the University of Tasmania, as Tasmania's only university, must be a leader in tertiary education, community standing and transparent decision-making. The *University of Tasmania Act 1992* needs to be reviewed and amended to improve governance, accountability, decision-making and academic outcomes. There are deliberations in the other place looking into that.

The state government should use opportunities to ensure that UTAS halts the relocation to the CBD and confirms an ongoing commitment to the maintenance of the Sandy Bay campus for educational purposes. This commitment must respect the built heritage, public open space and natural environment of the site. The concerns of academic staff, students and the broader community must be genuinely considered and addressed by the University Council. All UTAS decisions must be based on credible public engagement and accountable decision-making processes, and any statutory planning approvals provide for third-party rights of appeal.

That is our position on the university. It is a clear position, founded on the fact that the university is our only tertiary education facility. It needs to succeed; it needs to be focused on academic outcomes and academic excellence.

There are also principles about the land and the site. This is public land that was gifted to the university in 1944, 1951, ultimately. There are significant amounts of taxpayer's money that shift across to the university every single year and the *University of Tasmania Act* is a statute that arises from this place. There are significant issues which drive a lot of the public concerns about the institution - not just the move but the performance of the institution, full stop.

We support the order contained in this motion to increase transparency, and I will talk a little bit more about the motion itself. We certainly support more transparency. We would welcome the opportunity for more information to be put on the table, but we do not support the move as it stands at the moment. We want the Sandy Bay site retained for educational purposes. That does not mean we give blanket support to the Liberals' legislation as it is drafted at the moment. We do not automatically think that is the answer. I am sure all members have received the same correspondence I have had from the university that flags some initial legal advice around its concerns about the effect of this legislation. I will read it into *Hansard* for the benefit of those reading this in the future. This is a letter from Pro Vice-Chancellor Nicholas Farrelly to, I think, all members:

Our initial legal advice is this bill looks to be inconsistent with the fundamental principles of land ownership in Tasmania, amounting to a reverse compulsory acquisition that effectively prohibits the sale in order to force land use which the University Council would otherwise have decided is not in the best interest of the university, deprives the university of the value of the land, imposes an ongoing cost burden on the university through ongoing holding and upkeeping costs of the land and buildings which it is prohibited from disposing, and inhibits the council's long-term planning for the university to achieve the objective set out under the act.

I have not seen that legal advice and we have not sought our own legal advice. I am unsure whether the government has legal advice about the legalities and implications of this legislation regarding the responsibilities of University Council members and other issues. The Greens certainly do not want to be involved in anything that cuts across any legal responsibilities or any other issues about other of statutes or the responsibilities of the university. We broadly support the intent of the legislation, but we have significant concerns that we will need to see addressed.

From the Greens' perspective, the UTAS move into the city looks completely untenable at the moment for a range of different reasons. It looks like the Labor Party has jumped on a horse that has already bolted.

Mr Winter - Yes, because it is already there, it is already in the city.

Mr BAYLEY - We will get to that, Mr Winter. I will anchor back to 74 per cent of Hobart residents who voted no to this in the elector poll. This is not every council in the state, it was not a plebiscite of every single person in the state, but both the Sandy Bay site and the city are in the Hobart municipality. By any measure, 74 per cent is an unequivocal result, an unequivocal condemnation of this as an approach. We do not understand the motives, and people will cast pejoratives as to why a lot of people voted that way. However, the reality is that 74 per cent of people did not support this and that needs to earn an element of respect from this House and the University of Tasmania.

There are also the financial issues. Mr Winter raised the finances. I will read into *Hansard* some commentary from Mr John Lawrence. He is a well-respected retired economist and accountant. On 5 July he wrote:

The primary focus should be on arresting the decline in earnings from core operations. Moving to Hobart will only defer and exacerbate the problem. Building STEM facilities with a sale-and-leaseback arrangement will not fix negative earnings from the core activities of teaching and research. It will make it worse, as any investor lessor will want a rate of return well in excess of the rate at which UTAS could borrow, if only Treasurer Ferguson will approve an increase in UTAS's borrowing limit. UTAS knows this but its sheer bloody-mindedness has led it to deliberately pursue the reckless course of taking UTAS to the brink of insolvency by trying to force the hand of parliament and the government to allow it to sell parts of Sandy Bay so that it continues with its vanity project whilst ignoring the wishes of most other stakeholders.

That is the view of an eminent economist and accountant who has been tracking this and reading annual reports closely. He believes the financial landscape that sits underneath the university has fundamentally changed, and we know that is the case. This decision was made many years ago, prior to any level of consultation, at a time when the university landscape was very different. It is anchored in a business model that is reliant on international students, and international students, theoretically, want a city-based campus. However, the era of Australian universities, including the University of Tasmania, relying on international students has changed.

Whether that be through COVID, the trade wars with China, the federal caps that the federal government is currently considering on international students to universities, the landscape has changed and by any measure, whether it be community support, financial realisation or the future prospects, this move is now fundamentally untenable. Yes, students are getting courted by other universities, of course they are, it is a business, now a corporate business. When Keating and the federal government started to change the structure around the university model, when it started to charge students HECs and withdraw public support for education. It forced them into a business model and yes, they are competitive. This comes back

to one of the challenges with UTAS. UTAS has effectively moved its entire course offerings online, barely offers face to face engagement with students, certainly not in a lecture context.

Mr Winter - Why do you think that is?

Mr BAYLEY - That is because it is cheaper to do. It is cheaper. They can recycle the same lecture that's been recorded by a lecturer. It is not necessarily what kids want to do. I can speak from my own experience, my daughter. My daughter went through the last couple of years of her school in the COVID period. My daughter could think of nothing worse than doing an entire university degree in her bedroom. She chose to go to Sydney University. She had an early offer from UTAS and she ultimately got an offer from University of Sydney. She chose to go to University in Sydney because she wanted to interact with human beings face to face. That is a reality. That is one challenge.

If UTAS wants to start to become more attractive to students and academics, if it wants to up the level of academic offering that it is putting out there, it really needs to have a look again at the decision to rationalise learning, put most of it online and bring into place on face-to-face learning again. That, in my view and of lot of the young people that I talk to, is one of the key reasons that people are looking interstate or overseas for their support. Indeed, if you wanted to do a degree -

Mr Winter - Why do you think it is cheaper to teach online?

Mr BAYLEY - If you were happy to do an online degree, many people would potentially be better off looking at universities overseas.

The Leader of the Opposition flagged that UTAS has been moving for 15 years. Yes, some elements of it have been. Menzies, the Conservatorium and Hedberg, the art school, IMAS and Taroona, all of these are largely on uncontroversial moves. They are either already in the city and have been for a long time, or they were uncontroversial. Putting Menzies near the hospital makes logical sense. We did not see pushback on that. Then it comes to the Philip Smith Centre, introducing a new outdoor education faculty or course offering running out of the Philip Smith Centre on the domain makes perfect sense. We welcome that and celebrate it.

It is well beyond time that Tasmania had a Bachelor of Education with a focus on outdoor education. It is one of those niche areas that we should be offering here in this state. Most of that move has largely been uncontroversial and is replicating facilities that were already in the city. The big challenge came with a whole scale move into the city, paid for by a rationalisation of the University of Campus site at Sandy Bay, paid for by selling off that with the kind of developments that were put on the table represented a complete overreach for a whole range of people

Mr Winter - What sort of developments are you talking about? Housing?

Mr BAYLEY - Housing and a whole range of things. Look onto your motion.

The SPEAKER - I do ask that the interjections cease, you can keep it for the summing up.

Mr BAYLEY - Onto housing, Mr Winter, look at the day that the Labor Party supports the Greens in its efforts to rein in short stay accommodation to manage rentals, excessive rents to any no cause evictions to deliver minimum standards is the day we are happy to be lectured by you about housing, Mr Winter.

Just because there is a site - 100 hectares, as you say, I am not sure that it is 100 hectares because a whole lot of that is currently bush. I do not know whether you are proposing to clear all that bush and just have a wall-to-wall suburb up towards Mount Nelson, but the day you support those initiatives that we bring into this House is the day I am happy to be lectured by you.

It is not vacant land. Your motion reads as if this is vacant land - as if it is just some vacant block with birds nesting in it and so forth. It is not; it is a university campus. It is zoned for education. It has a bushland reserve. This is not your average piece of vacant land. If you were going mount an argument that this is vacant land, we should just as well mount an argument that we can build housing on Parliament House lawns or St Davids Park. It is a ridiculous argument that this is vacant land.

It is not vacant land. This is university land used for educational purposes. It has teaching on it. It has people living on it already in student housing, and it has community interest that is anchored there. There is no guarantee whatsoever that any planning authority - the Tasmanian Planning Commission - would agree to it being rezoned. There are no guarantees whatsoever. To claim that it is vacant land and that you can suddenly start turning a sod and building houses there is utterly ridiculous.

There may well be a future vision for the site. There may well be a landing point for this site that does include student housing. The Greens can totally see a vision where there is a whole lot of student housing built around that campus. Then, do you know what? No one will be able to argue that there is not a community of interest that wants a central hub on the university.

Mr Winter - You are happy if it is students living in the housing, so why are you not happy with other housing?

Mr BAYLEY - There are students living there already, Mr Winter.

Mr Winter - Why is it okay if the students live there?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I do ask that the member is allowed to make his contribution without interjections.

Mr BAYLEY - When it comes to STEM, everyone knows there is tripartisan support. I sure there is support across this Chamber for a new STEM facility but, again, it is untenable in the city.

It is very clear that the university should and can anchor back to the Sandy Bay campus, sell its surplus facilities and land here in the city and go, cap in hand, together with tripartisan support, to the federal government and others looking for funding for a STEM facility at Sandy Bay. That is clearly a vision and part of the solution in this debate. It is about anchoring back to Sandy Bay and making sure that the facilities are there.

The reality is some of the science facilities are there already - the science labs, the geology stores and so forth. They cannot be moved anywhere. They are so big and extensive.

Mr Winter - What is your proposal for the forestry building? What a great relationship.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, I can hardly hear the member speaking. I ask members on both sides to allow the member to make his contribution.

Mr Winter - Furious agreement. It is like the same policy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - All interjections will stop. Thank you.

Mr BAYLEY - That is where the solution lies, with STEM in Sandy Bay. If this House and the university made a commitment back to Sandy Bay - gave a commitment to retaining Sandy Bay's site and to building STEM in Sandy Bay - a lot of the heat would disappear out of this debate. There would be a lot of support for the university and its future anchored back to that site, and there would be a good prospect of going to the federal government and others to get the money and build the facility there.

I know we all have different positions on these different things and maybe you have had a road to Damascus moment, Mr Winter, but you have commented about this in the past. Correct me if I am wrong, but this is a comment from you from some time back:

It's not UTAS's role to inflate CBD numbers. It's not UTAS's role to fix the housing crisis. It's not UTAS's role to create construction jobs.

Mr Winter - No, that is not me. That is incorrect.

Mr BAYLEY - Are you happy to record that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, that is not me. That is not a comment from me. You have misinterpreted a social - that is not what I have ever said.

Mr BAYLEY - It has your name on it, Mr Winter.

Mr Winter - It is incorrect.

Mr BAYLEY - Was it fabricated by a third party?

Mr Winter - No. I have never said that.

Mr BAYLEY - Fabricated?

Mr Winter - Yes.

Mr BAYLEY - By a third party, or a staff member?

Mr Winter - A staff member? What are you talking about?

Mr BAYLEY - So, someone -

The DEPUTY SPEAKER - All comments through the chair, please.

Mr Winter - No, it is not me.

Mr BAYLEY - I will continue to read this in, and Mr Winter, you are welcome to correct it.

UTAS's role is to provide world-class student education outcomes and research facilities for their academics and industry partners. Cross-disciplinary STEM that requires shared resources - central science laboratories, super computing power, libraries, controlled environments, teaching resources and tools, specimen depositories - fragmented over the city is totally unviable.

Shrink Sandy Bay shore, sell the condemned buildings above Churchill Avenue and put housing on its shore, but keep the campus and take the opportunity to build it out to a STEM hub that is the envy of the nation. The solution is moving students to the classroom, not the other way around. Fix public transport. Agreed. It is three kilometres from the CBD.

Mr Winter - I have never said any of that. I would ask you to stop because I have not said this at any point.

Mr BAYLEY - Okay, I am happy to withdraw that. I will listen to your summing up.

I will not talk any further. We absolutely support paragraph (5) of this motion. We would like to see paragraph (4) of this motion; we would like to see additional transparency. I would like to move an amendment that strikes out clauses 1, 2 and 3. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting clauses 1, 2 and 3.

The SPEAKER - I call Mr Bayley on the amendment.

Mr BAYLEY - On the amendment, I will be really quick because I do not need to say any more. This basically removes the preamble and a whole range of statements that we contest or do not believe are necessarily helpful in the context of this debate. It retains the substantive element of this motion, which is ordering the government to release a range of documentation. We certainly support that.

We have concerns about the legislation. We would be fascinated to see if there is any legal advice. We are looking forward to continuing conversations with the university about its advice and thoughts. We are all for transparency, but, as it stands, we would like to amend the motion to take out the hyperbole and the preamble and just anchor back to paragraph (4).

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order. Just so I understand, are we on the amendment or -

The SPEAKER - Yes, we are on the amendment. We are definitely debating the amendment.

[6.08 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - What a mess. What an awful mess this University of Tasmania debate has become. What has been lost is its fundamental role to give Tasmanians a tertiary education and to conduct research through cooperative research centres, partner with industry and business and communities, and lift the overall debate, intellect and educational outcomes in Tasmania.

That is what has been lost in this debate. The university's act of parliament establishes its public character but it also enshrines its autonomy. It is a universally recognised cornerstone of university governance to ensure universities remains free from political interference. It is not an unfettered autonomy; it is a responsibility that they must maintain the goodwill and the support of the Tasmanian community in the decisions that they make.

We have a university that has completely bungled the move, the debate around it, the challenge and the argument about the delivery of modern universities and the environment in which they compete. They have completely struggled to explain that, not only to their staff but to the broader community. We have the politics of the three parties cherry-picking stats, information and data to create a political outcome.

It is a disappointing outcome overall and I am reflecting on everyone. I am sorry. The University of Tasmania is such an important institution in Tasmania and to have the level of debate that we have seen over the last 6 to 12 months on this matter has diminished all of Tasmania.

I will wait until I see the final version of the bill in terms of the proposal from the government and make my position clear leading into it.

This is such a low point in terms of a higher education institution in Tasmania. It seems that anyone who has an axe to grind with the university over the last 50 years, this is their time to jump in and have a real crack. So the debate is murky; the debate is turgid.

In terms of the motion and the amendment, there is a fair bit of cherrypicking and political posturing around points 1, 2 and 3 which are being proposed to be moved. However, at the end of the day, point 4 is the nub. It is important for transparency that the government produces the advice they received as a government regarding the decision to force both Houses of parliament to approve any major change in real estate or ownership or use of university property, which is something that challenges the original underpinning concept of the act that established the university - the parliament's act, the parliament's process of establishing the University Act and its autonomy. As I said though, that autonomy is not without a responsibility to the Tasmanian people.

I support the intent of the motion in point 4. I will see where the numbers lie on the amendment. The entire debate around the future of the university and the politics that have been played over the last 12 months or so has diminished everyone and has diminished the institution of University of Tasmania.

[6.12 p.m.]

Mr BEHRAKIS (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I would like to speak on this issue and indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting the amendment, and to just talk about this issue and call out some of the misrepresentations that are being peddled by the Labor Party -

The SPEAKER - You do need to address the amendment. I am happy to give you a call if the amendment is going to be supported. I am always happy to put that vote and move back to the substantial motion.

Mr BEHRAKIS - I will stick to it. I know the amendment. I know those clauses that are being removed do touch on the policy, do touch on the UTas issue, so I will try my best.

We can all agree that the university is an iconic Tasmanian institution, has educated generations of Tasmanians, including many of us here. What Labor fails to realise, and I am speaking to particularly paragraph 2, which is being proposed to be removed, the Sandy Bay campus is an integral, critical part of the university's appeal and offering in southern Tasmania. There has been a very clear and a very concerted effort and message by the community to ensure the site's future is secure.

Contrast with we have listened to the community which is why we brought this policy to the election. It is interesting that Labor had no policy on this until after the election. What is being proposed, what is being talked about, our policy does not prevent the university from investing in accommodation, does not prevent them from developing elsewhere, selling or leasing parts of the campus. It literally means that we are proposing that any disposal of land specifically on that site, that there is a consideration of the community and the approval of parliament. That is all it does. It is about striking the right balance between protecting the public interest and the huge level of public concern, and allowing the university to get on with their core business, which is educating Tasmanians.

I will highlight some of the points that have been raised in regard to our policy, and I have to say that it is the first time in my life I have been accused of being anti-development as I have by the Leader of the Opposition. There is a first time for everything. I am disappointed that the other Greens member for Clark was not in the room. I am sure she would have had interesting response to that. The reality is nothing can be further from the truth. It is funny coming from the same opposition who spent their election making their core platform opposition to a development, being the stadium, only to realise after the fact that they got it wrong. They changed their position and flipped. Now they have this policy that they have they have picked on and they have decided to get onto it and now call themselves pro development. I welcome it. It is great to see Labor trying to turn over a new leaf and call themselves pro development like I have been for years.

I am glad Mr Winter was able to acknowledge on Twitter a few weeks ago, but they have been radio silent on this issue right up until the election. Afterwards, they have tried to label everyone who does not agree as a vocal minority. Seventy-four per cent of the council voters in the first ever election that had compulsory voting - I would hardly call that a vocal minority. I can get behind the statement itself that too often we get developments that get held up by a couple of really vocal people. I have seen it a million times on council. But 74 per cent is not a vocal minority. That includes the broad cross-section of the community. It includes people who also vote Labor. It involves people who vote Greens, and it involves people who vote Liberal. It also includes the student body of the university and a huge number of staff.

I am happy to be corrected, but I am pretty sure the NTEU also has a position against the UTAS move. I am trying to whittle down what it is. What is the vocal minority that the Labor Party is talking about here? They have tried to have it each way. They remain silent on the issue and they come out afterwards. They were very quiet on this because given the clear feedback from the community in Clark, this would have given them a huge electoral backlash if they came out with it and they were honest about it before the election. They waited until it was safe to do so without consequence. They are happy to come out on this and act strong and say that we are pro-development. They can sit here and wait four years until they have to test what the people of Clark say about this.

Let us be very clear about what has been proposed here and what we are talking about. No-one is talking about stopping development on the Sandy Bay campus. No-one is talking about forcing or ceasing or reversing the development or the CBD campus locations. No-one is talking about blocking housing from being built. That is what Labor thinks is being discussed, or what they are purporting is being propose, but it is not.

What this side is doing through our policy is acknowledging that the land on which the Sandy Bay campus resides is public land. It was gifted to the university with the intention of it being for an educational purpose. That is the history of the place. We are ensuring that any development that occurs on that site, and we do we think development should occur on that site, should be in line with the broad community expectations.

Mr Winter - Do you support 2000 homes on the site? You just said you support development.

Mr BEHRAKIS - I will get to that, Mr Winter. I love that Labor is trying to reinvent themselves and they are trying to be supportive and trying to be pro-development. I know that is a novel concept for them but I have been there for some time, as Mr Winter has acknowledged.

Being pro-development does not mean every single development without question. It does not mean that. It does not mean rubber stamping things. It does not mean that development that occurs should not have checks and balances.

Dr Broad - That is what the Hobart City Council does. You just came from there.

Mr BEHRAKIS - No, that is not what that is. There are many developers building homes in our state. We are committed to continuing to facilitate that development. It is why we are doing things like the development assessment panels and taking politics out of council planning, which I hope Mr Winter supports.

The reality is that there is only one university in Tasmania. It is important that the state's only tertiary education institute remains focused on providing the world-class education that they are known for, and letting those who specialised in developing the housing that Tasmania needs to focus on that.

I will also add, this whole talk about 2000 homes and opposing it, and blocking 2000 homes, completely pre-empts the Mount Nelson/Sandy Bay Neighbourhood Plan that the

council has embarked on. The fact the university has actually withdrawn their planning applications for it in anticipation of the neighbourhood plan -

Mr Winter - Do you support it or not?

Mr BEHRAKIS - Well, there is no plan at the moment. There is no plan for 2000 homes. That is the fallacy of this whole conversation. The university withdrew their application to see what comes out of this neighbourhood plan. To suggest that we are even talking about 2000 homes completely assumes that nothing is going to come out of it.

Mr Winter - They do want to build 2000 homes there.

Mr BEHRAKIS - Why did they withdraw the application?

Mr Winter - Because of your council.

The SPEAKER - Order, members on my left, just because the member asked you a question does not mean that you are entitled to answer it.

Mr BEHRAKIS - Our apologies for inciting.

Further to that point, the argument that we are going to provide 2000 homes in that area, we do have to wait and see. The university has not come back saying they are definitely going to build these 2000 homes. They have withdrawn that application. They are waiting to see what happens. We cannot now act like this is what is going to occur.

Another policy that we took to an election, were brave enough to take to an election, the university will still be able to present whatever plans they want for the site, including the need to rezone, but these will be up for the consideration of the community, the council and, if necessary, the Planning Commission and the parliament, which, in most circumstances, would be fair and reasonable.

I do not know why the Labor Party thinks they can hoodwink Tasmania by continuing to push this rhetoric of 2000 houses. Any attempt to have checks and balances, any attempt to make sure that what is being built does align with broad community expectations, is blocking. I am not sure what they are trying to achieve other than trying to claim a little election win and trying to rebrand themselves as pro-development. I know they have a fair bit of rebranding to do, but we have been very clear. We took our policy to an election.

Mr Winter - There is nothing clear about your policy.

Mr BEHRAKIS - We were very open about it. Labor was very quiet at the time, very quiet. What we are talking about doing will respect the right of the university to establish new facilities in the Hobart CBD. We are not stopping that. We recognise the importance of, as has been discussed, our STEM sector potential for economic growth, and the global work opportunities and ICT leadership. We are working to make sure the university has a STEM-led plan for the Sandy Bay campus. We are listening to the students, we are listening to the teachers, and we are listening to the 74 per cent of people in the council area who want to make sure that this campus represents the best educational purpose as it historically has.

It does not mean that we cannot have housing development occur on that site. It does not mean we cannot have all sorts of development happening. All it is saying is if the university wants to dispose of land, public land gifted to them by the people of Tasmania, there has to be some sort of check and balance -

Mr Winter - Called the planning scheme.

Mr BEHRAKIS - No, we are talking about public land. It still has to go through a planning scheme.

On the issue of the university's move into the CBD, Mr Winter can check my record as far as how I voted on all of those and my position has not changed ever.

Let us talk about housing. Where do we want those houses to be?

The SPEAKER - Let us talk about the motion before the House. If you are talking about those houses that you say do not exist, you are okay.

Mr BEHRAKIS - Those houses and the fact that the motion is referring to 2000 houses that are not going to be built, this is the best place to build these 2000 homes. Just up the road on Argyle Street and Campbell Street, the same council that is embarking on the Mount Nelson/Sandy Bay plan has identified the easy development potential of over 5000 properties in areas where there are private owners who will not talk about developing public land and are talking about doing it with their own money. That is where our focus is, on facilitating those kind of developments in the inner city, which has a much lower impact on infrastructure and much higher amenity for those who are living in the inner city and access to services. It is not in those areas where the broad community in the entire city is against it.

To talk about the suggestion that this is a very localised opposition of people outside of Hobart who do not care. I know the attention on this was very much focused on Hobart. I still drive around in Clarence and see signs with the Save UTAS move. Let us not pretend that this is something that is just -

Mr Winter - It is going to be driven by signs. It is sign-led policy, is it?

Mr BEHRAKIS - Let us not talk - no, it is a reflection on the 'Oh, this is just some NIMBYs in Sandy Bay' and that is not true. It is untrue, it is a mistruth. It completely minimises how big an issue this is for many people in the community. As I said, we are not just talking about people who vote Liberal or people who vote Green, but also Labor voters, which is why you did not make this your key policy during the election, but it is your key policy now.

Mr Winter - We have had the same policy on this for a decade.

Mr BEHRAKIS - You were very quiet in this sitting during the last election, were you not? With that, Speaker -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I am attempting to hear Mr Behrakis, the member for Clark, in peace, thank you.

Mr BEHRAKIS - I could talk about this for hours, Honourable Speaker, but I will not. I will leave it there. I indicate that we will be supporting that amendment.

[6.26 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, we will be opposing the amendment. I know that there is not much time left to debate, but on the amendment in particular, and listening to the arguments on the amendment, some of the contributions were quite extraordinary.

The most interesting one was the other member for Clark, though, Mr Bayley, who said that they would be okay with student accommodation on the site at Sandy Bay, which made me wonder what sort of housing they would not want on the site. The Greens are happy with students to live at the University of Tasmania, homes, presumably, so why is it they do not want anyone else living there? Why is it that they will not allow for social or affordable housing to go there? Why is it only students that are allowed to live in Sandy Bay?

Mr Bayley - Because it is a university campus.

The SPEAKER - Sorry, I remind the Deputy Leader of the Greens that, (a), he should not be interjecting and, (b), he is certainly not allowed to do it while he is standing in the corridor. You will be asked to leave if you do it again.

Mr WINTER - The member for Clark, Mr Bayley, really exposed the Greens when he said that they might be okay with student accommodation, presumably, but not okay with other types of housing on that site, which speaks to the sort of position that they are now holding on this position - adverse to good outcomes for housing in this state. It is a disappointing position and they have really belled the cat in terms of what this is all about for them.

Then we had the other member for Clark, Mr Behrakis, who has talked a lot about voters, not about people. He talked about Liberal voters, Labor voters, and Green voters because that is how this government has seen this entire debate: who the voters are, who is voting for them. That is what the issue is. I have news for Mr Behrakis, former alderman Behrakis; this whole place has had the same position on UTAS and the move for years and that has been to keep out of it. This place has refused to enter into the debate. Your Premier was education minister for years while this move was going on and kept out of it. The Greens kept out of it for a long period of time until a little bit before you, but kept out of it for a long time. We have kept out of it as well because we respect the autonomy of the university, and we respect the planning authority that exists for checks and balances. That is what your old job was, alderman Behrakis. It is not what your job is now when it comes to planning in this state.

This government's position on this is confused. We have a member for Clark who said, 'We have heard you loud and clear and listened, and UTAS will stay in Sandy Bay'. That is what he said during the election. Then we had the other Liberal member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie, who denied that the new laws were designed to prevent the sale of Sandy Bay campus land, but provide an extra layer of scrutiny over what she referred to as a vital community asset. So, what is it?

What is it? Are they supporting housing or not? The member for Clark, Mr Behrakis, said that they might support housing in the future, they might support, in fact they do, there will be development on the site. But he cannot say if they support 2000 new homes. Yes, the

university withdrew their planning application and zoning changes. They did so because of the council that he was on. They did so because they have gone -

Mr Behrakis - They did so because of the election poll.

Mr WINTER - They did so because of the attitude from the council, Honourable Speaker. A council that had unanimously endorsed the city move had councillors and alderman like alderman Behrakis voting for and supporting the university move, then after more than a decade of moving, decided to change their mind. That is called sovereign risk. That is the issue with this government and with the policies.

We do not support the amendment because we support good policy. We do not support the sort of approach that is being proposed by the government. I hope that the Greens are true to their word and carefully scrutinise the proposed bill because it is a shocking thing for Tasmania, shocking thing for our education institution, the most critical education institution.

We do not support the amendment. I hope the House will not support it either.

The SPEAKER (Ms O'Byrne) The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 24

Mr Abetz
Ms Badger
Mr Barnett
Mr Bayley
Mr Behrakis
Ms Beswick
Ms Burnet
Mr Ellis
Mr Fairs
Mr Ferguson
Mr Garland
Ms Howlett
Mr Jaensch
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Pentland (Teller)
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Ms Rosol
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Wood
Dr Woodruff

NOES 9

Dr Broad (Teller)
Ms Brown
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms White
Mr Willie
Mr Winter

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.