

**For immediate release
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UTAS MOVE INTO CBD BY STEALTH CALLED OUT BY SAVE UTAS CAMPUS GROUP

CONFIRMATION that UTAS has banned all lectures with all the Sandy Bay lecture halls closed from the start of next year demonstrates how secretive and lacking in transparency is the institution and it needs to be called out.

The Save UTAS Campus group said it and several media outlets had been contacted by members of the public in emails and phone calls today about the university's plans for 2023.

Save UTAS Campus convenor Professor Pam Sharpe said UTAS's decision feeds into the university moving into the city by stealth.

"With no lectures of any kind, face-to-face or online from 2023, there is no need for lecture theatres and large spaces. And given no lecture halls are planned for the Forestry Building or other new buildings, it shows how sneaky and underhand are UTAS's actions."

Prof Sharpe said UTAS and the Vice Chancellor were under pressure from the forthcoming Legislative Council inquiry into the University of Tasmania Act 1992, the rezoning by the Hobart City Council of the Sandy Bay campus which is currently paused, and the vote by Hobart electors in October on whether relocation was supported.

"UTAS asked the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to change the wording of the question for voters to refer to 'consolidation' instead of 'relocation' to try to reinforce the impression of fait accompli. The TEC rejected this request," Prof Sharpe said.

"Vice Chancellor Rufus Black said the elector poll will not change his plans. Yet, in contradiction to this UTAS advised staff it will conduct a media campaign to encourage a YES vote that will include filming ageing buildings to give a false impression Sandy Bay buildings are hopelessly decrepit.

"In January, UTAS will move 3000 business and economics students into rented premises at the KPMG building where there is no parking. They will join other students already using rented CBD buildings with no parking. This while facilities at Sandy Bay are left empty.

"In the meantime, UTAS is conducting its so called 80-member panel consultation, referred to as the No Chance committee by cynics who heard the Vice Chancellor say there was "no chance" of the group causing him to change direction."

Prof Sharpe said the real purpose of the group was to improve the public's perception of UTAS confirmed when panel participants were advised its meetings would be filmed so

"It's also well-known Prof Black is under considerable pressure as he faces a period when UTAS Council will decide whether to renew his contract which expires early next year.

Prof Sharpe said the project may already be doomed because it relied on funds from a rezoned and liquidated Sandy Bay campus.

The rezoning has been paused likely because eight months after it was lodged with the Hobart City Council (HCC), UTAS has been unable to satisfy the HCC on more than 150 queries.

"It's clear UTAS's strategy now is to create the impression relocation is a fait accompli by prematurely moving thousands of students into rented CBD accommodation early next year, banning face-to-face lectures, and re-characterising 'relocation' as 'consolidation'.

"It's time for UTAS to come clean and stop its secretive advance into Hobart's CBD."

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