16 January 2014

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Integrity
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000

Dear Secretary,

Thank you for your letter dated 25 November 2013 inviting the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to provide the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity with a submission regarding the functions, powers and operations of the Integrity Commission, three years since the commencement of its operation. The University welcomes the opportunity to be engaged in this process.

It is the University’s submission that, given the size of the State of Tasmania and the low incidence to date of misconduct of the type contemplated by the Integrity Commission Act, it might be more beneficial for the Commission to focus more closely on its educative function, with the investigative function potentially being an unnecessary overlap with other agencies such as Tasmania Police and the State Ombudsman.

UTAS is ready and willing to assist in the performance of the educative function in relation to public officers, noting that there are several academics at the university who operate in this area. Such an education effort would focus on the ethical basis to issues of integrity, rather than a code and compliance mentality. A code and compliance approach is not supportive of ethical behaviour - to the contrary, it can be deeply corrosive of it. UTAS could assist the Commission in raising the level of understanding in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Belinda Webster
University Secretary