

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON MADELEINE OGILVIE MP

University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025

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Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

This Bill delivers on the Government's commitment to prevent the University of Tasmania from disposing of land at its Sandy Bay campus without the explicit approval of both Houses of Parliament. It also provides the flexibility for the University to retain a modern Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths precinct at Sandy Bay.

As Tasmania's only university, UTAS is central to our State's future – educating our young people, skilling our workforce, and sustaining the institutions on which Tasmanians rely.

Many Tasmanians have personal connections with UTAS – as students, alumni, employees, or through family and business ties. Like many members of this House, I studied at the University, and my family's links span three generations. It is part of the fabric of our community.

The University has a long history across Tasmania, with campuses in every region. The southern campus at Sandy Bay was built on land gifted to the University under the *University of Tasmania Act 1951*.

Members will be aware that UTAS began establishing a presence in the Hobart CBD in 2007. In 2019, it announced its intention to consolidate its southern campus in the CBD and redevelop Sandy Bay as a mixed-use precinct.

That proposal – set out in the 2021 Masterplan – attracted significant community opposition. In an elector poll conducted by the City of Hobart in October 2022, more than 74 per cent of voters opposed the relocation.

In response to those concerns, and as part of our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, the Government introduced legislation in June 2024 to amend the *University of Tasmania Act 1992*. That Bill required any disposal of Sandy Bay land to have the approval of both Houses, preventing unilateral action by the University.

In November 2024, the University announced it would retain a STEM precinct at Sandy Bay. This was a welcome development. Contemporary STEM facilities are critical to our State's growth. They will help us skill Tasmanians for the future, increase the competitiveness of our industries, and strengthen Tasmania's place in the national economy. Without this Bill, Tasmania risks falling behind — with modern facilities delayed until well into the 2030s.

On 28 November 2024, this House debated and passed the *University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025* with amendments. Those amendments supported the STEM precinct by excluding land above Churchill Avenue from the protections in the Bill and rezoning that land from Particular Purpose Zone 3 to Inner Residential. This rezoning is the most pragmatic way to enable the University to progress the STEM precinct, avoiding the lengthy Hobart City Council rezoning process.

The Bill passed this House and was tabled in the Legislative Council on 11 March 2025. However, following the State Election, it lapsed at prorogation on 11 June 2025.

The Bill before us today is consistent with the version passed by this House in November 2024. It includes the rezoning provisions, and Clause 7(3) makes clear that rezoning applies only to the defined parcels of land, still held by the University on both commencement day and Royal Assent, and that it cannot extend to land protected as “vested land.” This safeguard ensures that the rezoning mechanism operates only as intended.

In summary, this Bill strikes the right balance – protecting the public interest, respecting the University’s role as an education provider, and enabling the University to advance its STEM precinct at Sandy Bay.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.