



Andrew Wilkie MP  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR DENISON

19 APR 2017

The Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Premier  
11th Floor, 15 Murray Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Premier *Will*

I recently wrote to the Prime Minister to emphasise the benefits of the University of Tasmania's Hobart STEM proposal and to seek support for its funding. Please see attached for copies of that letter and the Prime Minister's response. This exchange of letters followed numerous other representations on the matter.

As the Tasmanian Premier, the ball is firmly in your court. The Prime Minister makes it clear that any request for funding of this vital project must be driven by the State Government and I anticipate you have acted by now as the Federal Budget is now less than three weeks away. However the tone of the Prime Minister's letter indicates to me that he is still waiting for a serious approach from the State. I truly hope this is not the case as this project, which has the unqualified backing of Infrastructure Australia, is too important to be treated with anything but the highest priority by your Government.

Please can you allay my concerns as it would be a tragedy for this project to fail for want of action by the State Government.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wilkie MP  
Independent Member for Denison



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: MC17-024339

16 APR 2017

Mr Andrew Wilkie MP  
Independent Member for Denison  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Wilkie

Thank you for your letter dated 2 March 2017 regarding the University of Tasmania's (UTAS) proposed Hobart STEM project and our recent discussion on the project.

I appreciate your point regarding the broader benefits of the Hobart STEM project and for conveying the objectives of the University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Peter Rathjen.

Promoting the uptake of STEM skills is a priority for the Government under the National Innovation and Science Agenda, to ensure Australians are equipped with the skills they need for the future.

The Coalition has made a significant commitment of \$150 million to UTAS for the relocation and expansion of the University's campuses in Launceston and Burnie. I look forward to UTAS submitting its detailed business case to Infrastructure Australia for assessment so that we can get on with delivering this important election commitment.

Any further request for Commonwealth funding for UTAS facilities will need to be driven by the State Government. Our policy is that all requests for Commonwealth support for major projects will be assessed for innovative financing in the first instance, including concessional loans, equity and value capture.

I am establishing an Infrastructure and Project Financing Agency in my portfolio to make this standard practice. The Agency will work across my Government, the private sector and the states to develop funding and financing solutions for landmark projects. As a more informed investor, the Commonwealth will deliver better returns for taxpayers, open up opportunities for private sector involvement and leverage better outcomes for the community.

Thank you again for your recent briefing and for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

MALCOLM TURNBULL

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02 MAR 2017

**Andrew Wilkie MP**  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR DENISON

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for giving me your time recently to brief you on the University of Tasmania's proposed Hobart STEM project. You would now be aware that the proposal is the only Tasmanian Infrastructure Australia Priority Project. As it is under active consideration for funding, I have two matters concerning the project I wish to point out.

Firstly, it would misconstrue the benefits of the proposal to see it only as an education project, with a subsequent call only on the education budget. On the contrary, Infrastructure Australia believe that, if realised, it would make a significant social, economic and environmental contribution to the regeneration of Hobart's CBD, and deliver transformational benefits for the whole of Tasmania. I bring this to your attention so that you are aware that the Hobart Science and Technology Precinct is an urban renewal project equally as much as an education project, and that funding should be considered in that broader context, most likely from the regional development budget.

In addition, the University of Tasmania's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Rathjen, asked me to make it clear to you that the Government's commitment to fund the project is his primary imperative, and that no money is needed immediately. Such a commitment would allow him to proceed confidently with preliminary works and planning. He advises me that the Government funding requirement would be approximately \$50 million a year over four years, not starting until fiscal year 2018/19. Consequently, the call on the Budget is not immediate but can be projected over the forward estimates.

I would be grateful for you to take these important matters into account in deciding funding for the project.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wilkie MP  
Independent Member for Denison

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