

21 FEBRUARY 2023 – MEDIA STATEMENT

TUSA Signs as the principal petitioner for the Empty Homes Levy Parliamentary Petition

On Friday 17th February, the TUSA State Council passed a motion to stand behind an Empty Homes Levy parliamentary petition.

The TUSA stand behind this petition due to the reality of the current situation that University of Tasmania students are facing, as well as the wider Tasmanian community.

The Tasmanian Housing Crisis is significantly impacting our community, and although the State Government has committed to building 10 000 new social and affordable homes for Tasmanians in need by 2032, the current rates of construction being at 200 homes per year simply does not cut the mustard. It leaves students and the more than 4,000 fellow Tasmanians on the social housing waitlist, for whom this is a current crisis, little respite in terms of addressing the issue in the immediate and short-term.

A prominent issue is the impact of the National Consumer Price Index. Seeing a 7.3% increase from Sept 2021 to Sept 2022, up from 3.1% in 2021 & 0.4% in 2020. Whilst the Tasmanian Weighted Median Rent Index has seen an 8.4% increase in 2022, on top of the 11.2% increase in 2021, and 6.1% in 2020.

Combining for a 25.7% increase since January 2020. Together, you can start to see how with this spiralling cost of living, we have ended up here today.

Meanwhile, on the students' side of things, key student supports such as Youth Allowance, AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY have only seen an indexation increase of 6.1% for 2023. This has left students needing to increase their hours of work outside of study in order to support themselves. For comparison, in 1984 Australian university students worked an average of 5 hours per week to support themselves, this increased to 14.4 by the year 2000. As we stand here today, UTAS students now work an average of 26.4 hours per week, that is a 0.66FTE job, alongside their studies.

The TUSA believe that any method through which truly affordable rentals can be created for University of Tasmania students, and the broader community, must be thoroughly investigated with an open mind.

To view the petition, visit:

<https://haepetitions.parliament.tas.gov.au/haepet/Home/PetitionDetails/108>

The petition closes on 17/05/2023.

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