Student Centre and Library FTAA Substantive Application

University Statement

Campus Environment



Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

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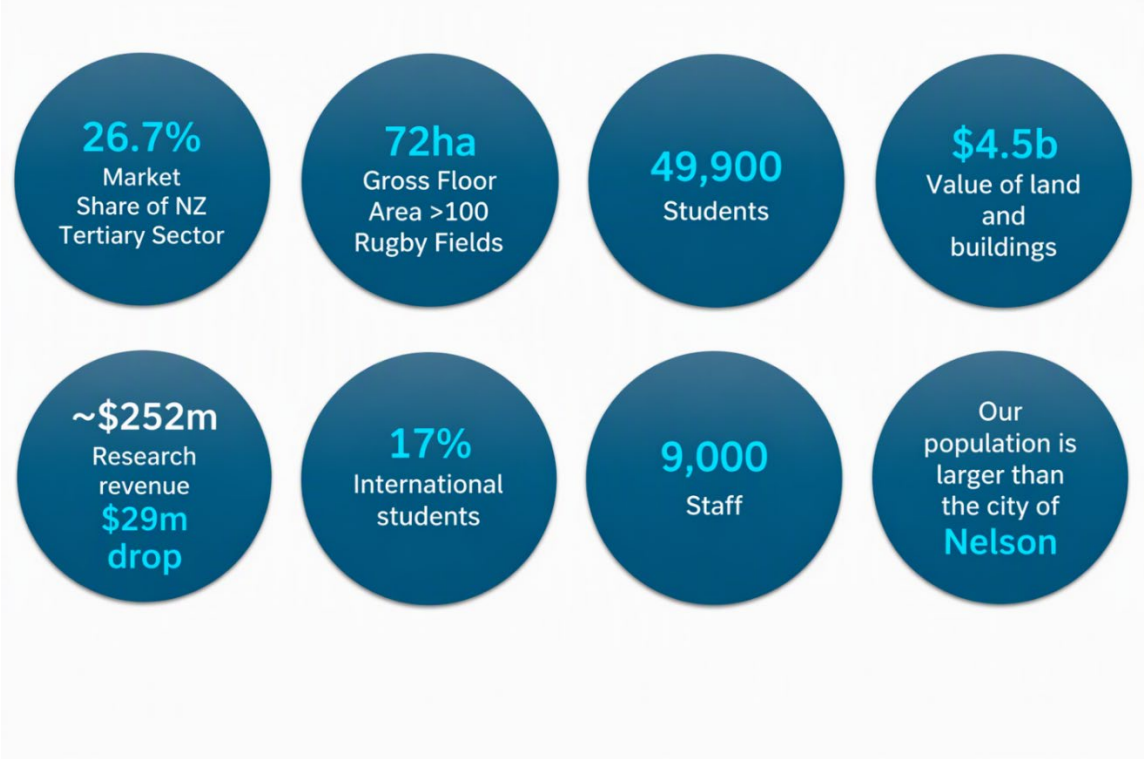
1. Executive Summary

1.1 The University of Auckland Student Centre and Library (the *Project*) was referred by the Minister of Infrastructure on 16 June 2026 under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, reflecting its recognised regional and national significance. In referring the Project, the Minister acknowledged its importance in enhancing the student experience, supporting academic success, strengthening research and collaboration, generating significant economic benefits, and contributing to a well-functioning and connected urban environment.

1.2 As New Zealand's highest ranked university, Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland has nearly 50,000 students, 17% of which are international students, employs approximately 9000 staff, and contributes significantly to Auckland's economy and New Zealand's knowledge and innovation sectors. Maintaining a globally competitive campus environment is essential to sustaining these outcomes and attracting domestic and international students.



1.3 In the QS World University Rankings 2027 the University is ranked 67th globally, placing it amongst the world's leading universities and reinforcing its position as New Zealand's highest ranked tertiary institution. It is vital to New Zealand's future that the University remains internationally competitive.

1.4 The University faces a critical need to upgrade its student-focused services and facilities. The Student Union Buildings were originally designed in 1963 to support a university of 6,000 - 7,000 students, whereas these spaces now serve a diverse population of nearly 50,000 students. This mismatch has led to significant challenges in capacity, quality, accessibility, and equity. Additionally, the existing General Library building is close to end of life and cannot be easily adapted to meet evolving student needs.

1.5 In response to those challenges the University has identified a new Student Centre and Library as a cornerstone project within the University's long-term Estate Strategy and City Campus Masterplan. These strategic frameworks establish a vision for a modern, connected, student-focused campus that supports excellence in teaching, learning, research, wellbeing, sustainability, and community engagement. Funding for the project is included within the Universities long-term capital plan.

1.6 The current Student Union buildings (B311 and B312) are ageing, undersized, and affected by substantial structural, compliance and building condition issues, including concrete degradation and seismic deficiencies. They are not able to be adapted in a way that would provide contemporary student facilities of an appropriate quality and capacity.

1.7 The Project will deliver a purpose-built Student Centre and Library and Plaza space that brings together key student-facing services, amenities and learning environments in a single, highly accessible location. The facility will provide a modern library, flexible study environments, teaching spaces including state-of-the-art super labs, student association and club spaces, food and retail offerings, and a range of informal social and collaborative spaces. Designed to be flexible and adaptable, it will meet current needs and will be able to respond to future changes in student expectations, technology and education delivery.

1.8 The integration of the library, teaching facilities, and super labs within a single development reinforces the University's commitment to learning, teaching, and academic excellence. The super labs will provide high-quality, flexible teaching environments that support growth in STEM disciplines, particularly within Science and Health Sciences programmes, while enabling more efficient use of teaching infrastructure. The consolidation of these functions also supports the longer-term objectives of the City Campus Masterplan by creating capacity and therefore opportunities for much needed refurbishment and optimisation of other academic buildings.

1.9 A comprehensive assessment of campus-wide development opportunities identified the existing Student Union and former Maidment Theatre site as the ideal location for the new building. The site occupies a strategic position at the centre of student activity, adjacent to key facilities including the Hiwa Recreation Centre, Kate Edger Information Commons (B315), Old Choral Hall (B104) and AUSA House (B322). Its redevelopment will help to improve connectivity with the CBD, establish a highly activated student precinct, improve integration with Albert Park and the city centre, and improve access to public transport, including to the recently opened Te Waihorotiu Central Rail Link Station.

1.10 While the University recognises that the existing Student Union buildings are a Category B historic heritage place under the Auckland Unitary Plan, detailed investigations concluded that redevelopment of the site would deliver significant benefit in terms of the University's long-term educational, operational and strategic requirements than retention-based options and the loss of heritage fabric in this instance is justified to achieve those outcomes. Redevelopment of the site has been identified as the only viable option capable of delivering the scale, functionality, accessibility and flexibility required to support future generations of students.

1.11 The Project represents a transformational investment in nationally significant tertiary education infrastructure that will support teaching, learning, research and workforce development for future generations. It will address critical infrastructure deficiencies, provide contemporary teaching environments, significantly enhance the student experience, improve operational efficiency, support future growth, strengthen Auckland's central city environment, and ensure that the University continues to be internationally competitive.

2. Background

2.1 The University of Auckland Student Centre and Library development (the Project) was approved as a referred project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (*FTAA*) by the Minister for Infrastructure on 16 June 2026.

2.2 The Minister's decision to refer the Project specifically recognised:

a) The regional and national impact of Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland (the *University*) and the key role that the Project will play in enhancing the student experience, fostering academic success and supporting research and collaboration.[1]

[1] Letter from Stephanie Frame, Manager – Fast-track Operations, *Section 28 – Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the University of Auckland Student Centre and Library project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024*, 16 June 2026, File ref: 26-BRF-01545-FTAA-2603-1193, (a)(i) (*Referral Notice*).

b) The significant economic benefits of the Project, including its ability to help sustain and potentially expand the University's already significant contribution to the Auckland regional economy and New Zealand's national education and knowledge economy.[2]

c) The contribution that the Project will make to a well-functioning urban environment, including its ability to deliver positive public realm, street activation and campus connectivity outcomes.[3]

2.3 The purpose of this statement is to provide further information and context relating to the Minister's findings in support of the substantive application that is being prepared for the Project. It addresses:

a) An overview of the University and its significant role in the Auckland region and in New Zealand's education and knowledge economy.

b) The University's overall approach to managing its estate.

c) Detail of the Project.

d) The University's masterplan for its City Campus and the way in which that has informed the Project.

e) Student facing services within the City Campus.

f) The importance of the Project to the University.

g) Project site and design considerations.

h) Benefits of the Project.

3. Overview of the University

3.1 Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland was established in 1883 as Auckland University College and has developed into New Zealand's largest and most comprehensive university. For more than 140 years, the University has played a central role in the advancement of education, research, innovation, and public service in Auckland and throughout New Zealand.

3.2 Today, the University is New Zealand's highest ranked university, with nearly 50,000 students currently enrolled and approximately 12,000 students graduating each year. It attracts students from across New Zealand and around the world, with students from approximately 100 countries contributing to a diverse and internationally connected campus community. International students often develop lifelong connections with New Zealand, whether through future residency or through ongoing economic, cultural, and professional ties.

3.3 The University is consistently recognised as New Zealand's highest-ranked university. In the QS World University Rankings 2027 it is ranked 67th globally, placing it amongst the world's leading universities. The University is also recognised internationally for its leadership in sustainability and social impact, ranking among the leading institutions globally across a range of environmental and societal measures.

3.4 The University is New Zealand's largest research organisation. More than 13,000 staff and postgraduate students are involved in research activity across a broad range of disciplines, attracting approximately $252 million in annual research funding. Research undertaken at the University contributes significantly to scientific advancement, innovation, social outcomes, public policy and economic development both nationally and internationally.

[2] Referral Notice, at (a)(iii).
[3] Referral Notice, at (a)(ii).

3.5 The University has a substantial international footprint, supported by research partnerships throughout the world and a significant international student population of approximately 8,500 students. These global connections enhance the University's teaching, research and innovation capability while also making an important contribution to Auckland's international profile and New Zealand's export education sector.

3.6 The University operates across a network of campuses and specialist facilities. Its three principal campuses are:

(a) the City Campus;

(b) the Grafton Campus; and

(c) the Newmarket Campus.

3.7 The University also maintains campuses in Whangārei (Te Tai Tokerau) and South Auckland (Te Papa Ako o Tai Tonga), together with specialist research facilities including the Leigh Marine Laboratory and the Goldie Estate Wine Science Centre on Waiheke Island.

3.8 Teaching and research activities are undertaken through six faculties, two large-scale research institutes and a number of specialist centres and institutes. Together these activities make the University one of New Zealand's most significant educational, scientific and research organisations.

3.9 The University makes a substantial contribution to the Auckland regional economy and New Zealand's wider education and knowledge economy. With annual revenue of approximately $1.6 billion and a workforce comprising many thousands of academic, professional and research staff, the University is one of the largest employers within Auckland's central city.

3.10 The University's economic contribution extends beyond direct employment and expenditure. The University plays a critical role in developing New Zealand's future workforce, including graduates in medicine, health sciences, engineering, education, law, business and science. Through its teaching activities, research outcomes, innovation partnerships, commercialisation programmes and international education activities, the University plays a significant role in supporting productivity, economic growth and workforce development throughout New Zealand.

3.11 The University is also a major generator of activity within Auckland's city centre. Its students, staff and visitors support local businesses, activate public spaces, and contribute significantly to demand for public transport and active transport networks. As such, the University is an important component of Auckland's urban environment and central city economy.

3.12 The University plays a critical role in supporting the Government's tertiary education priorities set out in the Ministry of Education’s Tertiary Education Strategy and the International Education Going for Growth Plan. In particular, it contributes to priorities of focused achievement, increased economic impact and innovation, increased access and participation, integration and collaboration, and critically, increasing the number of international students choosing New Zealand as a study destination. The International Education Going for Growth Plan, launched in July 2025, outlines the government’s vision to double the value of international education from $3.6 billion in 2024 to $7.2 billion by 2034. The University's ability to compete internationally for high-performing domestic and international students depends not only on education and qualification quality, but also on the quality of the campus experience and the facilities available to support student success. Contemporary learning environments, library facilities, social spaces, student support services and opportunities for collaboration are increasingly important factors influencing student choice and institutional competitiveness.

3.13 Against this backdrop, ongoing investment in the City Campus is essential to maintaining the University's position as New Zealand's leading university and ensuring it can continue to make a significant contribution to Auckland, and to New Zealand's tertiary education sector and the national knowledge economy.

4. The University Estate

4.1 The University's approach to the management and development of its complex physical estate containing $4.5 billion of land and buildings is set out in Te Rautaki Tūāpapa - The University of Auckland Estate Strategy 2021-2030. The strategy establishes a coordinated and future-focused framework for investment in, and stewardship of, the University's campuses, buildings, public spaces, infrastructure and landholdings.

4.2 Te Rautaki Tūāpapa has been developed to support the delivery of Taumata Teitei, the University's Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan. The strategy seeks to ensure that investment in the estate contributes to:

a) excellence in education and student experience;

b) world-leading research and innovation outcomes;

c) meaningful partnerships and engagement;

d) high-quality and equitable user experiences across physical and digital environments;

e) environmental sustainability and resilience; and

f) the creation of a distinctive sense of place that celebrates Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Ao Māori and the Pacific.

4.3 The University estate represents a significant and complex portfolio of physical assets that support the University's core functions of teaching, learning, research, innovation, engagement and service. The estate extends beyond buildings to include campuses, research facilities, libraries, student accommodation, public spaces, transport connections, landscapes and the broader environments through which students, staff and visitors experience the University.

4.4 The Estate Strategy recognises that the University's physical environment is a critical enabler of its strategic objectives. The quality, functionality, accessibility and sustainability of the estate directly influence the student experience, research performance, staff attraction and retention, community engagement and institutional reputation.

4.5 The Estate Strategy is guided by a series of core principles, including the provision of a distinctive sense of place, stewardship of heritage and environmental resources, flexibility and adaptability of the built environment, operational effectiveness and the creation of welcoming and inclusive spaces for all users.

4.6 The City Campus represents the historic and operational heart of the University. The campus contains many of the University's most significant teaching, learning, research, cultural and administrative facilities and accommodates the majority of the University's student population.

4.7 The City Campus extends across approximately 23 hectares and comprises more than 120 buildings, including a significant number of scheduled and heritage-listed structures. The campus contains approximately 424,000m² of University- floor area (excluding student accommodation).

4.8 The City Campus is home to the faculties of Arts and Education, Business, Engineering and Design, Law, and Science, as well as the Auckland Bioengineering Institute, general library, student support services, club spaces, student accommodation, University administration and major cultural facilities such as Waipapa Marae and Fale Pasifika.

4.9 The University has been progressing a very successful program of redevelopment of the City Campus over recent years. Major projects include the Engineering and Science developments, Waipārūrū Hall, Te Pūtahi Tangata (B201), the Hiwa Recreation Centre and the recently completed conservation and refurbishment of Old Choral Hall (B104). Many of these buildings have received recognition for their design quality and performance. This includes the Hiwa Recreation centre winning the Property Council Supreme Award in 2025 and Te Pūtahi Tangata (B201) being recognised as New Zealand's highest scoring GreenStar 6 building. A new Law and Performing Arts building (B230) is currently under construction.

4.10 Notwithstanding this investment further substantial renewal and redevelopment is required across the estate. A number of significant facilities are nearing end of life and no longer meet contemporary expectations for accessibility, technology integration, operational efficiency or user experience. In addition, changing teaching methodologies, evolving student expectations and continued growth in student numbers necessitate further investment. The Student Centre and Library is seen as essential for the continued transformation of the estate.

4.11 The University is the steward of a rich and diverse heritage estate. The City Campus contains 22 individually scheduled historic heritage places, including buildings of both national and international significance. Along with the investment in new buildings the University has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the conservation and enhancement of these heritage assets through substantial investment in their protection, restoration and adaptive reuse. Recent projects include the sensitive conservation and refurbishment of the Old Choral Hall, conservation works to the Clocktower Building, and the ongoing restoration of 5 Alten Road. Planned future investment includes major conservation works to Old Government House, the Clocktower, the Thomas Building and the George Mason Biology Building, all of which are scheduled historic heritage places in the Auckland Unitary Plan, and several of which are recognised as holding significant national heritage value through their inclusion on the New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangi Kōrero.

4.12 The University recognises that heritage is a defining element of the character, identity and sense of place of the City Campus. At the same time, it considers heritage stewardship within the context of the wider estate, taking a holistic and strategic approach that prioritises investment where it will deliver the greatest long-term benefit. This approach seeks to balance the protection and enhancement of heritage values with the need to provide contemporary, safe, functional facilities capable of supporting the key teaching, learning, research and student life functions of the university.

5. The Project

5.1 The University is seeking to create a world-class Student Centre and Library on the site of the current Student Union buildings and the adjoining vacant site (previously occupied by the Maidment Theatre). It will also better connect the University with the city and provide a recognisable public entrance.

5.2 The proposed building has Gross Floor Area of 19,568m^2 accommodating a broad range of complementary functions including:

a) reception, welcoming and exhibition space;

b) student association and club facilities;

c) new library and study spaces;

d) bookable student learning and collaboration spaces;

e) teaching and learning environments including flat floor teaching spaces and super labs;

f) a café;

g) informal social and gathering spaces; and

h) storage facilities.

5.3 The Project has been designed to provide large flexible floor plates capable of evolving in response to changing student expectations, technological developments and future educational requirements.

5.4 Importantly, the Project will support the University's efforts to maintain its position as a leading international institution by providing facilities consistent with the expectations of students choosing between major universities globally.

5.5 Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has provided a letter of formal support for the Project. A copy of this letter has been provided with the substantive application. The letter recognises the significant benefits of the Project, stating that:

"The Project will provide modern, inclusive, and accessible spaces that better reflect the needs and expectations of current and future students. The design of the new Student Centre and Library and Tē Tūātea has been informed by engagement with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, with the cultural narrative, developed in partnership with Haumi, integrated into the design and physical elements of the development. The Project will not only create a vibrant heart for campus life and significantly enhance the student experience, but we consider it will also contribute to a campus environment that reflects and celebrates the cultural identity and significance of the place.

We believe the Project will provide substantial and enduring benefits for Tāmaki Makaurau, its communities, and future generations of tauira."

5.6 The University considers the Project to be a critical enabling investment in the future of the City Campus. The Project provides a high quality new building asset which continues the transformation of the City Campus, addresses existing asset and operational challenges and provides capacity to enable further renovation, upgrade and enhancement of the wider estate.

6. The City Campus Masterplan

6.1 The City Campus Masterplan 2025-2045 establishes the long-term vision for the future development of the City Campus and provides the framework through which the objectives of the Estate Strategy will be implemented. Extracted excerpts from the City Campus Masterplan executive summary have been provided with the substantive application and the below images are sourced from those excerpts.

6.2 The Masterplan responds to the challenges and opportunities associated with maintaining a globally competitive university within an urban environment. It identifies a coordinated programme of investment directed towards enhancing the quality of teaching and learning environments, improving the student experience, strengthening connections across the campus and city, and creating a more sustainable and resilient campus environment.

6.3 The Masterplan is informed by tangata whenua values and recognises the University's responsibility to enhance the mana and mauri of place while strengthening connections between people, culture, learning and the natural environment.

6.4 The Masterplan identifies five transformational initiatives that will guide the future evolution of the City Campus:

a) Upgrade student experience – Enable a beating heart within the campus

b) Consolidating, upgrading and improving teaching and learning environments

c) Improving open space and connections throughout the campus

d) Enhancing the park like qualities of sector 100, creating a heritage precinct

e) Creating the live-in campus

Note: indicative new building envelopes



Key

- Key new buildings
- Existing building upgrade
- Heritage upgrade
- Student living partnership opportunity
- Existing building removal
- Existing building

Transformational initiatives

Upgrade Student Experience - Enable a beating student heart within the campus
Development of a student hub including a new Student Centre and Library and an upgrade to the Kate Edger Information Commons (B315)

Consolidating, upgrading, and improving teaching and learning environments
B230, new teaching and learning centre, new gateway building, architecture school and conference centre refurbishments, engineering building tower refurbishment

Improving open space and connections throughout the campus
Upgrades to Princes Street, the pedestrianisation of Alfred Street, a new mid-block crossing on Symonds Street, pedestrian upgrades to Alten Road and the enhancement of the John Hood Plaza

Enhancing the park-like qualities of sector 100, creating a Heritage Precinct
Building removals and heritage upgrades

Creating the live-in campus
New student living partnership opportunities in sector 400 and 800

Note: indicative new building envelopes

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- Key new buildings
- Existing building upgrade
- Heritage upgrade
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Enhancing the park-like qualities of sector 100, creating a Heritage Precinct
Building removals and heritage upgrades

Creating the live-in campus
New student living partnership opportunities in sector 400 and 800



6.5 The diagrams above illustrate how the masterplan initiatives have been prioritised over the period 2025-2045. New buildings, major renovations, heritage upgrades and building removals are identified. It is important to note there are no clear sites available for new buildings within the campus due to its constrained urban setting.

6.6 A central theme of the Masterplan is the creation of a connected and highly activated student-focused campus. The Masterplan recognises that the quality of the student experience is significantly influenced by the provision of high-quality study environments, student support services, social spaces, recreation opportunities and accessible public realm.

6.7 At the core of the Masterplan is an intentional upgrading of the student experience centred on a new Student Centre and Library. The Masterplan identifies this project as the most significant initiative required to establish a genuine social, academic and cultural centre for the campus.

6.8 The proposed Student Centre and Library is intended to operate alongside the adjoining student focussed buildings to create a cohesive and amenity-rich precinct that supports student wellbeing, engagement, learning and belonging.

6.9 The Masterplan also seeks to improve the quality and connectivity of public spaces throughout the campus. Key initiatives include the pedestrianisation of Alfred Street, enhancement of key plazas and courtyards, improved walking and cycling connections and stronger integration with Albert Park and the surrounding city centre.

6.10 The Masterplan takes a holistic approach to heritage and looks for opportunities to respect and enhance the setting the University's most significant heritage assets, including the ClockTower, Old Government House, Old Choral Hall, AUSA House and the Barracks Wall, including through significant heritage restoration, while acknowledging some of the wider strategic requirements for the university to deliver quality environments for our students may have some impact on other assets.

6.11 The University has also signalled through the Masterplan process the desire to remove some non-heritage buildings (B113 and B114) to improve the setting of some of our most important buildings. The additional floor area being created within the Project will help enable these future removals. There is an exciting opportunity to create a heritage precinct within the campus to better celebrate this important group of heritage buildings which sit within the north-eastern sector of the University (sector 100), through their presentation in a more open park like setting.

6.12 The Student Centre and Library Project is the key project through which the Masterplan's objectives will be achieved. Without the delivery of this project, many of the broader student experience, public realm and campus connectivity outcomes sought by the Masterplan would be significantly compromised.

7. Student Facing Services within the City Campus

7.1 University-wide student-facing services are currently dispersed across several buildings within the City Campus, primarily B311, B315, B310 (Hiwa), B322 (Auckland University Students' Association House) and B109. Building B312 is currently vacant and is not in an occupiable condition.



7.2 B311 and B312 were constructed in 1963 as part of a Student Union complex that included the Maidment Theatre. At that time, the University accommodated approximately 7,000 students. The University's student population now approaches 50,000 students, highlighting the significant mismatch between the scale of the original facilities and the needs of the contemporary campus community. B311 has a Usable Floor Area of 2,998.2m^2. B312 has a Usable Floor Area of 2,244m^2.

7.3 The buildings are characterised by exposed structural concrete and steel, which are now subject to ongoing material degradation and offer very poor levels of performance. They also require substantial structural and compliance upgrades that would materially alter their character.

7.4 In 2022 the University had to remove an atrium roof from B311 as it was considered to be unsafe due to corrosion, A temporary roof was installed

7.5 B311 has historically been the centre of student life within the campus. It contains commercial food tenancies, student services and houses equity spaces run by the Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA). In their current state, the buildings provide poor levels of amenity for students and occupants. In addition, the layout and configuration of the buildings offer limited opportunity to create fit for purpose modern student spaces.

8. The importance of the Project to the University

8.1 The Project will provide appropriate modern facilities to support a contemporary student experience which is an essential element of a high performing, competitive university.

8.2 There is a clear need to enhance student experience as the scale, quality and functionality of student spaces have not kept up with student demand and expectations. In particular, condition assessments have identified significant

shortcomings in the Student Union buildings (B311 and B312) which are in a significantly deteriorated state, and the General Library (B109) has been highlighted as having major building issues and poor condition and functionality.

8.3 The need for the Project arises from a combination of strategic, operational and asset management drivers. In particular there is a need to:

a) Improve the standard, functionality, accessibility, capacity and quality of student focussed space, including teaching space, to support a significantly larger and more diverse student body.

b) Provide sufficient floor area to enable the general library (including teaching spaces) to be relocated centrally within the campus. The library currently supports tens of thousands of students and many staff and cannot realistically be decanted to other existing spaces within the University. The delivery of a replacement library facility is therefore a prerequisite to future decisions regarding the existing General Library building.

c) Enhance the student precinct through a more coherent urban structure and improved public realm, including the creation of a new Quad to provide open space for University events, strengthen connections to Albert Park and the CBD, and reinforce the University's integration with the city.

d) Support the continuing evolution of the City Campus student experience through investment in new facilities, which will then create additional space and flexibility to support upgrades to other existing buildings and heritage conservation initiatives. Ensuring the campus can be maintained and remains fit for purpose and capable of supporting teaching, learning, research and student life for future generations.

8.4 The University is targeting completion and occupation of the new Student Centre and Library by Q3 2031.

8.5 The Auckland University Students' Association has provided its support to the application for the proposed new Student Centre and Library (including the demolition of the existing buildings) to be considered under the FTAA. A copy of this letter has been provided with the substantive application. The letter highlights that:

"AUSA currently occupies and manages a range of key student spaces within the existing Student Union Building, including Hineahuone, O Lagi Atea Moana (Cultural Space), Queerspace, Women's Space, Shadows Bar, Craccum and associated student facilities.

As an organisation deeply and directly connected to the daily experience of students on campus, we strongly support the redevelopment of this area and the creation of a new integrated Student Centre and Library. We consider this Project to be one of the most significant investments in student life, wellbeing, learning, and community undertaken by the University in recent decades.

The Project will provide modern, inclusive, and accessible spaces that better reflect the needs and expectations of current and future students. By bringing together learning, study, collaboration, support services, social spaces, and student activities within a purpose-built facility, the development will create a vibrant heart for campus life and significantly enhance the overall student experience at the University."

8.6 A detailed Building Condition Memorandum by Beca (dated 26 July 2026) has been provided with the substantive application and confirms that significant deficiencies remain with the buildings including:

a) Instances of severe cracking caused by Alkali Silica Reaction (ASR), informally known as 'concrete cancer'. This is a serious systemic construction defect requiring exposed concrete elements to either be removed or be completely protected from moisture. This work would significantly alter the appearance of the buildings and/or require ongoing maintenance.

b) Deficient Seismic capacity of parts of B311. To achieve the University's minimum standard, these buildings require substantial strengthening such as application of carbon fibre alongside intrusive additional walls and

vertical bracing elements. This would compromise the appearance and function of the facility and introduce facade weathertightness risks.

c) Link Bridges are non-compliant with the New Zealand Building Code. A practical approach to remediation could be to remove part/all of the link bridges and replace with safety barriers compliant with relevant codes, noting this would also significantly alter their appearance and reduce functionality and connectivity.

8.7 The Memorandum also notes that significant compromises would need to be made to incorporate these structures into any future development. These compromises would include:

a) Significant impact on usable GFA, due to the inefficient building configuration.

b) Floor level discontinuities as the new development will have greater floor to floor dimensions and a different basement level.

c) Inability to provide building services to modern standards (e.g. HVAC).

d) Reduced flexibility for future uses due to small floor plates and low floor clearances, and provision for access and maintenance of existing structure for ongoing ASR symptoms.

8.8 Not only are the buildings in a poor physical state and not able to be modified to meet the university space and quality requirements, they also occupy important strategic site located right at the centre of the campus, directly adjoining other important student buildings and with access to open space and the wider city centre.

8.9 Additionally, the General Library is approaching the end of its functional and operational life and has been identified as experiencing significant functional and building performance issues, including issues, with air and water tightness and constraints to increasing occupancy in the building. There is a need for a long-term replacement of this building. However, the building can continue to operate in the medium term, and in particular lecture theatres can continue to be used until a replacement building is completed, however with increasing operational and maintenance challenges and limited ability to adapt to changing student needs. It has a gross floor area of 16,345m^2.

8.10 The General Library cannot be comprehensively redeveloped while continuing to provide library services to the campus. Accordingly, a replacement library facility must first be developed before long-term decisions regarding B109 can be implemented.

8.11 While the role of libraries continues to evolve as online resources become increasingly prevalent, demand for high-quality library and study environments remains strong. Contemporary university libraries continue to play an important role as destinations for focused study, collaboration, learning support and academic engagement. The Project responds to these needs through the creation of a new purpose-built Student Centre and Library that will provide a contemporary destination for learning, study, collaboration, student support and campus life.

9. Project site and design considerations

9.1 The selection of the Project site was informed by the City Campus Masterplan process and formed part of a comprehensive assessment of the University's long-term spatial, operational and strategic requirements.

9.2 The location was not identified in isolation but emerged through consideration of the opportunities, constraints and future needs of the wider campus, including student movement patterns, existing facilities, heritage settings, public realm outcomes and opportunities for future redevelopment.

9.3 A key principle of the future state is to retain a strong, centralised student activity presence, leveraging opportunities presented by locations such as Hiwa, B315, B104 and B109. This group of buildings offer strategic proximity and

convenience, supporting a coherent and legible student heart that encourages activation, engagement, and ease of access.

9.4 Through development of the City Campus Masterplan, a range of potential redevelopment opportunities were considered across the campus. No other site otherwise offered the critical combination of proximity to existing student facilities, ability to create a centralised student hub, connection to the wider CBD, operational feasibility, and capacity to accommodate a replacement library and student centre. The Student Union and Maidment Theatre site was therefore selected as the only location that could meet all of the necessary criteria.

9.5 The site occupies a highly visible location at the intersection of Princes Street and Alfred Street and sits at the meeting point of key student destinations including the Hiwa Recreation Centre, Kate Edger Information Commons, AUSA House and Old Choral Hall. Its location supports the creation of an integrated student precinct that will function as the social and cultural heart of the City Campus while also establishing a welcoming "front door" to the University.

9.6 The site also provides the opportunity to create a substantial new Tē Tūātea / plaza and strengthen pedestrian connections between Albert Park, Princes Street, Symonds Street and the wider city centre. In particular this location will support better connection to public transport and active mode investment including the Te Waihorotiu City Rail Link Station which is anticipated to be an important transport connection for our students and staff as the University is a major driver of public transport usage in the city.

9.7 In determining the final development approach, the University investigated a range of options for the existing Student Union complex including:

(a) complete restoration and adaptive reuse;

(b) partial demolition and partial redevelopment; and

(c) full redevelopment.

9.8 These options were assessed against a broad range of criteria including whether they provided the required footprint, user experience, accessibility, adaptability, project cost, whole-of-life expenditure, service delivery outcomes and heritage considerations.

9.9 While the University acknowledges the heritage significance of the existing Student Union buildings (Category B historic heritage place under the Auckland Unitary Plan) and recognises their important role in the history of student life on campus, detailed investigations concluded that retention-based options would not meet the University's long-term functional, operational and strategic requirements and in particular provide a high quality contemporary experience for our students. In particular:

a) Retention of the existing buildings would not provide for the scale of activities required for a significantly larger student population.

b) Retention of the existing buildings would significantly constrain the delivery of a replacement central library. The existing building footprint, configuration and structural constraints would not enable the provision of the large, flexible floorplates required for a contemporary university library capable of meeting the needs of a student population approaching 50,000.

c) Retention would materially compromise the public realm and campus connectivity improvements envisioned through the City Campus Masterplan. In particular, it would limit opportunities to create an enlarged student plaza capable of accommodating a wide range of student activities and events, reduce opportunities to improve pedestrian movement through the site, and prevent the creation of important visual and physical connections between Symonds Street, the campus core and Albert Park.

d) Redevelopment of the site provides an opportunity to enhance the setting of adjacent heritage assets, including AUSA House, which is recognised as a Category B historic heritage place under the Auckland Unitary Plan and is also listed by Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. Replacement of the existing Student Union buildings will improve the visibility, appreciation and wider setting of this heritage resource.

e) If the buildings were to be retained, they would require substantial intervention to address identified structural, durability, accessibility and compliance deficiencies. This would involve significant alteration to the existing buildings, including seismic strengthening, remediation of concrete degradation, and substantial upgrading to meet contemporary building standards which would fundamentally change their character and appearance. Even with a significant investment in the existing buildings there would still be a higher ongoing maintenance and capital investment requirement than an equivalent new build and the expected useful life of the buildings even post remediation would be limited due to inherent weaknesses in the design and construction of the building.

f) Even following significant investment and upgrading, a retained and adapted building would not provide the scale, flexibility, accessibility or range of spaces required of a contemporary Student Centre. Additional facilities would need to be provided elsewhere on the campus, reducing the benefits associated with the co-location of student services and undermining the objective of creating a cohesive student precinct at the heart of the City Campus.

g) For these reasons, the University concluded that retention-based options would not provide the enable the development of a facility that could deliver the educational, operational, student experience, public realm and strategic outcomes sought through the Project. Redevelopment of the site therefore represents the most effective and enduring solution for meeting the University's current and future needs.

9.10 The Project therefore involves demolition of the existing B311 and B312 buildings to deliver a purpose-built facility capable of meeting the University's long-term requirements while maximising opportunities to improve the surrounding public realm and student experience.

9.11 The University has not reached this position lightly. The heritage values associated with the existing Student Union buildings have been carefully considered throughout the development of the Project and the assessment of alternatives. The University recognises the contribution these buildings make to the history and identity of the campus. However, following detailed investigation, the University concluded that redevelopment of the site is necessary to support our student community and achieve the educational, operational, student experience and public realm outcomes sought through the Project.

10. Benefits of the Project

10.1 The Student Centre and Library Project will deliver substantial educational, social, economic, urban development, connectivity and national benefits that extend well beyond the immediate project site.

10.2 In particular it will:

a) Enhance the student experience by providing a high-quality focal point for student life within the City Campus, creating a vibrant and highly activated destination where students can study, meet, participate in campus activities and engage with the wider University community.

b) Increase the capacity and quality of learning environments by providing additional study, teaching, super lab and collaborative spaces to accommodate continued growth in student numbers and support the renewal of other teaching facilities across the campus.

c) Provide a contemporary Student Centre and Library with flexible and adaptable spaces designed to support a wide range of learning styles, educational activities, individual study and group collaboration.

d) Improve accessibility, equity and inclusion by providing facilities designed to contemporary standards and capable of meeting the needs of a diverse student population, including students with differing cultural, accessibility and wellbeing requirements.

e) Strengthen the University's international competitiveness by providing facilities and student environments of an appropriate standard, that compare well to equivalent universities and meet the expectations of prospective domestic and international students. Therefore supporting the University's position as a leading global institution.

f) Generate significant public realm and campus activation benefits through the creation of a new campus plaza, improved pedestrian connections, enhanced integration with Albert Park and Auckland's city centre, and stronger connections to public transport infrastructure, including Te Waihorotiu Station.

g) Support the long-term renewal of the University estate by replacing ageing and increasingly constrained facilities with adaptable, future-focused infrastructure capable of responding to changing educational, technological and operational requirements.

h) Create a clearly identifiable student precinct, enabling the co-location of student-facing services, making support, advice and wellbeing resources more accessible and easier to navigate and supporting wider initiatives intended to improve connectivity, amenity and activation across the City Campus.

10.3 The Project is a nationally significant investment in tertiary education infrastructure that will support teaching, learning, research, innovation and workforce development for decades to come. It addresses critical deficiencies in existing facilities, enables the continued renewal of the City Campus, strengthens Auckland's city centre, supports Government objectives for international education and economic growth, and delivers substantial public benefits that extend well beyond the University itself. The Project is therefore strongly aligned with both the purpose and intent of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 and warrants timely approval.