

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Focus on assisting people with a disability for award-winning social work PhD student

Thirty social workers are converging on Hobart this week (Monday 18 and Tuesday 19) for a Field Educators workshop.

This concludes a statewide training program offered over the past week.

The *Social Work Student Field Placements: Providing an Integrated Learning Environment* workshop is a joint UTAS and Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW, Tas branch) event. This project was possible due to funding made available by Health Workforce Australia as an Australian Government Initiative.

Tuesday 19 March is also World Social Work Day, the perfect time for presenting the AASW Tasmanian Branch Social Work Student of the Year award.

UTAS Social Work PhD candidate, Chris Brophy, will be presented with the award at the workshop.

The award is given for the best academic results in the final year of Social Work studies.

Chris, who is in the first year of his PhD, will conduct a series of interviews to investigate how disabled people, who identify as gay or lesbian, experience the social work relationship.

“I have worked in the area of disability for some years and noticed a gap in research and practice around disability and sexuality.

“My aim is to contribute to the improvement of social work research and practice- to address social injustice and inequality,” he said.

“This award is a nice acknowledgement and a good way of raising the profile and importance of social work.”

Chris aims to one day become a social work academic.

Tracey Turner, from the Health Workforce Australia Social Work Project located within the UTAS Social Work Program, said the workshop will assist field educators (those who provide social work students' professional experience placements) to hone their skills in providing an integrated student learning environment.

“As field educators often work in stressful and complex environments, it’s important they have the best information and tools for providing a quality student placement,” she said.

“Supporting students to gain the skills they require to become a social worker is vital, both for them and the people they will assist when they enter the workforce.”

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