

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Dementia care degree a world first**

The World Health Organisation has highlighted dementia as a public health priority. It is predicted that there will be approximately one million Australians suffering from dementia by 2050.

In recognition of the growing number of people who will be diagnosed with dementia the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre in the Faculty of Health Science at the University of Tasmania is offering the world's first Associate Degree in Dementia Care.

The Associate Degree promotes professional development and career enhancement for employees of the aged care industry by providing a national online course, purpose-written for aged care workers.

Co-Director of the Wicking Dementia Centre Professor Andrew Robinson's vision is to provide a framework of research, education and care strategies to prepare Australia for the upcoming epidemic of dementia cases.

"Understanding the trajectory and biological basis of dementia forms the basis of our educational programs aimed at improving the quality of care for people with dementia," Professor Robinson said. "By offering the Associate Degree in Dementia Care to care workers, in particular, we are taking positive steps toward up-skilling a critical part of our health workforce, in preparation for what we know will be a challenging future for society as a whole."

The course informs students about concepts including: normal ageing, risk factors, diseases that cause dementia, pathology, staging and progression, and practical strategies to care for people with dementia, including management of challenging situations and behaviours.

Dr Andrea Carr, Course Coordinator, added: "Although the course is primarily designed for care workers, we have people from a range of backgrounds currently undertaking the course, including registered nurses, aged care facility management personnel and family members of people with dementia. The response from students to date has been overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting feeling empowered by being able to apply what they are learning with confidence."

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