

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Wednesday, 15 June 2016

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## Who parkruns? Unlocking the potential of free community running and walking events

Regular physical activity is essential for preventing chronic diseases, yet only 30% of Tasmanians exercise adequately for good health.

University of Tasmania researchers Dr Meredith Nash (Sociology) and Dr Verity Cleland (Menzius Institute for Medical Research) are investigating whether parkrun is a useful way to encourage Tasmanians to become more active.

Parkrun is a global network of free, weekly timed 5km runs/walks in public parks. Tasmania currently hosts parkrun events in Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport.

Drs. Nash and Cleland are looking for current Tasmanian parkrunners to complete an online survey to find out important information about their health and their reasons for participating in parkrun.

“Understanding the reasons for physical activity participation among Tasmanians is a fundamental first step in developing approaches to improve population health and wellbeing,” Dr Nash said.

“Parkrun is notable because it is inclusive and has minimal barriers to participation – it is free and requires no previous experience with running,” Dr Nash said.

“As a mass participation community event, Dr. Cleland and I believe that parkrun may have significant untapped potential for public health gain in the state.

“Studies of parkrun in the UK, for instance, have revealed that it is particularly attractive to women and older/overweight adults because the inclusive atmosphere is encouraging for new exercisers.

The survey is now online at <https://www.facebook.com/parkrunTasmaniaStudy/>.

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:**

Dr. Meredith Nash and Dr. Verity Cleland will be available for interview, photographs and filming at **11am, Wednesday 15 June** outside the University of Tasmania Sandy Bay campus's Centenary Building on Grosvenor Crescent (grid reference D4 on the attached map).

For media enquiries, please contact Dr. Meredith Nash on 0423 303 524 or Dr. Verity Cleland on 0414 752 807.

**Information released by:**

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: (03) 6226 2124

Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)