

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Renowned expert on aged care mental health to speak in Hobart**

Hobart health professionals will hear a renowned expert in aged care mental health this **Thursday 28 August** as part of a UTAS School of Pharmacy research project on the use of sedatives in nursing homes.

Professor John Snowden AM, director of Psychogeriatrics for Central Sydney, and Associate Clinical Professor at Sydney University, will present general practitioners, pharmacists and nursing staff with an overview of his research in Sydney's aged care homes.

The seminar, supported by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Tasmanian Branch) and the Southern Tasmania Division of General Practice, will be held at the Henry Jones Art Hotel.

The event will assist the School of Pharmacy's Reducing Use of Sedatives (ReDUSE) project, which aims to reduce the use of benzodiazepines (sleeping tablets) and anti-psychotics in nursing homes, and promote best practice among health professionals.

The ReDUSE project has already assessed that Tasmanian nursing home residents are prescribed these medications at a higher rate than in Sydney nursing homes.

Prof Snowdon is regarded as one of Australia's foremost experts on mental health in the aged. He was the founding chair of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Faculty of Psychiatry of Old Age, and has authored more than 100 articles in medical and psychiatric journals on topics that include late-life depression and nursing home psychiatry.

The RedUSE project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement through the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement Grants Program managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

### **Further information and to arrange interviews:**

Juanita Westbury, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Tas Branch) PhD scholar on (03) 6226 1966 or 0405 519 402.

Professor Gregory Peterson, supervisor, UTAS School of Pharmacy, (03) 6226 2197

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