

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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Attention: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Tasmanian academic co-edits a prominent Australian rural health textbook**

While Australians have one of the highest living standards in the developed world, there are health discrepancies between those living in metropolitan and rural areas. A Textbook of Australian Rural Health is one of the very few textbooks written in Australia specifically for students, educators and professionals with an interest in rural health or a commitment to working in a rural setting.

The textbook, co-edited by UTAS Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick and University of Melbourne Prof Siaw-Teng Liaw, was earlier launched by the Minister of Health Nicola Roxon in Canberra.

A/Prof Sue Kilpatrick said, “There are many factors contributing to the urban-rural differences. A major reason is distance from health services. As well there is a 20 year difference in average life expectancy between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians and two-thirds of Indigenous Australians live in the rural areas.”

The Textbook describes how rural health professionals and rural communities are working towards healthy rural communities, and covers some of the specific relevant issues and challenges facing health professionals practising in rural and remote communities.

“The University of Tasmania is among the major contributors to this book. Of the 15 chapters, six are co-authored by UTAS academics with subjects ranging from population health, diversity of cultures, supporting rural health professionals,

strengthening interprofessional practice, health services for refugees, e-health to rural connectivity,” continued A/Prof Kilpatrick.

“Compared to other states, Tasmania has a higher proportion of population living in regional and rural areas. Thus, a robust rural health program is pivotal in helping improve the health outcomes of our population.

“This textbook is designed for students and educators in both teaching university and rural placement facilities.”

Copies of the textbook have been sent to the state and national libraries, UTAS library and other Tasmanian key stakeholders in rural health and primary health care.

The publication was produced by the Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN) through funds from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing. ARHEN represent the University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) through national coordination for the 11 UDRH. The UDRHs collectively represent an expertise in rural health that is unique and unparalleled in Australia.

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