

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New international travel scholarship for students who defer 'gap' year

The University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor, Professor Daryl Le Grew, has announced a new international travel scholarship program for the current cohort of year 12 students who enrol at UTAS in 2008.

The program will provide up to \$500,000 per annum in scholarships and will support up to 150 students to undertake overseas travel each year from 2009.

Professor Le Grew said that the main target for the scholarships was the increasingly large group of high achieving students who take a 'gap year' to travel overseas after completing year 12.

"While we recognise the value of international travel for students, we believe the benefits will be maximised if it is undertaken and supported as part of an overall university experience rather than immediately after Year 12," Professor Le Grew said.

"UTAS has a strong commitment to its internationalisation agenda and this scheme is another step in supporting the development of graduates who are able to demonstrate a global perspective and inter-cultural competence in their discipline areas."

Professor Le Grew said that the scholarships would be available to students who enrol at UTAS in the year after they finish year 12 and then complete at least one year of an undergraduate degree. The scholarships will support up to one year of travel overseas.

Scholarships would be valued at up to \$3500 with part being paid in advance to help meet travel costs and the balance payable on the resumption of study.

The scholarships will cover a range of overseas travel options, including formal exchange programs, tourist travel, volunteering or community-based placements and other study abroad options.

The awarding of scholarships will be based on academic merit, but will also take account of the educational and personal development benefits of the travel proposals.

Professor Le Grew said that UTAS has a range of other scholarships and exchange programs available to all students, but that this was a special initiative and a significant investment to encourage year 12 students to consider a more structured 'gap year' experience after starting a university course.

Rosny College Year 12 graduate Anna Elliston, who was part of the UTAS High Achievers program this year, is among those students who may now reconsider their study plans as a result of the scholarship.

“This new scholarship program is a great idea. My gap year plans include teaching English to Tibetan nuns in India, but this opportunity from UTAS means I will be really thinking about when I head overseas,” she said.

“The financial assistance would be a big help, and it’s also nice that UTAS realise that international experiences are important in shaping people's future and education.”

❖ Ms Elliston is available for interview on 0409 673 975.

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