

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## First taste of life as a rural doctor for students

More than 100 first-year medical students from the University of Tasmania's School of Health Science in Hobart will get their first taste of what it would be like to be a rural doctor when they travel to the north and north-west of the State this week for the Year 1 Regional Communities Program, also known to students as Rural Week.

Breaking up into groups, they will rotate through a series of activities and excursions each day that will not only demonstrate what it's like to live and work in a rural area, but also how this might impact on health and access to health services.

The students will be based at Camp Clayton at Ulverstone, and visit numerous North-West facilities throughout the week, including the Mersey Community and North-West Regional Hospitals, University of Tasmania Rural Clinical School and Cradle Coast Campus, TasTAFE farm and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Launceston and University of Tasmania Launceston Clinical School.

At the hospitals they will observe the outpatients, day surgery, Department of Emergency Medicine, medical ward, orthopedics, radiology, pathology, surgical wards, maternity and obstetrics and gynecology (in a private hospital).

University of Tasmania Rural Clinical School co-director Associate Professor Lizzie Shires said that students spend the first three years of their five-year medical degree in Hobart studying basic medical sciences, but it is important that they gain an understanding of the benefits and challenges that living in a rural area present – both from a personal and professional point of view.

“For many of the first-year students, Rural Week is the first time they have been to the North-West Coast, and the first time they have been in a clinical setting.

“We hope that by introducing them to rural life early in their careers, they may choose to return for their fourth and fifth year medical training – and then potentially stay on as junior doctors.”

“Our current year four and five students have told us that visiting the hospitals and observing clinical settings and patient interactions was the highlight of Rural Week for them during year one, and that it does impact on their decisions when choosing locations to work at towards the end of their degree.”

The students began Rural Week with a lunch at Narawrantapu National Park today and some fun team-building challenges.

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