

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **UTAS dementia research receives \$3m boost**

Dementia research has been given a generous \$3 million boost this week.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen today announced a philanthropic grant of \$3million from the JO and JR Wicking Trust, managed by ANZ Trustees.

The grant builds on the original \$1.5million given by the Trust in 2007 for the establishment of the UTAS Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre in the UTAS Faculty of Health Science.

This second capacity-building grant will enable the further growth and development of the UTAS Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre for the next five years.

Prof Rathjen said the grant was extremely generous and much appreciated.

“The university aims to support excellence in UTAS wherever it is found, recognising the contribution of outstanding individuals and endeavours such as the Wicking Centre.”

“To secure the medium-term future of the Wicking Centre enables a greater capacity for making a difference in this specialised field of health science.”

Instigators and Co-Directors of the Wicking Centre, Professor Andrew Robinson and Professor James Vickers, are both thrilled.

The grant will allow them to continue translational research, which focuses on dementia, looking at the biological basis of the diseases that cause dementia and the development of health services provided for people with dementia and their carers.

Prof Robinson said the Centre’s goal is to prepare Tasmania and Australia for the increased number of people with dementia.

“As our population ages and one million people in Australia are projected to have a dementia by 2050, we need to explore ways in which we can better support people with dementia and their carers, both in the community and in residential aged care.”

Prof Vickers said being supported by the Wicking Trust to 2017 allows the Wicking Centre to build capacity and capability.

“This funding will allow us to attract more high profile researchers in neuroscience and nursing to better understand the causes of and treatments for dementia,” he said.

Teresa Zolnierkiewicz, Head of Philanthropy for ANZ Trustees, said the UTAS Wicking Dementia and Research Education Centre grant is a flagship grant of the J O and J R Wicking Trust, which since 2005 has made grants totalling \$33mill to address issues of ageing, Alzheimers and dementia.

“We recognise the seminal importance of the Centre’s work for Tasmania, Australia and the international community. It addresses one of Australia’s most important and rapidly growing public health issues.

“The benefactors, John and Janet Wicking, had the vision to devote their Trust to these issues, and would be proud of the world class work carried out by the Centre.

“We have been impressed with the Centre’s achievements over its first five years and are delighted to support them for a further five years.

“Our philanthropic perspective at ANZ Trustees is that significant initiatives like this need time to be established and embedded.”

For more information about the UTAS Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, visit <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/>

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