

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

DATE: WEDNESDAY 16 MAY 2012

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

---



## **Nurse-led Memory Clinic leading research**

An innovative University of Tasmania program to increase the role of nurse practitioners in the care of the elderly was showcased to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler today during a visit to the University's Medical Science 1 building.

The Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre in the University's Faculty of Health Science received funding from the Australia Government to establish a Nurse Practitioner IM/NPACT Tasmania study and the Nurse-led Memory Clinic (NLMC) last year.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Rathjen, said the work of the Wicking Centre was important in a national context and it was an excellent opportunity to profile the research being undertaken to Minister Butler.

"With rates of dementia rising and an aging population, forward thinking in the aged care field is critical to both Tasmania and to the nation," Prof Rathjen said.

The study nurse practitioner, Hazel Ryan, diagnoses dementia, in collaboration with other health professionals, and the clinic can accept self-referrals, rather than requiring a doctor's referral.

Patients with concerns about their memory and who are worried they may be affected by dementia or Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) can visit the clinic where they are assessed and given a diagnosis.

Dr Christine Stirling, Wicking Centre Research Associate, was pleased to show the Minister how the clinic operates.

"Early data indicate 72 per cent of clients self-refer to the NLMC. Twenty-seven percent of those self-referring receive a 'likely dementia' diagnosis, and another 10 per cent are diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)," she said.

"The remaining 63 per cent of clients have their memory concerns alleviated with an 'unlikely MCI or dementia' diagnosis after a thorough cognitive assessment."

Dr Stirling said early data indicates the overall NLMC rates of diagnosis are 39 per cent likely dementia; 12 per cent MCI and 49 per cent unlikely MCI or dementia.

**For more information/interviews about Wicking and the Memory Clinic, please contact:** Dr Christine Stirling: 0439 870 075.

For more information about the Wicking Centre Nurse Practitioner IM/NPACT study, visit <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/research/health-services/community-care/impact>

**Information Released by:**

**The Media Office, University of Tasmania  
Phone: (03) 6226 2691 Mob. 0447 537 375  
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au**