

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New partnership to address the needs of aged-care sector

The UTAS Faculty of Health Science and Mt St Vincent Nursing Home and Therapy Centre Inc. in Ulverstone have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to address the needs of medical and nursing students, aged care professionals and aged-care facility residents.

The partnership will see the establishment of a new Teaching Aged Care Facility at the centre and begin the implementation of a student placement program and organisational redesign.

\$1.4 million Commonwealth Funding has been allocated to build a learning centre on site at the facility. This will have video conferencing, a training room, research offices, computer lab and a student common room that will also be available to the wider central coast community.

More than 50 medical, nursing and paramedic students' from the UTAS Schools of Medicine and Nursing and Midwifery will then take aged care clinical placements at Mt St Vincents this year.

A key focus of the placements will be to support students to develop their knowledge and skills in caring for people with dementia, in an inter-professional engagement where they share experiences of learning and teaching.

There will be a similar facility established with Southern Cross Care in Newtown, Hobart.

The partnership is an initiative of the UTAS Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre's Teaching Aged Care Facility (TACF) program, which sees improving the capability of the aged-care clinical workforce as a key priority.

Led by UTAS' Professor Andrew Robinson, the TACF Program began its first phase in 2011 with funding from the University, the Department of Health and Aging and aged care industry partners.

Dean of the UTAS Faculty of Health Science, Professor Denise Fassett, said the resident population in aged care is rapidly moving to higher levels of dependency, with an associated increase in care needs.

"Our research into the issues of aged care reveals that due to a complex mix of individual, team and organisational capability issues, aged care facilities struggle to provide students with a positive placement experience - the foundation of future careers in aged care," Prof Fassett said.

"While our previous research has demonstrated highly effective strategies to build the capacity of staff 'on the floor' to provide quality aged care placements,

it also highlights that aged care organisations often struggle to effectively support the new arrangements.

“This is where developing a partnership between UTAS and Mt St Vincents in this Wicking program will help prepare us for a more positive and productive future for the aged care sector,” she said.

To find out more about UTAS’ Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, visit <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking>

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