

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Thursday, September 29, 2016

University College ushers in new era for higher education in Tasmania, the nation

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen today welcomed the national spotlight on the institution's newly launched University College.

In Launceston this morning, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull launched the University College as a central part of plans to revitalise the State's regional communities and economies.

The University College – headquartered in Launceston and operating statewide – will contain a suite of innovative programs directed towards addressing the state's attainment and participation performance.

"For some time now, and with support of local, state and federal representatives, we have been talking about the promise of associate degrees with our community, with Tasmanian industry and with educational experts," Professor Rathjen said.

"What we have heard in return is a belief that two-year associate degrees, with a flexible entry, can be a key to unlocking two real dilemmas for Tasmania – firstly communities of lower skills and high unemployment and, secondly, industries currently constrained because they can't access an appropriately skilled workforce.

“Associate degrees will be delivered more intensively and they will have a greater focus on skills for industries in which there is employment demand in the regions in which they are offered.”

The University College will deliver two new associate degrees in 2017; one in agribusiness and the other in applied business. In addition it will remodel and expand upon our existing entry-level courses. It is expected that around 40 per cent of students will transfer to a bachelor’s degree with generous credit arrangements.

The University College is a key component of the University’s \$300 million transformation plan, which also includes inner-city campuses in both Launceston and Burnie, at the heart of Tasmania’s Cradle Coast region.

Enrolments for the new associate degrees are now open (<http://www.utas.edu.au/new-associate-degrees>) and interest in the new offerings has been strong.

Professor Rathjen said industry engagement also was high with plans well progressed for a scholarship program and workforce placements for associate degree students.

“What we are talking about is a style of higher education which is skills- and workplace-focussed, and of a very high standard in university terms,” Professor Rathjen said.

“What we have seen when we have looked at the very good examples of these types of institutions elsewhere in the world is that, having had a taste of higher education, many students progress to further study.”

The associate degrees would provide an opportunity for people to upgrade their career or to transition from traditional to future-facing industries.

“Our focus will be to support students to gain the required skills to participate in the modern economy – helping drive the fortunes of the sorts of businesses which increasingly rely on science, technology, innovation and commercial acumen,” Professor Rathjen said.

Information released by:

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