

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **UTAS opens door on suicide intervention**

The UTAS School of Medicine has introduced the CORES Suicide Intervention program into the Medical and Paramedic courses.

The CORES (Community Response to Eliminating Suicide) program is a community-based intervention which was developed in Sheffield, Tasmania and began delivery in 2007.

This year, all first-year medical students (118) and 45 second-year medical students undertook the CORES Suicide Intervention training as part of their Rural Week experiences.

On completion of the program, students reported greater levels of comfort in talking about suicide with friends, family and colleagues as well as greater levels of confidence in their ability to assist someone who is at risk of suicide.

Ms Eve De Silva (Lecturer in Medical Education) said “current research shows that doctors are at 25 per cent plus higher risk of suicide than the general population and this program aims to help students to help each other in their current degree and in future practice.”

First and second-year paramedic students in Hobart and Sydney have also completed the training.

Lecturer in Paramedic Studies Ms Lisa Bowerman said that “as a paramedic myself I was well prepared to deal with any physical condition that a patient presented with, such as chest pain, etc, however when it came to a mental health presentation like suicidal ideation or threat, I was greatly unprepared.

“This program aims to change that for our current and future students.”

Team leaders Ms Eve De Silva and Ms Lisa Bowerman said the CORES program has already returned significant benefits to participants.

Professor Craig Zimitat, Director of Medical Education said “the School of Medicine is continually refining curricula for its Medical and Paramedic students, with the aim of producing graduates who are well-equipped with the skills and knowledge to maintain their own health in the face of difficult and demanding work roles.”

The School is introducing the CORES Suicide Intervention program and Mental Health First Aid for all of its health professional courses.

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