

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



The future of aged care

An innovative new program will review and redesign an aged care organisation while at the same time giving UTAS medical, paramedical and nursing students quality clinical placements.

The Honourable Mark Butler, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, officially announced the launched Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre's new "The Teaching Aged Care Facilities Program" today.

The program is situated at Masonic Peace Haven aged care facility in Launceston.

UTAS Dean of the Faculty of Health Science, Professor Ray Playford, is pleased with the collaboration.

"It fulfils the overall agenda of the faculty in examining solutions for local problems which also have global relevance with the increase in population of older persons."

The announcement of the program comes in Seniors Week (1-7 Oct).

The program's Chief Investigator, Professor Andrew Robinson, said it will provide a strategy to develop the aged care sector to meet the challenges associated with an older population of residents who have ever increasing care needs.

"The program involves a review and redesign of the aged care organisation, together with the implementation of quality clinical placements for UTAS nursing students, and for the first time medical and paramedical students," Prof Robinson.

"As a teaching aged care facility, Peace Haven will have a new capacity to support an expansion of teaching to recruit new leaders into the organisation, drive the roll out of practice-oriented research, and develop excellence in care provision."

"This is the future for aged care."

Feedback from current students on placement at Peace Haven has already been very positive, with a fifth year medical students saying:

"This is a different and rewarding experience."

“[An] excellent opportunity for us to follow up on our own and discuss our recommendations in a bid to improve residents’ health [care]”.

“It really gave me a new insight [into] what a nursing home is about.”

Marlene Johnston, CEO of Masonic Peace Haven, said they are delighted to partner the Wicking Centre in this innovative project.

“It’s a win/win for everyone concerned as we continue to improve our organisation as a whole, enabling the best possible care for our residents and their families as well as providing our staff with an attractive and engaging place in which to work.”

In 2012 the program will be expanded into additional Tasmanian aged care facilities, while partners in Victoria and Western Australia are available to also expand the program into these States when funding becomes available.

The new Program is supported with funding from Health Workforce Australia, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and the UTAS Schools of Nursing and Midwifery and Medicine and consortium partners, Masonic Peace Memorial Home, Launceston and the Queen Victoria Home, Lindisfarne.

Established in 2008, the Wicking Centre is funded by the JO & JR Wicking Trust, (managed by ANZ Trustees) with further financial support from UTAS and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Tasmania.

More information on the project can be found at
www.utas.edu.au/teaching-aged-care-facilities

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