

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2013

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



UTAS partnerships to address the needs of aged-care sector

The UTAS Faculty of Health Science has today signed a second Memorandum of Agreement with a local aged care facility to help secure a positive future for the aged care sector.

The agreements will aim to address the evolving needs of medical and nursing students, aged care professionals and aged care facility residents.

Today's agreement with Rosary Gardens (Southern Cross Care) will see the establishment of a student placement program.

More than 60 medical, nursing and paramedic students' from the UTAS Schools of Medicine and Nursing and Midwifery will take aged care clinical placements at Rosary Gardens and Mt St Vincents (Ulverstone) 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.

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 aged care resident population is rapidly moving to higher levels of dependency, with an associated increase in care needs.

"Our research 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, Mt St Vincents and Rosary Gardens 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>

Information Released by:

The UTAS Communications and Media Office

Phone: (03) 6226 2691 or 0447 537 375

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au