

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



UTAS medicine student will shave her locks to help blood cancer sufferers

Fourth year UTAS medicine student Jennifer English will shave off her shiny locks at the Rural Clinical School in Burnie on **March 17** to raise money for the Leukaemia Foundation, which provides support to people with blood cancer, as well as millions in research funding.

The 24-year-old is determined to do her bit as part of World's Greatest Shave, being more aware than most that every day around 31 Australians are given the devastating news that they have leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma or a related blood disorder.

Jennifer moved from Newcastle, NSW, in 2011 to study medicine at UTAS in Hobart, having "realised it had a great reputation for high-quality teaching".

It won't be the first time she's shaved her head, Jennifer took part in the same fundraiser when she was 17, when she recalls her parents were initially shocked, but then resigned to the fact that their daughter would happily be bald if it contributed to the health and wellbeing of others.

Her pathway to become a health professional has demonstrated that ever since.

"I think they decided that if shaving my head was the worst thing I could do, they were getting off pretty lightly," she said.

"Some people have said it's a crazy thing to do, shaving your head for strangers. But I think it's crazy to care more about your hairstyle than people with cancers.

"Blood cancers are the second biggest cause of cancer death in Australia, and more than 11,000 people in Australia will develop a blood cancer this year – it's such a good cause it's the least I can do.

"If I can have a haircut, albeit extreme, to help others then I don't see why not."

Within 24 hours of registering for the World's Greatest Shave (which officially runs from March 13-16), Jennifer reached her personal fundraising target of \$200, and is now hoping to double that by the time she is bald.

Her brown tresses will also be put to good use, being donated to a wig-maker who makes wigs for chemotherapy patients.

Jennifer has a strong interest in drug and alcohol addiction medicine, a niche area that she is hoping to specialise in one day, but she admits that university is opening up so many fascinating areas of medicine to her that she keeps changing her mind about what she would like to do when she graduates.

Having moved progressively to smaller and smaller towns, she is finding she enjoys the rural lifestyle and wants to remain in a rural area.

This year she is studying full time at the Rural Clinical School and she is hoping to work at the NW Regional hospital in the future.

Media opportunity

What: World's Greatest Shave; Jennifer will shave her head

Who: Fundraiser Jennifer English

Where: Rural Clinical School, Burnie

When: Monday, March 17, at 1pm for 1:15pm

Donations: To donate to Jennifer visit

<http://my.leukaemiafoundation.org.au/Jeni>

For more information, please contact UTAS Rural Clinical School media officer Lana Best on 0417 978 025.

Information Released by:

The Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: Lana Best (03) 6324 5019; Mob. 0417 978 025

Email: Lana.Best@utas.edu.au