

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Funding boost would transform economy, health care in North

The University of Tasmania today welcomed a major funding commitment to its bold Northern Health Initiative (NHI).

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, announced in Launceston a pledge of \$28 million over four years to turn the UTAS Newnham campus into the “health and exercise science hub of Australia”.

NHI would provide significant direct investment to the Newnham campus, boost regional health services and train much-needed health workers for the future.

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said he was delighted that widespread community support had led to a funding commitment for the project.

"The Northern Health Initiative is of such scale and scope it could help contribute to a different future for the North and North-West of the State," Professor Rathjen said,

"This will not only about provide stimulus and jobs now, but build the health workforce we will so desperately require into the future."

Prof Rathjen said that the NHI funding commitment underscored the ability of the University to partner with government to develop new economic sectors which would underpin renewal and deliver highly skilled jobs.

"Today's announcement follows that last week of funding for the new Creative Digital Innovation Partnership, of which the University is a core partner and Tasmania one of three national hubs. "

A second industry innovation partnership, this time based in Tasmania, is expected to be announced by the Federal Government later today.

Prof Rathjen said the NHI also highlighted the role of the University as an agent of economic development.

“We have committed to and have prioritised development in the North and North-West, and have now shown that we can deliver both community and political support for our strategies. Initiatives such as this bring wealth to the community.”

The NHI would provide:

- Total economic return to Tasmania of \$1.235 billion over 10 years.
- The development of new health-related industries, generating up to 500 new jobs.
- Training for almost 700 new students each year in allied and preventative health related fields.
- Almost 3000 new graduates in high-demand areas such as disability and aged care over the next 10 years.

University Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Development) Professor Janelle Allison said the NHI created an alignment between the considerable health needs of northern communities with emerging technologies, in such a way that could unlock entrenched, intergenerational problems.

"Every student, across a range of disciplines, who enters the NHI will need to take two compulsory subjects around health and physical activity," Prof Allison said. "Over time, that will strike at the heart of some of our serious community health issues.

"Coupled with advancements in how we collect data and make it meaningful using apps and other digital platforms, NHI is a terrifically powerful way of addressing Tasmania's ever imminent community health and health budget crisis."

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: (03) 6226 8518; 0429 336 328 (Peter Cochrane)

Email: Peter.Cochrane@utas.edu.au