

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## John Monash Scholarship is music to engineering student's ears

A love of music and the desire to improve digital hearing aid technology and hearing tests has led to University of Tasmania engineering student Lauren Ward being awarded the 2015 BHP Billiton John Monash Scholarship.

The John Monash Scholarships, which are some of Australia's most prestigious awards recognising potential leaders in their respective fields, will be announced this afternoon at a special function at the Sydney Opera House at 5.30pm.

Lauren, originally from Wollongong, NSW, will graduate in December from the University of Tasmania's School of Engineering with a Bachelor of Engineering with Honours, majoring in Electronics and Communications, and her John Monash Scholarship will be the third in four years received by University of Tasmania graduates.

Lauren also has a Certificate III in Music Technical Production and a Certificate III in Media and she has also undertaken electives at the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music in order to gain skills in audio and acoustics.

Not only is Lauren involved in science communication and outreach, but she is also a presenter on local community radio and is active in music (piano) and sports (roller derby) and has worked at bionic ear company Cochlear and for ABC Radio.

She has had numerous leadership roles and led fundraising for the Leukaemia Foundation.

"I've always been passionate about music, and it was during work experience in grade 10 at the ABC recording studio that I fell in love with the technology side of things and what could be achieved with audio gear," she said.

"I was no longer satisfied just playing music – I wanted to understand how it fundamentally worked and by understanding that I knew I could then design new things and create new technologies.

"During my internship with Cochlear I worked with world leaders in bionic ear technology and it really opened my eyes to how I could use my skills in audio and sound to really benefit people."

The John Monash Scholarship of \$60,000 a year for up to three years will allow Lauren to study for a PhD at the University of Salford (UK), renowned for its Acoustics Research Centre.

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said that Lauren is a well-deserved addition to a growing list of John Monash Scholarship recipients from the University who have all set themselves on a path to contributing to national leadership in

their chosen field.

“This prestigious scholarship is very competitive, with nearly 300 applications received this year, making this a wonderful achievement for not only the University of Tasmania but Tasmania.

“Lauren will have the opportunity to learn how to utilise spatial sound principles to develop improved digital signal processing methods for use in assistive hearing devices and in the delivery of hearing testing – what she achieves in the future could well be life-changing for those with hearing impairments.

“She has worked hard and achieved wonderful academic results, and no doubt her family is just as proud as the University of her passion and commitment to helping others through the opportunity afforded by education.”

CEO of the General Sir John Monash Foundation Dr Peter Binks said that Lauren is an outstanding young Australian.

“We are very proud of her as a John Monash Scholar. Our selection panels were impressed by her intellect, and by her leadership in a number of fields. She has made significant contributions at the University, in the commercial field, and in the community.

“We were particularly impressed by her proposal for improvements to hearing technologies, which would bring great benefits to many Australians.”

Lauren will spend three months this summer working for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Hobart, where she will work on new technological aids to record childrens’ speech and detect speech patterns that give an early indication of developmental problems.

**Information released by:**

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