

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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New facility for aged care education opens in the North-West

A new \$1.4 million teaching and learning facility in Ulverstone is a major boost for the North West Coast, delivering significant benefits for health students, aged care facility staff and residents.

Named the Leven Centre, the new facility is a joint initiative of the University of Tasmania and the Mt St Vincents Nursing Home and Therapy Centre and brings university-level facilities to the Central Coast municipality.

Dean of the Faculty of Health at the University, Professor Denise Fassett, said the Centre will support the region's ability to care for a rapidly ageing population.

"We need to prepare our students for an ageing population. As future health professionals, they will require the necessary skills and experience to care for the older members in our community," Professor Fassett said.

"This Centre increases our capacity to train students in aged care and ensures that training will include a very high quality, well-supported placement experience."

The Leven Centre will initially provide increased training capacity for students studying nursing, paramedicine and medicine, with plans underway to expand this opportunity to students studying in other courses. The Centre will also allow aged care staff to participate in further training, health promotion activities and research projects.

Driven by the University's Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, the project expands the Centre's Teaching Aged Care Facility Program, which aims to improve the capability of the health workforce to care for older Australians.

Features of the new building include video conferencing equipment, a training room, research offices, computer lab and a student common room that will also be available to the wider central coast community.

A key focus of the project is to support students to develop their knowledge and skills in caring for people with dementia. Students will participate in a range of activities on placement at the Leven Centre and they are encouraged to work across different professions to share learning experiences.

The Centre has been built as part of a Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Tasmania and Mt St Vincent Nursing Home and Therapy Centre Inc. and extends an existing partnership between the two organisations. Funds for the Centre totalling \$1.28 million were secured by the University of Tasmania through the Australian Government's Health and Hospitals Fund.

Mt St Vincent Nursing Home and Therapy Centre is owned and operated by the St Vincent de Paul Society and has approximately 70 high care beds, with respite beds and independent living units also available.

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