

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Scholarship secures future of regional radiation health services

A University of Tasmania student will strengthen the delivery of cancer treatment services on Tasmania's North-West after being awarded an annual scholarship which encourages graduating radiation therapists to return to the region.

Natasha Belbin, of Devonport, is the 2016 recipient of the Elphinstone Group/Family Scholarship in Medical Radiation Sciences, awarded to students with a high academic achievement originating from the North-West, and enrolled in a Bachelor of Health Science or Bachelor of Health Science/Medical Radiation Science at the University.

The \$20,000 scholarship is jointly funded by Elphinstone Group and the Tasmanian Government, and is presented to students pursuing a career in radiation therapy to cover study costs, HECS, accommodation, travel and living allowances.

Subject to availability, the scholarship also provides the recipient a three-year contract to work for the North-West Tasmanian Health Service within five years of graduation.

Ms Belbin is enrolled in the Bachelor of Health Science/Medical Radiation Science and after this semester will spend two years at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga to complete her study, followed by a professional year of placement.

Elphinstone Group Executive Chairman, Mr Dale Elphinstone, said the scholarship paved the way for students to return to the North-West region with an important skill set.

"This will ensure we have talented people within our community to deliver services to patients over the long term and make efficient use of this much needed investment," Mr Elphinstone said.

Tasmanian Health Service Director of Medical Services Dr Robert Pegram said the scholarship program provided significant benefits to both the North-West Cancer Centre, as well as cancer patients who lived in the region.

“Scholarship recipients will be working at a state-of-the-art cancer centre providing them with access to specialist equipment like the Varian True Beam linear accelerator and 32 slice CT scanner,” he said.

“They have also made a commitment to the Tasmanian Health Service to grow their careers with us which will ultimately benefit those patients, families and friends who access and use our health services, while assisting us in building a robust skilled workforce into the future. We truly thank them for this commitment.”

University of Tasmania Pro Vice-Chancellor (Community, Partnerships and Regional Development) Professor David Adams welcomed the positive mark the institution’s students were making through the scholarship.

“Radiation therapy is a vital part of the North-West health service and this scholarship not only supports University of Tasmania students in reaching their full potential, it also importantly provides them with a passage to return to this region and practice their profession,” Professor Adams said.

Ms Belbin is also a Founder and current Treasurer of the University’s Radiation Society, established to support students during their transition to Wagga Wagga for their degree pathway and also to promote the fields of medical radiation sciences.

Recipients of the Elphinstone Group/Family Scholarship in Medical Radiation Science receive \$20,000 during each year of their studies, and are required to achieve a minimum credit result in each academic unit.

The program has now been running in partnership with the University of Tasmania Foundation for six years.

Information released by:

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