

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

** Released under strict embargo to 1.30pm, Wednesday, November 16, 2016

Iconic Tasmanian brand backs brighter future for agriculture and UC students

Tasmanian boot brand Blundstone – long synonymous with the State’s farming sector – will provide \$120,000 to support students undertaking new associate degrees in agribusiness next year.

Enrolments are now open to the first intake of the courses conducted by the University of Tasmania University College (UC) and will start on February 1 (<http://www.utas.edu.au/new-associate-degrees>).

The Blundstone scholarships will provide support for the entire first crop of students to fund travel to workshops and industry placements that will make up part of the associate degree structure.

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen thanked the company for its support, saying it was a clear and important symbol.

“The University College has been established to improve Tasmania’s educational attainment and retention, which has been described as a social ill for our island,” Professor Rathjen said.

“Over the next 10 years many thousands of people will access higher levels of education through these associate degrees.

“Today, a firm which is iconically Tasmanian, is giving significantly to demonstrate that it shares this vision for our community and economy – that this new approach to higher education is a transformative opportunity for the State.”

UC Principal Professor Janelle Allison said Blundstone’s initiative was the sort of strong industry engagement that the college model would be built upon.

“The University College will provide graduates who are tailored to meet the needs of regional industries – industries which are currently constrained by a lack of skilled workers,” Professor Allison said.

“The associate degree courses will effectively build a bridge between communities of high unemployment and industries in desperate need of workers.

“Agriculture is a very good example of this and it sits right at the heart of communities and economies in regional Tasmania.

“The Blundstone gift will support 30 Tasmanians next year, helping defray another barrier to education which is cost.

“This gift will make a real impact in the lives of our students.”

Blundstone CEO Steve Gunn said the business sought out opportunities to support its local community in powerful ways.

Today’s announcement follows another in June of three new scholarships worth \$30,000 each, designed to encourage young people from the North and North-West to study agriculture.

“We’re now a global brand with growing sales and production capacity, and our heritage and sense of place have shaped who we are,” Mr Gunn said. “As a heritage brand with our roots firmly in Tasmania our past is extremely important to us and our farming heartland is at the centre of that.

“These scholarships allow us to give back to a community that has supported us for many years.”

Associate degrees in agribusiness and applied business will be launched at the start of next year.

They will be structured so that students emerge with an associate degree after two years, or articulate through to a bachelor degree with credit.

“The experience in the United States is up to 40 per cent of students will carry onto bachelor programs,” Professor Allison said.

“Either way, University College students will be graduating with qualifications which are first rate and highly relevant to their regions.”

Information released by:

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MEDIA EVENT DETAILS AND DIRECTIONS:

WHAT: Launch of the Blundstone Scholarships

WHEN: 1.30pm, Wednesday, November 16, 2016

WHERE: 'Springfield', 381 Middle Tea Tree Road.

Turn left into Middle Tea Tree Road just before Richmond. Springfield is about three kilometres past the Coal Valley Golf Links. On the left, drystone wall. There will be a teardrop flag at the entrance.

