

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: MONDAY 20 APRIL 2009

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Future doctors head out on rural rounds

Communities from Queenstown to Penguin and Dover will welcome small groups of students to their towns for a week of grassroots learning about local networks of health care and how these impact on the lives of people living in these communities.

UTAS' medical degree aims to produce junior doctors who will be well-equipped to address the future healthcare needs of Tasmania's communities, and has a particular emphasis on rural health.

More than 120 second year UTAS medical students will be going to the country to learn more about health services in rural communities around Tasmania during their "rural week" which begins today and runs from 20-24 April 2009.

This innovative Rural Communities Program is part of a staged introduction to rural practice for medical students at UTAS.

It is hoped that the program will grow and build stronger partnerships between the School of Medicine and rural communities, and that students will develop ongoing relationships with their community and return in later years of their course.

Associate Professor Craig Zimitat, Director of the Medical Education Unit, said that the Rural Communities Program aims to give medical students a deep knowledge of the health needs of Tasmania's rural communities, first-hand experience of the roles of various health professionals working in rural areas and a broad appreciation of the inter-professional nature of health care.

"As well as interacting with local health professionals, community leaders and patients, students will undertake clinical skills sessions with local GPs, visit local schools and be involved in a range of community events," he said.

The Rural Communities Program also aims to expose students to the many positive aspects of rural practice and promote their interest in pursuing careers in this area of medicine following graduation.

"The level of community support for the week-long program from local health professionals, service clubs, schools and councils is excellent," he said.

In North West Tasmania, 30 students will be placed in Queenstown, Wynyard, Penguin, Ulverstone, Latrobe and Sheffield.

In Southern Tasmania, 80 students will be placed in Huonville, Geeveston/Dover, Kempton/Bothwell, Snug/Bruny Island, Triabunna and New Norfolk. A further group will be focusing on rural patient's experiences in Hobart.

In Northern Tasmania, 15 students will be placed in Westbury and Deloraine and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Launceston.

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- WHAT:** Rural Communities Program – “Rural week” for second year UTAS medical students
- WHEN:** 20-24 April 2009
- WHERE:** Rural communities across Tasmania
- In the NW:** Queenstown, Wynyard, Penguin, Ulverstone, Latrobe, Sheffield
- In the North:** Westbury, Deloraine and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Launceston.
- In the South:** Geeveston/Dover, Snug/Bruny Island, Huonville, Kempton/Bothwell, Triabunna, Hobart and New Norfolk

For more information:

North West region student groups:
Rosalie Maynard, Rural Clinical School

Southern and Northern student groups:
Associate Professor Craig Zimitat, School of Medicine
Ms Alison Miles, School of Medicine

Information Released by:
The Media Office, University of Tasmania
Phone: 6226 2124 Mobile: 0417 517 291
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au