



Media Release



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HOBART WATER
AND
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Scholarship tackles water industry skills shortage

A scholarship designed to attract Tasmania's brightest students to work in the water sector has made a dream come true for Deloraine's Hannah Atkins.

Eighteen-year-old Hannah is the seventh young Tasmanian to win the opportunity to work in the state's water sector while undertaking engineering studies at the University of Tasmania.

Hannah Atkins won the 2007 Steve Balcombe Hobart Water scholarship which gives her financial assistance for her studies and the chance to work on engineering projects which address greater Hobart's water systems.

She follows six other young Tasmanians who have joined engineering projects on Hobart Water's workforce.

According to Hobart Water, the scholarship program has, over the past six years, significantly contributed to the organisation's ability to manage its projects and achieve business growth despite the industry's skills shortage.

"All over Tasmania, the loss of engineers has created very serious issues," Hobart Water's Chief Executive Officer, Dr Christine Mucha said. "This has been the case across all sectors, and is particularly being felt in the water sector.

"However, over the past six years we have selected one outstanding first year student entering either engineering or earth sciences at UTAS to work with us throughout their degree.

"The partnership has proven so successful, that we've then gone on to employ some of the students when they have completed their degrees.

"Hannah's outstanding communication skills and her passion to apply science to the real world is exactly what engineers will need to excel in the future," Dr Mucha said.

According to Hannah, who completed her studies at St Patrick's College, winning the Steve Balcombe Scholarship means she will definitely be able to attend UTAS.

"I was really excited and honoured to hear that I had been selected as I understand there were many applicants. Winning this scholarship means that I will be able to afford to attend university.

"I have a really strong interest in the physical world and how we can apply science and physics. Even though it's not a traditional career path for females, I hope one day I can help and inspire others to move into engineering," Hannah said

The scholarship is in honour of Hobart Water's former chair, Steve Balcombe.

Mr Balcombe was an engineering graduate of UTAS, and had a distinguished career in both the public and private sectors in Tasmania before his premature death in March 2001. He played a key role in the development of many Tasmanian industries including forestry, agriculture and paper-making and was the inaugural chair of Hobart Water.

Hobart Water is the bulk supplier of drinking water to the eight Councils of southern Tasmania.

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