MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

University option for retrenched Caterpillar workers

The University of Tasmania will offer scholarships to retrenched Caterpillar Underground mining employees.

UTAS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Provost, Professor David Rich, said that although the international financial crisis was beginning to hit Tasmanians hard, the University wanted to help people take the opportunity to get additional qualifications or change career direction.

“We see these circumstances as a chance to support and strengthen our local community – to create new opportunity and increased productivity out of adversity,” he said.

“That is especially the case as it appears likely that a high percentage of the 280 retrenchments are apprentices – young people who can take this time to carve a different future for themselves.”

The scholarships, which will cover the costs of the student’s higher education contribution of between $4162 and $8677 over a year, depending on the course chosen.

For those workers who are not qualified for take a bachelor degree, entry places will be made available in the University’s two-year associate degree program and / or university preparation and bridging programs.

Prof. Rich said the University of Tasmania was particularly aware of the impact of forced redundancies on families, especially the potentially reduced opportunities for family members to engage in higher education.

UTAS has arranged for each Caterpillar staff member to be given a flier on the scholarship opportunity and is planning a May information session on the scholarship and courses.

UTAS made a similar offer in February 2008 to Launceston workers retrenched by Telstra.

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