

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Attention: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Rural health teaching site opened at St Helens

A new Rural Health Teaching Site opened today at St Helens will provide accommodation and IT facilities for health students who are undertaking rural placements.

Professor of Rural Health, Judi Walker, said that the University Department of Rural Health and the St Helens District Hospital had collaborated on the development of the Teaching Site.

“This is another step in the strategy of making rural areas attractive to health students,” she said.

“Each year up to 20 nursing, medical and pharmacy students gain clinical experience at St Helens, working with local health professionals who are vital to their education.

“A positive rural placement experience as a student provides a strong incentive to consider working and living in a rural community as a graduate.

“This experience is invaluable for the students but the cost of accommodation can be prohibitive. This new Teaching Site will greatly reduce the financial costs incurred by students.”

At today’s opening ceremony, the Hon. Dick Adams MHR commended the University for its commitment to working with local communities to improve health care for people in rural Tasmania.

“I am happy to see the University Department of Rural Health expanding its Rural Health Teaching Site network to provide quality facilities necessary to the students undertaking rural placements and rural health professionals,” he said.

“The work of the Department helps build Tasmania’s health workforce and retain health professionals in the rural communities.”

Today’s opening underlines the already-strong relationship between the St Helens community and the University of Tasmania.

St Helens Hospital staff will supervise daily operations of the Teaching Site and Break O’Day Council staff have offered invaluable assistance throughout the establishment period.

Break O’Day Council Mayor, Robert Legge said the Council has entered into a property purchase/lease back agreement with the University Department of Rural Health and will waive some annual rates and charges.

“We are keen to see increased numbers of students in our community and we hope these new facilities make St Helens an even more desirable destination for health professionals,” he said.

The University Department of Rural Health has a network of Rural Health Teaching Sites with facilities at Campbell Town, Dover, Flinders Island, George Town, King Island, Nubeena, Oatlands, Queenstown, Scottsdale, Sheffield, Smithton, St Marys and Swansea.

The teaching sites are also available to visiting health professionals such as dentists, nurses, locum GPs and allied health professionals.

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