

MEDIA RELEASE

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Students to get a feel for the starched-uniform days of nursing

School of Nursing and Midwifery students at the University of Tasmania's Domain campus will get a feel for the strict, starched days of nursing last century when they dress up in reproduction century-old nursing uniforms for a special morning tea **tomorrow (Tuesday 6 August)**.

The school, part of the Faculty of Health Science, has collaborated with the Friends of the Tasmanian Nursing Collection to present an exhibition of items from the collection at the recently refurbished former Electrical Engineering Building.

Displayed in three double wooden cabinets built in the 1920s, the exhibition is located next to the clinical laboratory – a high-tech simulation ward – and it demonstrates the contribution that Tasmanian nurses have made to health care, featuring items and photographs from the late 1800s to 1970.

Nursing and Midwifery Head of School Professor Steven Campbell said that the exhibition is a charming reminder of nursing history in Tasmania.

“The exhibition provided by the Tasmanian Nursing Collection shows to our student nurses how resourceful and innovative Tasmanian nurses were,” he said.

“The display complements the campus and further highlights our rich Tasmanian history in health care and how far we have come in both nursing equipment and education.”

The exhibition contains a mixture of past equipment, a photograph of the Royal Hobart Hospital in 1900 and is guarded by a model mannequin in the uniform of a trained nurse from 1902.

Items were initially collated by members of the Royal Hobart Hospital Graduate Nurses Association for the National Trust Australia (Tasmania) Tasmanian Nursing Collection, but after being on display in a museum for many years space restrictions saw the collection go into storage.

Tasmanian Nursing Collection chair and currently practising nurse of nearly 40 years Cheryl Norris said that it was wonderful to see the historic memorabilia on display again.

“It’s so important to recognise where health care has been, where it comes from, and then we can really appreciate where it is now and how you can apply that knowledge tomorrow,” Cheryl said.

“This display is quite poignant in that it links the past and the present in one space, and you can see the many changes, from the craftsmanship and quality of the pre-disposable era to the mainly plastic, disposable equipment used by nurses today.

“Each item has a history and data attached to it providing a phenomenal resource for new students when they are researching the heritage of their profession.

“Just having the older nurses and the trainee nurses coming together for this event is another opportunity for sharing history and knowledge.”

Located in the School of Nursing and Midwifery reception, the public are invited to view the display between the hours of 9am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

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