

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New \$500,000 Journalism Lab opened at UTAS

Journalism and media students at the University of Tasmania will have access to state-of-the-art production and learning facilities, with the launch today of the new \$500,000 Media Lab by the Minister for Education, Mr David Bartlett.

The lab, housed in the impressive 1961 Arts Lecture Theatre building on the Sandy Bay campus, includes five radio and video production studios, a 20-space editing suite and a newsroom.

Students will use the lab to produce journalism and media in a variety of forms across a range of platforms, both experimentally for assessment and for publication and broadcast.

“A strong media is vital to any democracy. This fantastic new facility will ensure the journalists of the future receive the best possible foundation to equip them for careers in the industry,” Mr Bartlett said.

He said the University of Tasmania’s Journalism, Media and Communications program focused on practical experiences as well as theory.

“I’m proud to have been personally involved in the Journalism, Media and Communications program through hosting a mock press conference for first year journalism students.

“This gives students the chance to practice asking hard questions and analyse how media events function,” Mr Bartlett said.

Journalism, Media and Communications has been one of the University’s most successful and fastest growing programs since it began in 1999. It attracts students from interstate and overseas, and has been nationally recognised for its innovative teaching, which combines practical journalism and media skills with theoretical analysis.

Its graduates from both the undergraduate and postgraduate courses now work in the news media and associated industries across Australia and overseas.

Professor Jan Pakulski, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, highlighted the role of professionally trained journalists and communication experts in fostering better public understanding of complex issues facing our society.

'These include environmental challenges, ethical dilemmas and problems of social integration brought by rapid globalization,' Prof Pakulski said. 'Raising the standards of professional communication is essential for dealing successfully with all those challenges.'

Journalism, Media and Communications coordinator, Dr Libby Lester, said the new lab's design recognised the dramatic shift in the media in recent years.

'We want students to embrace the new technologies now available – from mobile phones to MP3s to high-end cameras, field recorders and editing software – to produce exciting but also important journalism and media,' she said.

'Students will leave us with the skills to work in traditional mainstream media but also with the ability to go out into the world independently and tell stories which can make a real difference.'

The new JMC Lab is a part of the broader range of educational facilities that improve both the professional training and general education of Faculty of Arts students. It gives students access to up-to-date communication technologies used by the industry, and opens the way for a more sophisticated education in communication: written, oral and visual.

The lab also complements Edge Radio, the language labs and the dedicated 'learning hubs' developed in the Faculty. All of them contribute to an excellent learning environment open to students of the Faculty of Arts, in line with the UTAS EDGE agenda that stresses excellence as the core orienting value.

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