

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



UTAS students willing and able to experience workplace culture

A new UTAS-run program is helping students gain vital work-related experiences and the skills needed to help secure a career.

Throughout 2010, 11 UTAS students with a disability have been matched to mentors from the public sector, private industry and community sector, under the Willing and Able Mentoring program (WAM).

Students will **TODAY (Friday 10 December)** receive a certificate of completion for their involvement in the career-focused mentoring program, at a celebration in Hobart.

National Disability Coordination Officer in the UTAS Support and Equity Unit Debbie Hindle said WAM was developed because students with a disability frequently finish their education with little experience of the work environment or understanding of the skills they need to develop in order to start a career.

“The program provides a student with a mentor and helps them to learn more about the individual career pathway they wish to pursue,” Ms Hindle said.

“The aim is to equip students with the skills to develop a professional identity.”

WAM is a national program originating at Deakin University, providing a program of six to eight meetings that focus on career development.

It offers experience of workplace culture; skills in presenting a professional profile (such as how to write resumes etc); networks within the industry; information about the career environment and clarity about career direction.

Third-year UTAS Bachelor of Tourism student Claire Cenin was offered mentoring by the Federal Group where she spent time in their contact centre, learning how to handle queries relating to Federal properties across the state.

“It has been a good opportunity to get exposure to the workplace,” Claire said. “My time in the centre has helped to show me what’s involved.”

The WAM program has been delivered in Tasmania by the National Disability Coordination Officer Program in partnership with the Disability Bureau in Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Public Sector mentors have been drawn from the Departments of Education, Health, Housing and Human Services, Economic Development and the Arts, Premier and Cabinet, Justice, Primary Industry, Water and the Environment, Justice and the Taxation Office.

“We have also been pleased to access support and commitment of mentors from the government and non-government sector with the involvement of TasCOSS, Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust and the Federal Group,” Ms Hindle said.

“Participation in the WAM program will enable students to be competitive in the new State Government initiative offering Graduate Employment Positions for People with Disabilities. Therefore WAM can be a pathway to a great career start.”

For more information about the Willing and Able Mentoring program (WAM) at UTAS or the National Disability Coordination Officer Program visit:
<http://www.ndcotas.com.au/home>

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