



UNIVERSITY *of*  
TASMANIA

Tuesday 10 December 2019

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## West Coast students to be honoured at Children's University graduation

West Coast children will be among the 78 Children's University Tasmania graduates leading the University of Tasmania Town and Gown procession in Burnie TODAY (**Tuesday 10 December**).

The Children's University was launched on the West Coast this year and 20 members will graduate in 2019.

Eighteen will have the honour of representing the region and their schools – Mountain Heights School, Zeehan Primary, Strahan Primary and St Joseph's Catholic School Queenstown - in the Town and Gown, before their own graduation ceremony at the Burnie Arts and Function Centre.

Children's University has been a game changer for Mountain Heights students Rajanie Jones, 11, and her brother Calin Jones, 7.

Their mother Carla Mitchell said the West Coast's famous wet weather and the children's liking for technology meant they previously spent a lot of time at home, and indoors.

But since joining Children's University there has been a big change.

"Rajanie has been doing a lot of calligraphy and other activities at the Hub [West Coast Community Services Hub] and Calin goes magnet fishing nearly every week and has a YouTube channel," Ms Mitchell said.

Calin's YouTube Channel is creating plenty of interest, and he now has others joining him to clean up rivers around the State.

"I have caught all sorts of things – bikes, hammers, pliers, parts of scissors, fishing lures," he said.

Ms Mitchell said she expected to be emotional at the graduation.

"I am really proud of them," she said.

Five students from St Joseph's will also be the first Children's University Tasmania graduates from a Catholic school.

Abby Powell and her husband Ray are born and raised West Coasters, and are feeling very proud of their daughters Skye, 10, and Claire, 9.

"I just can't wait to see them in their graduation uniforms," Mrs Powell said.

To achieve their target hours, Skye and Claire have spent a lot of time at the Galley Museum in their hometown.

The family has also gone on the road to other validated learning destinations, such as Seahorse World and Platypus House at Beauty Point.

"We went to University Open Day, and the girls have made new friends from doing school holiday activities at the Hub," Mrs Powell said.

Children's University Tasmania helps develop children into adaptable, lifelong learners by providing quality learning activities outside the classroom, and thereby builds bridges to employment and higher education.

The program – which is offered by the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania – has close to 900 active members in 42 schools around the State.

The program was extended to 10 schools in the North-West with grant assistance from the Tasmanian Community Fund, and this year it has outgrown the capacity of a single graduation in the region.

The inaugural Devonport graduation was held on 17 September.

A state record of 41 students will graduate from Montello Primary School today.

### **Photos/ filming opportunities:**

**Who:** Children's University Tasmania graduates;

**When:** Commences 2:30pm TODAY (**10 December**);

**Where:** Burnie Council Chambers.

### **Interviews:**

Peter Underwood Centre deputy director Dr Becky Shelley 0417 314 842.

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