

HealthLinx

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Welcome

We are living in fast moving, exciting times and the UTAS Health Science arena is no exception. As we go to press Schools in the Faculty and colleagues from Clinical Psychology (Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology) and Social Work (Faculty of Arts) are working with a range of clinical training providers to prepare responses to Health Workforce Australia's request for proposals for clinical training funding. This measure is part of the Council of Australian Government's National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Hospital and Health Workforce Reform. It seeks to provide specific funding support to manage the increased demand for clinical placements through growing numbers of students and expanding clinical training capacity.

The measure builds on the 2009 Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing's Clinical Training Funding Capacity Grants Program. UTAS and DHHS as Partners in Health were successful in attracting \$1.8 million through this Program to implement a Tasmanian Clinical Placement Partnership (TCPP) to expand clinical placements in major disciplines by 27% across the State. The TCPP will deliver improvement in the overall quality of training, focusing on regional and rural placements and will run from July 2010 to December 2011.

The hallmark of such initiatives and important research activity in the Faculty is innovation and this edition of HealthLinx you can experience a wealth of novel initiatives which will enhance our reputation through growth, excellence and engagement across the sector.

The UTAS Medical Science precinct was commissioned in November 2009 and the transition to the new building on the corner of Campbell and Liverpool Streets, Hobart is now complete. The new building is a centre for innovative medical education and learning and it will play a role in fostering community awareness of advances and breakthroughs in medical science. Down the road in Collins Street, the RA Rodda Museum of Pathology has been awarded a Commonwealth Community Heritage Grant to fund a significant assessment of the collection.

In the north west, the Rural Clinical School, in collaboration with the North West Area Health Service and the Tasmanian Polytechnic, has secured \$1.5 million capital works funding to establish a Centre of Excellence for Rural Clinical Education at the Mersey Community Hospital as part of a nationwide strategy to boost health professional training in rural communities and will help to ensure students and clinicians have access to top quality facilities. This dovetails well with the creation and appointment of Dr Lizzi Shires to a new senior academic position in community-based medical education.



Professor Judi Walker acting Dean Faculty of Health Science

IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>UTAS Medical Science Precinct</i>	2
<i>Links explored between acute climate change and chronic disease</i>	4
<i>Partners in Health Annual Report</i>	4
<i>Council advisory role for UDRH academic</i>	5
<i>Centre of Excellence for Rural Clinical Education at the Mersey Hospital</i>	5
<i>Intra-Faculty Teaching Development Grant Success</i>	6
<i>New emphasis on community-based medical education</i>	6
<i>HLS and the Tasmanian Institute of Sport join forces</i>	7
<i>R.A. Rodda Museum of Pathology awarded federal Community Heritage Grant</i>	8
<i>First Fast Track Bachelor of Nursing Graduates from Rozelle</i>	8

In the north, School of Human Life Sciences researcher, Sibella King is investigating links between acute climate change and chronic illnesses to provide insight into how environmental stress affects central blood pressure and blood coagulation. The study uses new painless technologies to provide additional information to traditional blood pressure measurements for more accurate diagnosis of arterial disease.

Staff from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Launceston Clinical School and the School of Pharmacy have been awarded a Teaching Development Grant for their innovative vision for the use of online electronic portfolios. Students will use ePortfolios to monitor and collect evidence of the completion of competencies and capabilities and as a place of self-reflection that

can be seamlessly communicated to their lecturers.

And in Sydney, City Recital Hall was the backdrop for the graduation of the first cohort of fast track Nursing graduates from our UTAS Rozelle campus.

These and other examples of innovation and achievement signify the continuing development of the Faculty's research and teaching and learning endeavours in 2010.

UTAS Medical Science Precinct

The Co-Location project was launched in November 2005 with initial planning for the development focused on a site next door to the Theatre Royal. Preliminary investigations found this site to be unsuitable, during 2006 new site acquisition processes were undertaken. It was decided the new facilities would be built on the site of the old Menzies Research building. Adjacent sites were acquired to ensure a land size adequate for the proposed building and future expansion.

Medical Science 1 (MS1) was commissioned on 23 November 2009. Over the course of December and January staff made the transition to the new building located on the corner of Campbell and Liverpool Streets.

This new state of the art building provides increased efficiency created by being in one central location, instead of scattered throughout the central business district of Hobart and Sandy Bay. The combining of the School of Medicine and Menzies Research Institute into one location provides a platform for sharing of information and ideas at both a formal and informal level.

The new building will not only support teaching of medical science students but will also become a centre for medical education and learning for the general Tasmanian population. It will play a pivotal role in fostering community awareness of advances and break throughs in medical science. The 170 seat lecture theatre was used for the inaugural Public Lecture Series being delivered by the School of Medicine. The first lecture of the series was delivered by Professor Margaret Morris entitled



Medical Science 1 (MS1)



Entrance and reception of MS1

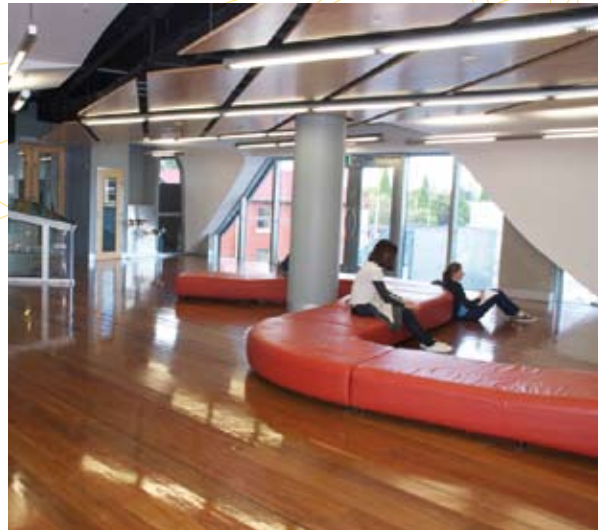
Obesity, what does your brain have to do with it?

This informative and very well received lecture was delivered to 135 listeners. There will be a number of lectures to follow in the series, including topics such as the topical National Health Reform.

In January 2010, the School of Medicine commenced teaching in the new MS1 building. In addition to the MBBS and Medical Research programs the new Bachelor of Paramedic Practice degree commenced delivery. The flexibility of the new building is providing excellent teaching spaces and the feedback from both students and staff has been extremely positive.

One of Australia's most imposing medical science precincts will be created in Hobart when the second stage of the co-location project, Medical Science 2 (MS2), is completed in December 2012. MS1 and MS2 will be integrated into one world-class facility known as the UTAS Medical Science Precinct. This facility will ensure Tasmania's strong position in health and medical education and research into the future.

MS2 will include a 250 seat auditorium which will significantly increase the School of Medicine's teaching activities, the clinical research facilities of the Royal Hobart Hospital, as well as Menzies' expanding research program. The funding for the development of MS2 has been committed by UTAS, along with considerable support from the Australian Government, the State Government and Atlantic Philanthropies. Stage two of the Medical Science Precinct has been approved, demolition work has commenced on site and with completion due in 2012.



Students using the student hub MS1



Artefacts displayed in MS1



Atrium linking MS1 and Hollydeen House



Students working in wet lab (MS1)

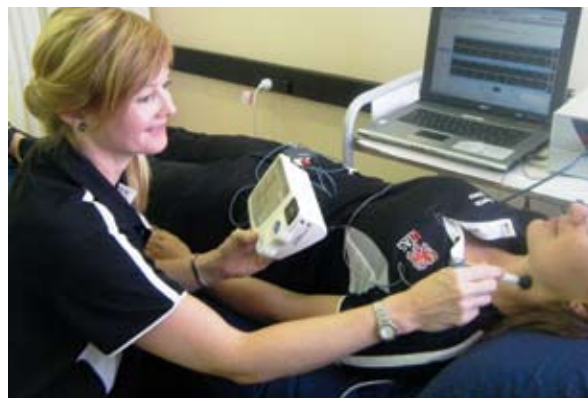
Links explored between acute climate change and chronic disease

Climate change scientists predict increases in global temperature of 1.5 to 5.8 degrees by 2100. It is anticipated this will lead to greater incidence of extreme weather events. It is thought repeated exposure to such extreme temperature variations may have serious health consequences for individuals with underlying chronic disease.

UTAS School of Human Life Sciences researcher, Sibella King and her co-researchers are currently investigating the association between exposure to extreme temperature variations and health consequences for individuals with underlying chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes.

Ms King said “exposure to sudden extreme variations in temperature and humidity cause changes to your circulation. Circulation assists in maintaining the body’s blood pressure and temperature. Heat exposure dilates the skin’s blood vessels and increases the heart rate to maintain falling blood pressure, whilst exposure to cold constricts them and is accompanied by increased blood pressure. These effects are thought to partially explain the higher incidence of heart attacks in winter and there is also evidence of higher rates of stroke in summer and winter due to changes in blood coagulation (clotting) with extreme temperatures”.

Ms King’s study seeks to provide insight into how environmental stress affects central blood pressure and blood coagulation in



Ms. King taking a pulse wave reading at the carotid artery

healthy people, and in people with Type 2 Diabetes.

The study uses new technologies such as Pulse Wave Analysis which measures blood pressure at the heart rather than the upper-arm, and Pulse Wave Velocity which measures stiffness of the arteries and how hard the heart is working. These new, painless technologies provide additional information to traditional blood pressure measurements. It is believed this will more accurately diagnose the presence and progression of arterial disease, and assist in the prevention or worsening of diseases like Type 2 Diabetes.

The results from this study will benefit individuals with chronic disease, the elderly or individuals who work in extreme environments.

If you would like to be part of this study and are over 18 years of age and either healthy or have Type 2 Diabetes and are available to attend five testing sessions over a period of two to five weeks please contact Sibella King on 6324 3688 or email Sibella.King@utas.edu.au

For further information on the study please also contact Sibella King using the information above.

Partners in Health Annual Report

The 2009 Partners in Health Annual Report was recently released. The Annual Report contains some of the key work which has taken place during 2009 and will continue during 2010. This includes the Physiotherapy Workforce Education Project, Paramedic Education Project, conjoint appointments, and the Clinical Placement Systems Development Program. 2009 was a very successful year for Partners in Health, with

more exciting developments planned for 2010.

The Annual Report is available in electronic format on the website. Hard copies are also available on request.

For more information on Partners in Health, please visit our website www.partnersinhealth.utas.edu.au, or contact Zoe Ambrose, Executive Officer, on 03 6324 4059 or zoe.ambrose@utas.edu.au

Council advisory role for UDRH academic

The expertise of UDRH Senior Research Fellow Dr Clarissa Hughes has been recognised through an invitation to serve on Hobart City Council's Alcohol & Other Drugs Strategy Reference Group (AODSRG). The group was formed initially to:

- provide advice to council on trends, issues and good practice in the areas of harmful drugs and alcohol;
- advocate for, and assist council in advocating, when appropriate, the necessity of council's involvement in formal advisory structures and in providing support on an informal basis to decision-makers;
- identify research needs, report on research findings, and advise on research proposals;
- assist the council in implementing the council's Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy; and
- regularly review the council's Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategy.

Dr Hughes will serve on the AODSRG, along with representatives of other key organisations including the State Government Alcohol and Drug Service, the Department

of Police and Emergency Management, The Link Youth Health Service, Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis & Related Diseases (TasCAHRD), Holyoake, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council, and the Drug Education Network (DEN).

"This is an excellent opportunity for UDRH. UTAS, to the best of my knowledge has not been represented on this very important committee until now", said Dr Hughes. "I've been working in the alcohol and other drugs area for several years and it is affirming to receive an invitation to serve on the AODSRG. It will be great to be part of such a diverse group of people, working towards the common goal of reducing the harm from alcohol and other drugs."

Dr Hughes said that she will aim to use her knowledge of the research evidence to provide constructive feedback on alcohol and other drug policy and other initiatives, and highlight the alternatives to negative, risk-focused health promotion campaigns.



Dr Clarissa Hughes

Centre of Excellence for Rural Clinical Education at the Mersey Hospital

\$1.48 million of Australian Government funding will see the redevelopment of part of the Mersey Community Hospital at Latrobe as a Centre of Excellence for Rural Clinical Education.

This follows a successful submission by the Rural Clinical School (RCS) in collaboration with the North West Area Health Service (NWAHS) and the Tasmanian Polytechnic for REID (Rural Education Infrastructure Development) Pool funds.

The new Centre will extend clinical training opportunities at the Mersey for medical and nursing undergraduate clinical training, enrolled nurse training, postgraduate clinical training and access to continuing professional education and support.

The redevelopment will include a clinical skills and simulation centre, multi-use teaching spaces, learning hubs and study areas,

new staff offices and separate clinicians and student lounge areas.

Funding of the Mersey Centre of Excellence is part of a nationwide strategy to boost medical and health education training in rural communities and will help to ensure that students undertaking rural training have access to top quality facilities.

Improved facilities will in turn enable more students to experience the rewards of living and working in regional areas, and encourage them to consider future careers in rural health.

In total, \$33 million has been allocated to 22 projects around Australia through REID funding.

Work is expected to get underway mid- year.

Intra-Faculty Teaching Development Grant Success

Staff from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Launceston Clinical School and School of Pharmacy have been awarded a Teaching Development Grant for their innovative vision for the use of online electronic portfolios within undergraduate professional degrees. In 2010, Carey Mather, Jan Radford and Juanita Westbury will be integrating ePortfolios into the Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Pharmacy respectively.

Communication between students, academic staff and preceptors is critical to successful clinical education. This year, the project is trialling the use of ePortfolios in selected units to facilitate the integration of students' knowledge and skills and provide opportunities for greater interaction between students and lecturers. The ePortfolio is being used to facilitate the monitoring, assessment and provision of feedback on the development of students' skills while on professional experience placement. Students will utilise ePortfolios to electronically monitor and collect evidence of the completion of competencies or capabilities, and as a place of self-reflection



Students working in the Pharmacy computer lab

and evaluation that can be seamlessly communicated with their lecturers. It is envisaged that the use of ePortfolios will be extended to engage preceptors in the future.

The project will be implemented for clinical placements this year. Following this it will be evaluated with the consideration of more extensive roll out of ePortfolios within Schools of the Faculty of Health Science in 2011.

New emphasis on community-based medical education

Dr Lizzi Shires has been appointed to the new position of Associate Head, Community-based Medical Education at the Rural Clinical School (RCS).

This new position has been created to provide clinical academic leadership and direction to the review and further development of the RCS community-based medical education component of the rural MBBS program. Over the next few months Dr Shires will be working with RCS colleagues Drs Bryn Parry and Satish Kumar, and with local GPs and other primary care providers to ensure a sustainable and innovative clinical training model for primary care at the RCS.

Dr Shires' appointment coincides with an increasing emphasis on community-based medical education both nationally and internationally.

Dr Shires is a UK trained GP with extensive experience in Primary Care education and training. She spent eight years in the UK working at a strategic level developing Primary Care

Education and 11 years developing and delivering community based education for GPs, Practice Nurses and Health Care staff as well as students. She played an integral part in developing a new Primary Care Education team and gaining funding to support this.



Dr Lizzi Shires

Dr Shires has been involved in Australian Rural General Practice for five years, currently working part-time at Patrick Street Clinic in Ulverstone. She holds postgraduate qualifications in Public Health and Teaching and Learning.

"I feel very privileged to be able to join such a fabulous team at the RCS and have been made feel really welcome. I'm very impressed by the current clinical training model and looking forward to working with everyone to develop this project," Dr Shires said.

HLS and the Tasmanian Institute of Sport join forces

Tasmania's sporting community will benefit from the new collaboration between UTAS School of Human Life Sciences (HLS) and Tasmanian Institute of Sport (TIS), through the development of the Scientific Principles of Strength and Conditioning in the Bachelor of Exercise Science degree. The objective of the unit is to explore theoretical and practical aspects of strength and conditioning for athletes and clinical populations. Peter Cullhane Physical Preparation Officer, of the TIS has been busy taking the students through their paces at the new TIS strength and conditioning facility at the Silverdome in Launceston.

Two strength and conditioning scholarships are now available as a result of the partnership and are designed to support students interested in pursuing a career in strength and conditioning in the field of elite athlete preparation. The scholarships provide a financial and professional development component; this facilitates students to develop their skills through continued involvement with TIS athletes and mentoring by TIS physical preparation staff. James Fell, Exercise Science Program Co-ordinator said "this is a fantastic opportunity and a great resource to have access to in terms of expertise and facilities. The scholarships are icing on the cake".

HLS also work alongside the TIS in the identification and development of elite athletes. The School was recently appointed as a testing centre on behalf of the Australian Sports Commission's National Talent and Identification & Development Programme. The third and fourth year Exercise Science students will gain practical skills while undertaking testing of hopeful young athletes in the Human Movement Gymnasium at the Launceston campus, two to three times each year.



Students observing the technique of a body lift



Exercise Science students using equipment in the gym



Exercise Science students using weights in the gym



R. A. Rodda Museum of Pathology awarded federal Community Heritage Grant

The R. A. Rodda Museum of Pathology has been awarded a \$6215 federal Community Heritage Grant to fund a Significance Assessment of the collection. The Museum is part of the School of Medicine, University of Tasmania and is located in Collins Street in Hobart.

Dr Sorrel Standish-White from the R. A. Rodda Museum of Pathology attended a three-day intensive preservation and collection management workshop held at the National Library, the National Archives of Australia, the National Museum of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra.

Dr Standish-White said the grant was important in supporting the effort to preserve the collection held in the R.A. Rodda Museum of Pathology. "While the grant provides the funds, the workshop offers the expertise to help us protect the collection. The collection is an invaluable teaching resource for the medical, nursing and paramedical students, hospital registrars in training and school groups," she said. The Significance Assessment will be carried out early next year.

National Library Director-General Jan Fullerton said the Community Heritage Grants program showed the commitment

by the National Library, along with its partner institutions and the Federal Government, in encouraging communities to care for the nation's heritage, be it in small country towns or capital cities.

"It is all about working together to help spread the message that if we don't preserve our history now, it could be lost forever," she said. "Through sharing this knowledge, the information can be taken back to the communities where it is most needed to ensure that local heritage collections are still there for future generations."

The grant money is used for significance assessments, preservation needs assessments, conservation treatments, preservation training, digitisation, and purchasing quality storage materials or environmental monitoring equipment.



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First Fast Track Bachelor of Nursing Graduates from Rozelle

City Recital Hall in Angel Place was the backdrop for the graduation of the first Bachelor of Nursing students from the UTAS Rozelle campus. The graduates also included students graduating from the Bachelor of Nursing from St Vincents and Mater Health Darlinghurst campus and postgraduate students completing a Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Master of Clinical Nursing. The occasional address delivered by Professor Debora Picone, Director General, NSW Health welcomed the new graduates into the professional health care world and emphasised the importance of passion and commitment to the provision of high quality health care and the development of a strong professional identity.