The University of Tasmania has declared itself open to talent, with a bold strategy that prioritises research, students and community. Engagement with community sits at the heart of what it is to be a university. Our community and partnerships plan provides an essential foundation for this university to realise its social mission and commitment to community.

As an engaged university, our community partnerships will focus our efforts on the University’s social mission which seeks to achieve better educational outcomes and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all Tasmanians, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the state.
Central to the University’s mission is the idea that what happens in the world shapes our laboratories and classrooms and what happens in our university matters to the world.

This plan speaks to the heart of what it is to be a university. Universities serve society by maintaining an independent responsibility for knowledge. Since the establishment of the first Western University in Bologna, and more recently expressed in the Magna Charta Universitatum (1988), the vocation of a university – its teaching and research and the configuration of those resources – is to inform and shape fairness, justice and a forward looking society. Our own university describes this vocation as our “commitment to free inquiry in the creation, preservation, communication and application of knowledge,” (Open to Talent, Strategic Plan: 2012 Onwards).

The University of Tasmania is a beacon for some of the world’s most creative thinkers and a unique living laboratory for studying and understanding the trends and challenges that will shape and improve Tasmania’s future and generations to come. As the only public university in Tasmania, UTAS embraces its responsibility to enrich Tasmania and its regions through teaching, research and service. This mission is at the centre of all we do. Through its commitment to community in its strategic plan – Open to Talent – the University calls upon its students and staff to come together to tackle some of Tasmania’s most pressing issues. There are countless examples over the 125 years of UTAS history where our broad based expertise and well trained intellectuals have brought issues to public attention, explored ideas and responses and created significant benefit for the state.

Community and service thus underpin this commitment to the University’s vocation and mission. This year, we recommit to an ambitious portfolio of community initiatives in which educational attainment, improving health literacy and economic independence are singled out as particular challenges needing collective impact.

This commitment to our social mission will engage our research and teaching resources, including scholars, professional staff and students in partnerships with alumni, state and local governments, business and other community agencies. Across the range of disciplines, from law to medicine, social sciences to geology and marine science, we are committed to bringing our skills, innovation and compassion to the communities in which we live.
Our position as the sole university in the state brings both exceptional potential and obligation for engagement with the social, cultural and intellectual life of the island.

The concept of community is complex and fluid. Communities form around identity, demography, geography, relationships, interests and issues and nowadays also across place and ethnicity. Communities communicate and interact through a range of channels which may be personal, technological, political or organizational. It is a challenge to formulate a single idea that would describe community as it is understood in these multiple contexts.

Meaningful relationships with external communities (local, national and global) are distributed across the University of Tasmania. The University’s Strategic Plan, Open to Talent, identifies community as its third pillar, alongside research and teaching. It aspires to a relationship to and with community as core to its role and responsibilities as a university in a number of ways:

• configuring the University to facilitate meaningful partnerships with government, industry and communities in Tasmania and across the world, becoming an exemplar of how universities can best interact with the communities they serve;

• participating in and, where appropriate, leading authentic conversations of local significance with a focus on collaborative action around shared interests, purposes and values;

• positioning UTAS as a forum for ideas, debate and discussion, open to all members of the community and courageous in tackling challenging topics; and

• engaging with our Aboriginal community and culture.

Engagement

Other organisations including universities identify a spectrum of engagement that includes consulting, cooperating, collaborating and empowering. This spectrum of engagement serves as a framework to articulate the range and forms of community partnerships and relationships and it is important that this plan supports the University across this entire spectrum of engagement.

Our privileged relationship with the state provides excellent opportunities to work with our communities to inform research and test ideas and solutions. Our education programs too can be enhanced by engagement with Tasmania’s society and environment.

Engagement can bring the world to us and us to the world.

Community Engagement

Efforts to define community engagement are dynamic and debated. The term has become ubiquitous used by corporate and social enterprise alike. For universities it primarily captures relationships between universities and communities they serve. For our purposes we have adopted the definition of community engagement put forward by the University of British Columbia (2012) as “the respectful and genuine collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional, national and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of democratic partnership and reciprocity.”

Within this context there are several ways in which students and staff connect to community:

• Academic partnerships

• Community outreach or service

• Volunteering – may involve reciprocal arrangements

• Performance – opportunities for community to engage with the arts, sport, public debate offered by the university.

The intellectual, cultural and social environment of our campuses is at the heart of our endeavour and the University will work hard to welcome community, students and alumni into its life.

Volunteering and engagement in outreach activities will foster lifelong allegiance between UTAS and our student body and capture the real life skills and experience of our alumni.
Our aspirations

The University of Tasmania partners with others to co-create value for the University and its communities, supporting a strong social mission that embraces cultural, economic and ecological wellbeing for all.

The University will undertake community engagement activities that:

- Are collaborative and mutually respectful.
- Maximise community well-being, university teaching and research, and sustainability.
- Focus on the areas of the University’s social mission: achieving better educational outcomes for all Tasmanians, improving health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians, and contributing to the economic prosperity of the State.
- Support the University’s responsibility to generate and share knowledge.

Our Students:

Engagement in the life of the state will provide an opportunity for current students and alumni to volunteer, work or participate in outreach activities, fostering lifelong allegiance to the University and benefiting from the skills and experience of our alumni. We will elevate student participation in community engagement to 100% — all undergraduates will take at least one community engaged course and participate in at least one community service effort during their time at our University.

Our staff

Our University will offer our staff a community engagement learning opportunity to support professional development in engaging with communities to ensure value for both parties.

Our Alumni

We will mobilise the significant resource present in our alumni to provide capacity and leadership in the interests of community outcomes.

Community impact

Engagement with Tasmania’s society and environment will assist the University to increase local participation rates in education, expanding the horizons of students beyond UTAS, fostering skills that extend the curriculum and providing real world experiences.

Transformative Leadership

The University will be a recognised leader in and convener of community engagement in higher education. The focus will be on enabling communities to take charge of change – primarily through increased levels of connectivity across a range of areas of social significance including health and education, the economy, infrastructure and the environment.

Engagement can bring the world to us and us to the world.
The Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) aspires to build a critical concentration of internationally recognised scientific expertise and leadership in quantitative marine and Antarctic research and education, both at the University and via strengthened relationships with the major Commonwealth marine and Antarctic research organisations in Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government. IMAS builds upon more than 20 years of University partnership in cooperative Antarctic research, and aspires to a similar key role in temperate marine and Southern Ocean research. Three core activities of research, education and outreach enable its vision, and a focus on integrating knowledge, capability and skills across traditional disciplinary boundaries in the physical and life sciences, social sciences and humanities, within and outside IMAS. This benefits stakeholders and users across government, industry, research partners and community. IMAS recognises the care, connection and energy that comes from a community of many levels and dimensions, and values opportunities to participate in authentic conversations that allow the Institute to act as an agent of change and transformation.

The Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment is a joint initiative between the University and the Tasmanian Government, and is founded on a vision to lead a process of positive and sustained transformation in Tasmanian education to benefit the whole community. The Centre draws upon a wide and collegial base of expertise in research, workforce development and planning, and community aspiration and outreach to increase levels of educational attainment in the pre-tertiary sector in Tasmania. Its transformational vision draws on a crucial and vibrant partnership with the Tasmanian Government through which durable and authentic partnerships with diverse stakeholders in education, industry and community will be fostered.

What happens in our university matters to the world
The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, a partnership with the Tasmanian Government, has brought together the human and physical resources of the government with the scientific research and teaching capacity of the University to create a centre of educational excellence in agricultural research, development, extension, education and training. Its activities are collaboratively funded by the Tasmanian Government, the University, agricultural research, development and extension organisations, resource management organisations amongst others. With a mandate that extends beyond Tasmania to national and international imperatives, TIA is also positioned to create a constructive science dialogue with the community. TIA's success has demonstrated that 'science for impact' works: not only have TIA scientists performed extremely well in the research ratings, they are also highly appreciated and effective at the coalface, valued by farmers and industry for their practical knowledge, and appreciated by government for their relevant and timely input into the policy-making process.

The Institute of Regional Development (IRD) is a place-based research and teaching institute located on the Cradle Coast Campus of the University of Tasmania, originally established as an initiative of the Federal Government’s ‘Renewing the Region’ project. The Institute creates opportunities for the regional community to share expertise and know-how through research, education and enterprising projects. It works with business, industry, government and the community to identify areas where research and education can make a significant and positive difference and taps into regional networks and expertise to develop courses and activities that meet local needs and have practical outcomes. The IRD works closely with its regional community and offers a range of public programs that encourage community members to use the university as a local resource.

The Menzies Institute for Medical Research exists to perform internationally significant medical research leading to healthier, longer and better lives for Tasmanians. The Menzies receives assistance from a broad number of community supporters, including individuals, community organisations and industry sponsors. Since it was established in 1998, the Institute has made significant research breakthroughs in a number of areas and has developed a positive relationship with the Tasmanian community evidenced through high levels of philanthropic support, community engaged research and volunteer programs.

The Institute for the Study of Social Change brings together over 100 researchers across Tasmania who are interested in studying social change in all its dimensions. It is founded on a belief that the complex challenges facing society can only be addressed through active cooperation and collaboration. The Institute seeks to form partnerships with government, the community sector and business and relationships via national and international collaborations.

The Centre for University Pathways and Partnerships – Pathways to Success team focuses on increasing the aspirations of Tasmanians towards higher education with a particular focus on Aboriginal people and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program is the successful outcomes of a funding partnership with the Australian Government. The program undertakes a range of innovative initiatives based on brokering partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders, including community service organisations, industry and schools amongst others. The program supports and promote smooth transitions to higher education, promoting pathway options and enabling current and future student, families and communities to engage with career possibilities aligned to Tasmania’s key industry sectors, including food, advanced manufacturing, tourism and health.

Each year the Menzies Institute for Medical Research invites the public to a debate on a health issue. Our guest debaters are experts from Tasmania and interstate. The debate is attended by about 200 people.

The Murina Pathway Program engages Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal Community through interactive ‘In Country’ experiences. Here, Bonnie Starick completes an ephemeral artwork at Ullisco Beach.

TIA’s involvement in community engaged research programs, such as Sense-T, enables farmers like Mike Buckley to participate in our activities.

Our partnerships with industry enable the sharing of expertise and the development of courses and activities that meet local needs.

The Murina Pathway Program engages Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal Community through interactive ‘In Country’ experiences. Here, Bonnie Starick completes an ephemeral artwork at Ullisco Beach.

The University of Tasmania is a beacon for some of the world’s most creative thinkers.
The Riawunna Centre provides a welcoming space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to meet, study and access academic and pastoral support and assistance to enable them to achieve their education aspirations. The Centre also provides information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and societies, promotes cross-cultural understandings, and is a prominent place within the University for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, traditions and discourses. Riawunna also offers a wide range of skills and experience to non-Aboriginal people wanting to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

The Maritime Transport Policy Centre (MTPC) facilitates research into maritime policy. It was established in January 2008 in Launceston within the Australian Maritime College (AMC), an institute of the University of Tasmania (UTAS). Its role is to provide independent advice to governments and the broad maritime industry on maritime transport policy and related issues. To achieve its brief, the MTPC consults widely with government and industry; it conducts and facilitates political, economic, social, technical, legal and environmental analysis. The MTPC uses the experience, knowledge and skills of AMC and UTAS staff and post graduate students, as well drawing on its wide-ranging national and international maritime industry, government and academic networks for support. This ensures its work is contemporary and relevant.
Strategic Area 1:  
Our commitment to the State of Tasmania

Through our outreach activities we contribute to public debate on issues of concern and, in return, benefit from the participation of community members.

In the knowledge economy, the creation of a learning society and a commitment to lifelong learning soundly position both communities of place and communities of interest, and support better standards of living. By raising awareness of the University’s social mission and the ways in which we deliver value to our communities, we will expand opportunities for engaged partnerships, and raise awareness and appreciation of the ways in which the University helps create the conditions in which to flourish.

Outreach activities play an important role in ensuring that the results of our scholarship are made available to our communities, and our teaching and research connect with non-traditional audiences. Outreach activities include public lectures, knowledge sharing activities, blogs, articles for non-academic publications, and use of social media to inform social debate, as well as the provision of technical assistance, exhibitions, performances and school visits.

Engagement with technological enhancements will support this strategy, for example by use of smart phone apps, mobile tagging, and online access to digital collections, exhibitions, live streaming, video records and social media. These enabling technologies will support our efforts to reach sections of the community who may not usually engage with established outreach activities. We acknowledge the task ahead, and that it will encompass the whole of the state, including our regional campuses. We will reach out to the rural areas of the West and East Coasts, and the outlying King and Flinders Islands.

An Economic Driver

Our strategic plan Open to Talent is unequivocal about the fact that as the only university in this state, we must continue to “sit at the heart of social, intellectual and cultural life in Tasmania”. Our commitment to underpinning the economic and social vitality of Tasmania is evident in the University’s built environment. A $564 million capital works program continues apace as we build a presence in the heart of our major cities. Staff and students will live and work in the CBDs of Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

What is increasingly understood in the general community is the University’s role as a key economic driver in this state. For the first time last year our annual budget exceeded half a billion dollars; we employed nearly 6,000 staff to teach and support more than 30,000 students. Research income totalled more than $90 million while international education contributed $200 million $1.7 billion to the state’s economy. This figure takes into account a range of activities, spread across Tasmania by virtue of our campuses located in key regions of the state, including the impact of our skilled graduates in the economy. There also is recognition that University of Tasmania researchers, often working in collaboration with industry, government and other institutions, can link excellent research to economic sectors of promise to the Tasmanian economy.

The Children’s University

The Children’s University Tasmania caters for children aged seven to 14, initially targeting urban schools in areas of greatest schools, before being rolled out across the state. The Children’s University promotes education by rewarding participation in learning activities outside of school hours, awarding formal certificates at yearly graduation ceremonies to recognise students who complete their Passport to Learning. The children decide which activities they would like to participate in and the system acknowledges that children learn by engaging in a range of experiences, not just by traditional classroom learning. The program partners with a range of organisations, including government, schools, institutions such as museums and galleries and the community.

We will:

- Engage with communities to promote Tasmania’s social, cultural, environmental and economic development
- Increase the scope and quality of the University’s engagement in significant events
- Expand the number and type of quality outreach events to engage different community sectors
- Coordinate engagement with communities to leverage maximum shared benefit
Strategic Area 2: Mobilise the University’s cultural resources in support of our communities

Sharing our cultural resources with our communities expands opportunities for discovery, curiosity and access to learning.

The University contributes to the cultural life of Tasmania as custodian of an extraordinary collection of static and dynamic assets and resources, including historic artefacts, visual arts and scientific collections. Common to all the University’s cultural assets is their use to support and enhance teaching, research and community engagement, as well as in enriching the University’s public profile. Providing access to specific world class activities, infrastructure, collections and artefacts ensures that the University continues to provide opportunities for discovery and learning for our communities.

Examples include key public occasions, the Southern Gospel Choir, Special and Rare Book and Private Deposit collections, specific specimen collections, the Tyler Collection, performances and the telescopes.

The University of Tasmania owns and manages eleven identified cultural collections, each of which is an accumulation of physical or digital objects with aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or technical significance. In some cases, such significance goes beyond the collection’s role as an intellectual resource or source of information or evidence.

The diversity of the collections has the potential to promote interdisciplinary activity, and may be developed into a distributed museum of art, design and science.

A unique cultural asset, the Southern Gospel Choir has received both national and international recognition, and offers opportunities for community involvement through performance, workshops and its participation in community events.

**A University Museum of Arts and Sciences**

As testament to the endeavour of its first 125 years, The University holds an eclectic but fascinating collection of objects and artefacts from the arts, sciences and classics. It includes objects of national and international importance, many of which are significant to the history and identity of the University and the State of Tasmania itself. A unique legacy, this collection juxtaposes the ordinary (rocks, minerals and fossils, or preserved, diseased human tissue specimens for example) with the extraordinary (including an internationally significant Antarctic bacterial and fungal culture collection, a proconsulodon stellitis fossil (the dolphin whale) and the oldest printed book in Tasmania).

In its entirety, the University Collection represents a significant resource and indeed may become the focus for a University museum of arts and sciences. Some of the cultural objects have been highly influential in teaching and/or research terms, while others have direct links to world class research discovery.

Especially striking about these collections is not only the stories they tell of the past, but their potential to speak to the future. Creative and cultural industries are important to the new economy in Tasmania and the idea of artists in residence in scientific communities and scientists in residence in artistic and creative communities is something that UTAS continues to embrace.

**The Tyler Collection**

The Tyler Collection is an extraordinary testament to the vision of a collector who captured the tension of immense cultural and political change in Communist Romania, and a fascinating time capsule which has taken a serendipitous journey from Bucharest to Hobart via the collector’s home in Washington DC. Coming from a time and place unambiguously remote from its new home, it now awaits a fresh life within the University of Tasmania Fine Art Collection. The Tyler Collection was donated to the University in 2013 by Frances and Geoffrey Tyler, as part of larger cultural bequest.

The Collection comprises approximately 800 items—paintings, prints, sculpture, ceramics, and religious icons. It is mostly of Romanian art, and predominantly by one artist, Corneliu Petrescu. The collection contains a unique selection of Romanian artworks from 18th century icons through to 20th century modernist works. The breadth of styles represented in the Collection illustrates important social, cultural and political phases in Romania’s recent history, especially the repression of monastic traditions associated with the rise of Communism; an important range of artworks that would otherwise have been confined in Romania under the authoritarian rule of Nicolae Ceausescu (1965-1989).

**We will:**

- Develop a conservation and management plan for the University’s cultural resources, collections and artefacts
- Optimize community access to and engagement with the University’s cultural activities, artefacts, collections and spaces through public programs and school engagement
- Maximize the profile of specific world class activities, infrastructure, collections and artefacts
- Foster museum based scholarship
- Explore new ways to extend engagement through collaborations and MOUs with other cultural institutions and organisations like TMA5 and OVMAG

1 Other collections may be recognised as the plan is implemented.
Strategic Area 3: Strengthening community-based research and teaching

Through our community-based teaching and research we bring knowledge-based solutions to societal and world problems.

Community-based teaching ties university learning with service to communities, providing students with applied experience through practical work in real-world settings. It includes workplace learning, practicum placements, internships, clinical teaching, service learning, and fieldwork and work experience. The benefits to students are explicit, providing students with opportunities to practice the skills they are learning in a real-life setting. Typically, community-based teaching is for credit. The benefits to the community play a role but data suggests that participation in active community-based learning present an important opportunity for growth and preparation for professional life.

Community-based research explores a research topic of practical relevance to the community. The community participates in the research and benefits from it, but is not involved in its design. Much of the research carried out in the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania and the School of Health Sciences is of this type. Through faculty expertise in community-based teaching and research, we align community needs with curricula, learning outcomes, and research. University staff will work to develop culturally sensitive interventions and collaborations with community and business for improving health and education outcomes and emerging opportunities for economic development.

Community-based teaching enables our nursing students to undertake practical placements which give them hands-on experience in real-world settings.

Community-based clinics and health checks at community events enable students to hone their skills in real-life settings.

We will:

- Continue to offer quality community-based teaching programs that prepare our graduates for work and provide flow on benefits for communities.
- Seek to provide all UTAS graduates with a community engaged learning experience.
- Grow our staff strengths in community-based teaching and research.
- Measure the community impacts of community-based teaching and research.
- Provide professional development opportunities and create trans-disciplinary networks to strengthen staff expertise in engagement.
Engaged University of Tasmania

Engaged students

Edward Forrest

Ed Forrest relocated to Hobart from Burnie in North West Tasmania to study medicine. Now training as an intern at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Ed recalls a long list of opportunities to get involved in both the University and community during his time as a student. As a first and second year student, he participated in Rural Week, visiting rural areas of the state, working in local health care centres and providing a presentation to the community at the end of his stay. In third year, he volunteered to mentor first year medical students, helping them to navigate not only the transition from school to University, but in some cases their relocation to a new city. For the final two years of his medical degree, Ed returned to Burnie, his home city, to study at the Rural Clinical School, which he says provided the opportunity for many clinical placements in various areas and disciplines. This included work in the major North West hospitals and placement in general practice, community and mental health and palliative and aged care organisations.

The University of Tasmania provides opportunities for students to engage globally via placements and volunteering activities. At the end of fourth year, Ed went to Hanoi, Vietnam, on an overseas elective where he worked in a surgical hospital for four weeks. During this time, he would participate in the daily rounds, attending theatre and often participating in the various operations. “I was also lucky enough that while I was there, a highly specialised neurosurgeon was also visiting from France and I was able to observe a number of his operations on young children who had received nerve injuries during birth, operations which are not done in Tasmania.”

In his final year of study, Ed worked for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Port Augusta, South Australia on a rural and remote healthcare placement. “During this five week placement, I spent three days a week flying to remote and/or indigenous communities in north-western SA to undertake clinics. Some of our stops would be at nine sites, others would be at landing strips on cattle or sheep stations, where we would often hold the clinic consultation on the plane. The other days I would be on call for emergency and medical retrieval flights to take unwell or injured people to Adelaide.”

Ed is obviously grateful for the opportunities he was given to engage with community during his time at the Royal Clinical School especially. Visits to rural high schools (including Sheffield and Oatlands, run by RUSTICA – the Rural Health Society) gave him the opportunity to encourage other students to consider a career in Health, and attending local primary schools enabled him to join others in promoting healthy eating and exercise habits. “The work with school students, including providing first aid at community events such as the Burnie Challenge, and the clinics in stalls at local community events, allowed us to not only refine our consultative and practical skills, but more importantly, to provide free health services to community members, such as the checking of blood pressure and blood sugar levels, with a positive impact on the overall health of the community.”

Cayne Layton

Are prawns warm or cold blooded? How could keep become extinct? Why do some deep sea creatures glow? These are the kinds of questions that Cayne Layton, a University of Tasmania PhD researcher with the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, is starting to expect from students at Goodwood Primary School, Hobart.

A marine ecologist, who moved from Canberra to Tasmania to study kelp forests, Cayne is a keen participant in CSIRO’s Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools (SMeS) program and every month he visits Goodwood Primary as a special guest science teacher.

Principal at Goodwood Primary School Sue Bullen said that Cayne is an integral part of the school’s science curriculum and that his most recent visit coincided with the start of National Science Week. “He has helped students understand the importance of science in their lives and raised their awareness of science-related careers,” she said.

“He’s also helped our students understand the importance of inquiry, collaboration and communication – all critical 21st Century skills. “Every time Cayne visits, the students develop a growing appreciation and love of the natural environment – he talks with such passion about his marine research and brings in amazing objects like lobster and crab shells, preserved sea dragons and squid beaks, and the students are captivated.”

With gloves and safety goggles in place the students even get to feel like scientists as they study the marine samples. They are also shown underwater footage collected by Cayne and he has come up with some fun ways to explain the most common question of them all… what’s a marine ecologist?

“I think that even that level of informal engagement is important and helps to create a sense of transparency and collaboration between our research and the community.”

Throughout the fun and excitement of hands-on learning Cayne aims to relay some simple but important messages to his young audience.

“Everyone is a scientist and science is about questions,” he said.

And Tasmania, with its amazing and unique plants, seaweeds, animals and environments is an incredible place to do science.”

“My aim is to demystify science and illustrate how science is part of our everyday lives.”

“Science isn’t just something that’s done in a faraway laboratory by old men in lab coats, science is everywhere – it’s when students go bushwalking or fishing, it’s when students cook at home with their parents, it’s when students use a computer or look up at the stars.”

“I think it’s important that the community becomes more engaged and understanding of science and the amazing world around them.”

Cayne also believes that community engagement and science communication are an integral part of modern research. “I think we as researchers have a commitment to communicate our work and our results to the public where possible.”

“Our work is often publicly funded so there’s an obvious need for responsibility and sharing, but I believe that more the community understands about science the better we will be able to face some of the most important issues of our time, such as climate change or antibiotic resistance.”

The kelp forests which Cayne and his colleagues work in are in a central feature of the region’s marine ecology, and are familiar to divers, commercial and recreational fishers and tourism operators. Cayne says that this shared-use helps spark up conversations with members of the public.

“We often chat to locals at boat ramps or out on the water and they’re always interested to hear about what we’re working on. They often provide an insight into local conditions or make remarks that reflect our findings, for instance how the kelp forests have changed over the years or whether the water temperature is warmer than usual.”
Engaged University of Tasmania
Engaged staff bring Arts and Sciences together

Catriona Macleod

Catriona Macleod is senior research fellow and deputy program leader – estuaries and coasts program, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

Much of Catriona’s research has focussed on improving our understanding of the relationships between aquaculture operations and local environmental conditions, with a view to supporting sustainable development and improving management practices. Her work has played a significant role in shaping Tasmanian government policy on environmental assessment of aquaculture, and informed regulatory policy and strategic research direction for aquaculture activities locally and internationally.

Salmon aquaculture is Australia’s fastest growing aquaculture industry, and Tasmania’s fastest growing primary industry, with plans to double production by 2025. Such rapid development is not without issues. Effective communication between all environment stakeholders (community, industry and government) is critical to ensure growth is based on shared understanding, and resolves potential conflicts.

In 2012, Catriona initiated the “Your Marine Values” study to identify what Tasmanian stakeholders value most about the marine environments of the southern Huon and D’Entrecasteaux Channel in South East Tasmania. The study focussed on identifying those marine values affected by and affecting aquaculture activity, and ensuring that planning and management efforts safeguarded them.

A rigorous and highly participatory community engagement program was implemented. It included individual stakeholder workshops in regional locations, an online survey and cross sector workshop involving management agencies, researchers, aquaculture and commercial fisheries industry representatives and community representatives. The level of community engagement was overwhelming and as a consequence, a broad ranging suite of ecotological, social and economic values was identified.

The study characterized values shared by government, the aquaculture industry and community stakeholders, and linked them to legislation and policy, research and monitoring, and to measurable indicators of the condition of those values. It facilitated better communication between communities, industries and government about what is at stake, what safeguards exist and what knowledge is being generated about existing issues. Ultimately, the “Your Marine Values” study enabled a more informed engagement process, and greater trust between participants.

The success of the “Your Marine Values” community engagement strategy was recognized as a highly effective way of building positive community understanding of the complexities of the science and the management implications of the research, and prompted the inclusion of a Community Reference Group in the research team’s latest project.

Catriona is a member of River Derwent Heavy Metals Project. An initiative of the Museum of Old and New Art, the project brought together a group of local, national and international artists, scientists and architects with the goal of using their various disciplines to jointly study and attempt to clean the Derwent River of its legacy of 20th century industry, including mercury, lead, cadmium, zinc and copper. The project encouraged the development of experimental technologies and creative solutions to the river’s pollution problems. Symposiums and the creation of a series of artworks served to increase public awareness of the issue, and find potential solutions. This art/science partnership changed the thinking of many of the scientists in the group, challenging them to truly “think outside the box”, leading to some very interesting collaborations and opportunities!

While much of Catriona’s work has been with industry and government, she is increasingly interested in communicating her research and its implications to the broader community.

Helping people better understand the complex processes and interactions within the marine environment, or to better express their issues or concerns about the marine environment is really rewarding. If you can understand the issues faced by stakeholders (i.e. put yourself in their shoes) then you are better placed to provide them with environmental management strategies that they can actually implement or achieve.

“My goal is to help government, industry and the community to better understand how the marine environment is valuable, and to develop trust and understanding to ensure the best outcomes all around.”

Lucy Bleach

Lucy Bleach maintains a local, national and increasingly international exhibition practice. She has been the recipient of several Australia Council and Arts Tasmania grants for new work and professional development.

In 2005 she was awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award research scholarship, through the University of Tasmania. She has participated in six Ten Days on the Island festivals, and was the 2009 Asiatick Visual Arts Resident in Japan, where she participated in the 4th Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennal.

In 2011 Lucy was commissioned by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery to produce a solo exhibition. She exhibited new work in 2013 for the Heavy Metal Project, Museum of Old and New Art, and participated in the 2015 Dark Moko. As an (arts) institution UTAS has increasingly pursued socially engaged, community based goals impacting on urban centres and regional communities directly experiencing environmental, socio-economic and cultural challenges – how lasting social change can be achieved in regional contexts through creative arts practice and pedagogy.

Lucy’s research focuses on our varied relationships to tenuous, contingent and at times volatile environments, seeking engagement with communities that authentically experience such relationships.

“An (arts) institution we have increasingly pursued socially engaged, community based goals impacting on urban centres and regional communities directly experiencing environmental, socio-economic and cultural challenges – how lasting social change can be achieved in regional contexts through creative arts practice and pedagogy.”

Lucy is currently engaged in three Tasmanian art science research collaborations. These are aimed at addressing regional environmental and social challenges, using creative responses that act as catalysts for understanding and change.

One of these, LIVE SITE CATALYST, an Institute for the Study of Social Change flagship project, is focused on the contested post-industrial landscape and regional community of Triabunna. Initiated by pragmatic forms of engagement within the local community, LIVE SITE CATALYST seeks to apply poetic and allegorical methodologies that address political, environmental and social realities, to frames a two-year project, with ongoing activities to be progressively ‘owned’ by the community.

The Triabunna Spring Bay Mill site and community currently sit in both post-industrial and political limbo. The community of Triabunna is caught between the well-meaning ideas and agendas of external forces - philanthropists, politicians, academics, artists - and the legacy of a once ‘secure’ future framed by an unsustainable timber industry. The wister community of Triabunna needs to be honoured and respected for its diversity and compassionately engaged with a view to developing tangible opportunity and confidence.

Given the complexity of the Triabunna context, the research program is designed to foster collaboration amongst key players that include community members. It is geared to developing new ways of envisioning the locale and the solutions, honouring the precedent and history that has shaped the landscape and the people whilst shifting capacity and understanding of potential.

Lucy Bleach’s collaboration with the Museum of Old and New Art, enabled a two-year project, with ongoing activities, to be progressively ‘owned’ by the community.

Lucy Bleach is a recipient of the Australian Postgraduate Award research scholarship, through the University of Tasmania. She has participated in six Ten Days on the Island festivals, and was the 2009 Asiatick Visual Arts Resident in Japan, where she participated in the 4th Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennal.
Strategic Area 4: Impactful partnerships

Our island context, sole university status and multi-campus structure provide unique partnership opportunities

The University’s definition of community is inclusive rather than exclusive and includes indigenous peoples, young people, people of different abilities, the elderly, refugees, scholars in other universities and industry specialists. Communities also include functional groups, such as industry, governments, disciplinary groups, alumni, professional organisations, non-governmental organisations and not-for-profit organisations. This broad approach to what may be included under the umbrella of community sits alongside the University’s commitment to diversity.

Our engagement activities are characterised by their collaborative approach, mutual respect, and their goals of mutual benefit. In engaging with communities, the University is one of several knowledge partners working together to create an inclusive learning community where data, information and knowledge lead to wisdom. All parties to a partnership come with their own bodies of knowledge, whether explicit or tacit, broad or localised. We recognise the importance of developing partnerships of shared knowledge to enhance the benefits for both parties.

Our community-engaged research will involve partnership development, cooperation and negotiation and a commitment to addressing the issues defined by both partners. Examples range from participatory research in the Faculty of Health, to industry partnership-driven research in some Linkage and Industrial Transformation projects.

The University plays an active role in co-creating value by seeking out partnerships of mutual benefit. During the life of this plan, our focus will be on targeted collaborations directed towards having an impact on the education, health and the economic needs of Tasmania.

Our commitment to regional campuses

The University is committed to investing in and developing the future of our community across Tasmania. Our campuses in Hobart, Launceston, the Cradle Coast (Burnie) and Sydney are evidence of our broad commitment to delivering teaching and research both within and outside of Tasmania.

Our facilities include:

- three world-class research institutes – the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies and Menzies Research Institute in Hobart and the Australian Maritime College in Launceston;
- the Human Interface Technology Laboratory Australia (HITLab AU) in Launceston;
- the Rural Clinical School, based at the North West Regional Hospital and the North West Private Hospital in Burnie;
- the Grote Reber Museum and Mount Pleasant Radio Telescope Observatory in Cambridge, the Mount Canopus Observatory near Hobart, the Blasdes Tier Optical Astronomy Observatory in Blaize Tier and the Ceduna Radio Observatory in South Australia.

Our recent and continuing developments in infrastructure amount to more than $300m. These projects included the $45m Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS); the $140m Medical Science Precinct; the soon to be built $75m Academy of Creative Industries and Performing Arts (ACIPA); and $120m worth of investment in new student accommodation in Hobart, Launceston (Newnham and Inveresk) and Burnie.

Regional campuses in the north and north west are supported by regional advisory boards, drawing on the expertise of community members who engage with the University on determining strategic direction and activities in these geographical areas.

We will:

- Deepen engagement capability within the University
- Develop a coordinated approach to facilitate community engagement with the University
- Support University-community partnerships through the provision of competitive, targeted grants, and recognise achievements through the Vice-Chancellor’s Awards program
- Provide an annual report on the impact of University-Community partnerships

Agfest

In 2015, the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania Inc. and the University of Tasmania entered into a partnership agreement with a view to strengthening and supporting the commitment that both organisations have to engage with the Tasmanian community and developing a relationship of mutual benefit to both parties.

As a result of this partnership, the University had an increased presence at the Agfest field days in May, 2015 to raise the awareness and profile of the university in rural communities. Arising out of this were three key initiatives:

- A student learning trail which supported the Kids Agricultural Awareness Program;
- An innovation tent, where the innovative activities of the University were showcased and promoted, along with the services that the University can provide to both the community and students;
- A survey program to assist RYOT to understanding the perceptions of Agfest visitors and exhibitors, their experiences and the benefits generated from their participation. The survey program also included a survey of Agfest volunteers.

We provide opportunities for our international alumni to continue to engage with us, and in 2015, conducted 125th anniversary celebration events across the world.

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Service activities provide a vehicle through which participants develop skills and experience to undertake leadership.

The University is explicit about its responsibility to encourage current students, staff and alumni to engage in volunteering, employment and outreach activities, and makes a firm commitment to the value of service to student development and the student experience. Equally, the University recognises the significant body of social capital held within the student body, its alumni and staff. Considerable resources can be made available when these forms of capital are mobilised and leveraged.

We recognise that students have much to offer while undertaking their studies and, in many cases, want to contribute to varied communities of interest and of place. Participation in recognised programs of civic engagement can afford students connections to such communities, opportunities for friendship and social learning, real world experiences, opportunities to learn skills that extend the curriculum and can sometimes offer graduating students ongoing career opportunities.

We recognise that staff contribute in many ways, by serving on community and state-serving entities such as Boards and accreditation panels, by contributing to Senate inquiries and other public debates, by participation in lectures and forums such as the Inglis Clark lectures, and through their professional bodies.

Having students, staff and alumni visible in our communities has the capacity to inspire others to pursue their educational potential and follow their aspirations. This is particularly the case in regional Tasmanian communities where higher education participation rates are significantly lower than those in other parts of Australia. The University will develop civic awareness and civic leadership by means of the staff and student experience, and provide opportunities to staff, students and alumni to participate in community service activities which aim to make a positive difference.

In 2014 alone, the University delivered over 80 named lectures and forums, numerous corporate events, and many networking events and community partnership forums, receptions and events. These events reached over 20,000 people during the course of the year. Partnership and engagement with external organisations is a key goal for the University’s events area and a number of Association of Landscape Architects Australia, the Red Cross, Australian-American Fulbright Commission, Australian College of Educators, the Australian Institute of International Affairs, the Launceston Historical Society, Medical Protection Society, the Royal Society of Tasmania, and many, many others.

We will:

- Recognise the contribution our staff make to state and community-serving entities
- Ensure that service to society is part of the student experience
- Align service opportunities to enhancing education attainment, improving health outcomes, and strengthening the island economy
- Empower our students to become active citizens by serving communities at home and around the world

We will ensure it does so.”

Her Excellency Professor The Honourable Kate Warner AM

Professor Kate Warner, AM, was appointed as the first female Governor of Tasmania in 2014. With over four decades of distinguished service to the University of Tasmania, and a long record of service to the community, this was a fitting recognition of her immense talents and her commitment to the acquisition of knowledge, education and research.

Professor Warner was the first female University Law Faculty Professor and first female Law Faculty Dean, devoting her stellar career to teaching and research, and acting as an inspiring mentor to those she has worked with. Her outstanding contribution was honoured when she received the University of Tasmania Distinguished Service Medal in 2012 and Professor Warner was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2014 for service to the law, particularly in the areas of legal education and law reform, and to the community.

Professor Warner has been a leader within the University in her commitment to community engagement and her contribution to state serving entities. She has been a Member of the Sentencing Advisory Council; assisting with the preparation of the Council’s discussion papers and reports, a Member of the Board of Legal Education, the Council of Law Reporting and the Directors, Centre for Legal Studies. Professor Warner pursued her keen interest in regulation, gaming policy and harm minimisation, as a Commissioner of the Tasmanian Gaming Commission. As President of the Aconcagua Foundation, she supported social and cultural advancement in the community through its programs in the Arts, Environment and Social Justice.

Professor Warner has provided advice to government on rape law reform and abortion and as the Director of the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, she was involved in providing recommendations on sexual assault, sentencing, same sex adoption and many other legal issues. She has also provided assistance to other law reform bodies nationally including the New South Wales Law Reform Commission and the Australian Law Reform Commission.

In her role as Governor, Professor Warner has continued her commitment to serve the community and the state of Tasmania. With the support of her husband Richard, she has recently opened Governor House to community and educational activities, and, as one way of encouraging careers into agriculture, the University’s agricultural science students now use the estate paddocks for science experiments such as fertiliser trials. She has also accepted a position on the Advisory Board of the Institute for the Study of Social Change and as Chair of the Advisory Board for the Underwood Centre of Educational Attainment.

“It has been extremely important to me to be able to contribute to both the community and the University through the work that I have done. Being able to engage with, and be of assistance to the Tasmanian community, as part of my academic career, was immensely rewarding. In a state where education attainment levels are a significant issue, it is important that this University-community engagement continues, and I am in the unique and fortunate position of being able to ensure it does so.”
How do we measure our success?

1. We will develop a key performance indicator for each strategic area, and extrapolate this out to a set of community metrics, to enable a more nuanced idea of our success. We expect that our faculties and institutions will prioritise strategies and identify activities that meet them.

2. We will translate these metrics into community performance expectations for our academic staff, refined in such a way to enable them to measure their own engagement activities against the key performance indicator and metrics that best fit with their identified strategic areas for engagement. Across both professional and academic staff, this will have a cumulative impact for the University in meeting the key community performance indicators.

3. And finally, we will measure our impact. We will enable our staff to recognise the broader impact of their engagement activities on the social mission of the University, and we will use the community capitals framework developed by Flora and Flora (2004) to calculate the impact of the University’s engagement activities on the state of Tasmania.

The traditional Indonesian Ogoh-ogoh monster burning at Princes Wharf No. 1 as the closing event for Hobart festival Dark Mofo. University students volunteered to carry the monster to its pyre. School groups met with artists and community members from a wide range of backgrounds and joined the procession to ward off evil spirits. Image credit: Richard Jupe, Newspix.

Our commitment to engagement covers the whole spectrum of community, from young to old.

Active Launceston won the Healthy Weight Program category in the Heart Foundation Local Government Awards in 2009 and received a National Commendation award.

Partnerships such as the Antarctic Gateway Partnership not only position the University and Tasmania as a global leaders in Antarctica and Southern Ocean science, but also highlight the importance and impact of collaborative effort and activity.