Our History

Launched in February 2015, the Peter Underwood Centre is a partnership between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government in association with the Office of the Governor of Tasmania.

The Centre is the tangible expression of the Making the Future Partnership Agreement, and was founded with the full support of the University Council.

The Honourable Peter Underwood AC (Tasmania’s 27th Governor) began the conversation with the University of Tasmania that led to its creation, and we are honoured that the Centre bears his name. Mr Underwood was a passionate believer in the transformative power of education and held the conviction that the most important infrastructure of any nation is an educated and functionally literate population.

Mrs Frances Underwood is the Patron of the Peter Underwood Centre.

Our Advisory Committee was established in November 2015, under the leadership of Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC, Governor of Tasmania.

Our Director, Professor Natalie Brown, joined the Underwood Centre in June 2017.

The Underwood Centre convened the biennial Education Transform Symposium in 2015 and 2017, bringing together scholars, policy-makers and practitioners to focus on educational attainment.

In 2017 the Underwood Centre relocated to a new Hobart CBD office, which includes a new blended learning resource for the Tasmanian community to enhance engagement in learning. The A-Lab has been co-funded, co-designed and co-resourced by the University and the Department of Education.

"Education perhaps more than anything else is a passport to a better life.” - Peter Underwood

Thank you

Our approach is centred on collaborative practice. We hope to address our long-term outcomes to raise educational attainment through linking and leveraging the expertise of the Centre with other key stakeholders.

Our collaborations lie at the heart of what we do, and it is important that we take the time to acknowledge our Advisory Committee, chaired by Her Excellency, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC; our patron Mrs Frances Underwood; our colleagues in both the Tasmanian State Government and the University of Tasmania; our affiliates and supporters, schools and community organisations with whom we work; Learning Destination operators who contribute to Children’s University; our vitally important donors who support our activities; and the hard-working and dedicated staff of the Centre.

- Professor Natalie Brown
Director’s Report

It has been another exciting year of growth at the Peter Underwood Centre, as we continue our mission to transform the lives of all Tasmanians through education.

This is not a journey we have embarked on alone, nor will it be a short campaign. But I am proud to lead a team dedicated to championing this effort, and I am inspired by the progress that was made in 2018.

Our new blended learning resource, the A-Lab, has quickly developed significant momentum. There were 4363 interactions by the A-Lab with students, parents, educators and other community members.

The expansion of Children’s University Tasmania from 16 to 32 schools was another cause for celebration, and the graduation of 127 North-West members was a day to remember. The program has been extended to 10 schools in the North-West courtesy of a $350,000 grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund. It was my pleasure to acknowledge the TCF’s support at a school holiday program special event at the TIA Forthside Vegetable Research Facility Open Day. Children’s University Tasmania was also launched in the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands with assistance from Communities for Children South East Tasmania.

The Centre strengthened its relationship with the College of Arts, Law and Education by collaborating in five CALE Hothouse research projects, while our research and evaluation ties with the Department of Education also continued to grow.

A monthly segment on ABC Radio’s statewide program, Mornings with Sarah Gillman, was indicative of our growing presence in the media.

We have also embarked on a new project, Engagement with Learning. After working with visiting scholar, Professor Julian Sefton-Green, and holding ‘roundtable’ discussions with a range of stakeholders, the next phase of this collaboration with the Department of Education will be implementing a project plan.

Among the other many highlights of a busy year, was delivering a showcase of our engagement activities to the West Coast, where we plan to refine a model for taking our iconic projects to other communities around the state.

- Professor Natalie Brown
Our reach

757 Children’s University Tasmania members.

4363 Interactions by the A-Lab with students, parents, educators and other community members.

91 Media reports on the Peter Underwood Centre.

14 Research projects involved the Peter Underwood Centre in 2018.

21,011 Hours of validated activity by Children’s University graduates.

34 Teachers completed the requirements of the Graduate Certificate in Education (Early Childhood).
One of the new and exciting developments of 2018 was the opening of the Peter Underwood Centre’s blended learning space, the A-Lab. Located in the Peter Underwood Centre offices in Elizabeth Street, Hobart, the A-Lab has been co-funded, co-designed and co-resourced by the University of Tasmania and the Department of Education.

Officially launched on April 20, the A-Lab interacted with 2415 students, 254 parents, 433 other community members and 1261 educators in 2018. These were based around learning experiences that promote wonder, and are creative, thoughtful, challenging and empowering.

Peter Underwood Centre Director Professor Natalie Brown said the level of momentum which developed around the A-Lab - its productivity, scope and range of projects - had surpassed the expectations of both the Department of Education and the University of Tasmania.

“It is allowing us to connect and collaborate with other key stakeholders and trial new and creative ways of working that can be scaled up and handed on to advance our vision for young Tasmanians to flourish through the transformative power of learning,” Professor Brown said.

“With the co-location of senior State Government staff, the opportunity created by the A-Lab is being harnessed to achieve curriculum outcomes statewide.

“It is also being utilised by a number of community groups working in the education sphere.”

The numerous projects which utilised the A-Lab in 2018 have been grouped in three broad categories - Professional Learning, Student Learning and Internal/External Collaborations.

**The A-Lab Projects in 2018**

1. **Professional Learning:**
   - Graduate Certificate in Education (Technologies).
   - Blended Learning.
   - ICT Integration, STEM and the General Capabilities.
   - Digital Technologies.
   - Technology Showcase.

2. **Student Learning:**
   - A-Lab experiences.
   - Student Projects.
   - National Science Week Activities.
   - Festival of Bright Ideas.
   - West Coast Showcase.

3. **External and Internal Collaborations:**
   - Health Literacy for Kids.
   - ArTELLIER.
   - Child Family Centres App Development.
   - Lego Robotics.
   - Externally-funded Outreach.
   - Tasnetworks and F1 in Schools Australia.
   - Girls in Tech.
   - Libraries Tasmania.
   - EPR- Early Years.
   - Enterprize Tasmania - Family Code Club.
   - Drill Dance.
   - Bitlink.
   - The Archaeological Dig.
   - The Game.
   - Tagari lia Child Family Centre.
Knowledge creation, curation and dissemination

Horizon Series

A vibrant opportunity for inspiring informed debate on topics from children’s brain development to national and state education policy, the Horizon Series was again a central part of the Centre’s knowledge curation and dissemination.

Held monthly from February-November at each campus via the Immersive Video Conference Rooms, Horizon is an intimate format, which encourages the involvement of all attendees in open discourse.

Speakers generally present for about 30 minutes, and this is followed by a 30 minute question and answer session. But even this schedule is quite flexible.

Our presenters were:

- Mr Ben Wilson, Professional Learning Leader, Department of Education; Student engagement through blended learning.
- Professor Julian Sefton-Green, Professor of New Media Education, Deakin University, Melbourne; Tracing the non-formal learning sector: An international comparative project.
- Dr Laura Jana, US-based paediatrician, health communicator, early educator and award-winning author; Upstream Innovation: Nurturing the skills today that will shape our children’s tomorrow.
- Professor Michael Rowan, Emeritus Professor, University of South Australia; Adjunct Professor, University of Tasmania; Educational inequality in Tasmania: Evidence, explanations and exciting prospects for solution.
- Dr Helen Whitty, Consultant to the museum and cultural sectors; Literacies and families within a museum: An action shot.
- Mrs Lesley Richardson, Manager Australian School-based Apprenticeships, Department of Education; Education to Employment: A youth engagement strategy that is bridging the gap between school, VET, university and employment.
- Dr Glenn Savage, senior lecturer in education policy and sociology, ARC DECRA Fellow, University of Western Australia; Senior Honorary Fellow, University of Melbourne; A blessing and a curse - National schooling reform and the reshaping of state policy processes.
- Ms Tanya Ringuet, Advanced Skills Teacher, and three students, from the Launceston Big Picture School; 12 Big Picture School Distinguishers and how they guide learning and teaching practice.
- Mr Danny Sutton, Chief Executive Officer, Colony 47; Investing in person-centred and flexible education and employment pathways that support the courageous journeys of young people who experience disadvantage in our community.
- Dr Crispin Day, Head of The Centre for Parent and Child Support, UK; The Family Practice Model - Evidence, practice and research.
- Dr Jess Woodroffe, Academic Coordinator of the University Connections Program and High Achiever Program, University of Tasmania; Celebrating school-university partnerships in senior secondary education in Tasmania.
GREEN SHOOTS: Students from Mountain Heights School in Queenstown enjoying the green-screen technology during the West Coast Showcase.

Visiting Scholars

Professor Julian Sefton-Green worked with the Centre during 2018 on engagement in learning.

His contributions included a Horizon seminar on the non-formal learning sector in March; providing expert advice for the A-Lab; writing a provocation paper for the Engagement in Learning Roundtable at Government House; and supporting the West Coast Showcase.

Scott Dirix is the Senior Leader of Alternative Programs at Salisbury East High School in Adelaide.

He came to the Centre as a visiting scholar in June and provided a workshop, Alternative Actions to Education, offering insights for implementing successful in-school alternative learning programs within mainstream school sites.

The workshop took place at the Professional Learning Institute, with DoE staff from around the state linking in via videoconference.

Contributions to strategic policy and practice

Professor Natalie Brown:
- National Schools Resourcing Board.
- TASC Framework Advisory Council.
- Ministerial Roundtable ‘More Teachers Quality Teaching’.
- Professor Kitty te Riele:
- DoE Research Assessment and Approval Committee.

Dr Becky Shelley:
- B4 Coalition.
- Social Impact Program Steering Committee.
The growth of Children’s University Tasmania was one of the most striking outcomes for the Peter Underwood Centre in 2018. The number of schools involved in the program doubled from 16 to 32. Much of this growth was due to a $350,000 grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund which enabled Children’s University Tasmania to be extended to 10 schools in the North-West, and the Burnie graduation of 127 members was one of the most memorable events of the year.

The program was also launched in the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands, with assistance from Communities for Children South East Tasmania, which is facilitated by the Salvation Army. As part of this community-based model, Children’s University is also being offered to home educated children and young people during a 12-month trial.

The program had 757 members in 2018, with 343 in the North and 173 in the South - of those graduating at ceremonies in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart. Once again the Children’s University graduands had the honour of leading the University of Tasmania Town and Gown processions in each region. Graduates engaged in 21,011 hours of validated learning, and much of that took place at 191 Learning Destinations statewide. Members were also treated to a broad range of exciting school holiday programs — everything from an archaeological dig at the convict ruins of Kerry Lodge, at Breadalbane, to a coaching session at High Performance Cricket Tasmania.
A LETTER FROM ABBEY

"Dear whoever is reading this. I have loved this year in Children’s Uni and want to do it again. Thank you to Annie and Miss Graham, who has been by our side through it all. And my mum, she has taken her time to help me, and explains things I don’t understand.
So thank you all. I had so much fun at the graduation ceremony and I can’t wait to do it again next year.”

Thank you to:

- Financial support is offered by the Tasmanian Community Fund, Communities for Children - South East Tasmania (Salvation Army), Rotary and individual donors.
- The principals and teachers, and the Children’s University Tasmania school coordinators.
- More than 190 Learning Destinations statewide.

Engagement Project

This five-year project is being shaped through co-construction with the Department of Education, and informed by interactions with a broad range of stakeholders.

With funding support from the University of Tasmania, Professor Julian Sefton-Green worked with the Underwood Centre as a visiting scholar.

Professor Sefton-Green’s provocation paper, Terms of Engagement. A provocation paper about engagement in learning for the Peter Underwood Centre, enriched and expanded the Centre’s vision of this strategic pillar.

A roundtable on ‘engagement with learning’ was held at Government House to initiate the development of the project and was attended by senior leaders from government departments, community and non-government organisations.
Workforce Development

The Department of Education has worked closely with the University of Tasmania to develop a suite of initiatives that maximise opportunities for teachers. This strategy aims to attract and retain teachers, and support their development and performance to drive improved learning outcomes.

Highlights included:

Teacher Intern Placement Program
- Since 2016, 64 student interns in the program have transitioned to permanent positions within DoE.

Teacher Development Initiative (Mathematics and Science Specialists)
- 25 teachers successfully completed the Graduate Certificate in Mathematics Education.
- 12 teachers successfully completed the Graduate Certificate in Science Education.

Teacher Development Initiative (Early Childhood Specialisation)
- 34 teachers completed the requirements of the Graduate Certificate in Education (Early Childhood).

Teacher Development Initiative (Inclusive Education Specialisation)
- Since 2017, 22 teachers have graduated with a Graduate Certificate in Inclusive Education specialisation. This initiative is funded out of the Disability Taskforce budget which has been allocated by the Government to progress the reforms identified by the Taskforce.

Business Development Management Initiative
- 30 business managers and staff in non-school positions have graduated from the Associate Degree in Applied Business.

Leadership Development Initiative
- Throughout 2018, the Department and UTAS worked together to refresh the delivery of this initiative. In 2019, the Leadership Development Initiative will be delivered in partnership between the Department’s Professional Learning Institute (PLI) and UTAS to ensure a suite of leadership programs articulate to UTAS post-graduate units.
- 3 school and non-school staff graduated with a Bachelor of Education Professional Honours under the pre-2018 delivery model.

Paraprofessional Development Initiative
- 12 teacher assistants successfully completed all requirements of a Diploma in Education Support under the Paraprofessional Development Initiative.

Teacher Development Initiative Technology
- 21 teachers successfully completed the Graduate Certificate in Technologies Teaching and will graduate in 2019.

Sharon Lee has faced more than her share of challenges, including isolation and family turmoil, to achieve her life’s mission.

The King Island grandmother has devoted herself to helping others. Employed by five different organisations to provide care in her community, Sharon is also a full-time teacher aide at the King Island District High School.

But her heavy schedule didn’t stop her from seizing the opportunity to further develop her skills and expand her role in the classroom by studying for a Diploma of Education Support under the Paraprofessional Development Initiative.

"Just being selected for the Paraprofessional course was a moment of disbelief," she said.

"I was proud to be selected and recognised; what an honour it was to be given this opportunity."
**Media**

Coverage in all mainstream media formats, the University of Tasmania internal and external communications and media, and the Peter Underwood Centre’s own online and social media presence, continued to raise the awareness of the work of the Centre within Tasmania and beyond.

An analysis of this coverage on the Isentia Mediaportal showed there were 91 items on the Underwood Centre in the mainstream media - print, radio, television and online. An article on the Children’s University Tasmania graduation in Hobart, *Peter Underwood Centre’s program sets children on path to learning*, featured on all of NewsCorp Australia’s major metropolitan daily websites. Photos and articles on the Launceston and Burnie Children’s University graduations were published on the front page of the Examiner and The Advocate newspapers.

Southern Cross News ran an extensive report on a school holiday program for North-West Children’s University members at the TIA Forthside Vegetable Research Facility Open Day.

Major progress was made in building the media profiles of the Centre’s academic staff, who were regularly approached by the media to provide commentary on a broad range of education issues.

The introduction of a monthly, half-hour, segment on ABC Radio’s statewide program, *Mornings with Sarah Gillman*, featuring Centre staff was a tremendous fillip in this regard. The segments were:

- *Peter Underwood Centre Director, Professor Natalie Brown, talks Science, September 25.*
- *Peter Underwood Centre Director, Professor Natalie Brown, and Deputy Director, Dr Becky Shelley, talk Mathematics, October 30.*
- *Peter Underwood Centre Deputy Director, Dr Becky Shelley, and some special guests from Brighton Primary School discuss the Children’s University Tasmania graduations, November 27.*

The work of the Centre featured prominently on the University’s new Staff Intranet site.

Articles on the Centre’s blended learning space, the A-Lab, and the Children’s University Tasmania school holiday program, Kids Dig, were published in the July issue of the *Open to Talent* magazine.

**Digital Platforms**

The number of followers of the Peter Underwood Centre Facebook page almost doubled in 2018, while the Centre’s followers on Twitter increased by 37 per cent.

- 1030 subscribers to our mailing list.
- Facebook - 607 followers.
- Twitter – 302 followers.
Research

Research underpins everything that the Underwood Centre is and does.

Our research focus is to:

- produce knowledge on educational attainment that is of direct benefit to Tasmanians and that both learns from and informs national and international research;
- connect with local, national, and international organisations, think tanks, policy groups, and allied professional groups to share information and knowledge.

Projects

**Review of Literacy Teaching, Training and Practice in Government Schools.**
Funded by Department of Education, April 2017-December 2019.
Kitty te Riele, Elaine Stratford, Sarah Stewart.

**Raising Educational Attainment in Tasmania’s North-West.**
Becky Shelley, Karen Eyles, Kitty te Riele.

**Facilitating School-Parent-Community Partnerships Throughout Tasmania to Help Children Realise Their Educational Potential.**
Funded by Ian Potter Foundation, July 2016-July 2018.
Sue Kilpatrick, Elaine Stratford.

**Improving Education for Young People in Custody: Forging a Prison to Education Pipeline.**
Kitty te Riele, led by Julie White (Victoria University Melbourne).

**Launceston Big Picture School Evaluation.**
Becky Shelley, Kitty te Riele, Elaine Stratford, Oliver Grant, Melody West.

**Dare to Dream: A Comparative Analysis of Children’s University in Malaysia and Tasmania.**
Funded by the East Asia Institute, 2017-2018.
Becky Shelley, led by Can Seng Ooi (CALE).

**Independent Impact Evaluation of Outcomes for Students from the Collective Education Project.**
Kitty te Riele, Becky Shelley, with Tess Crellin.

**Impact evaluation of the Aboriginal Student Engagement Australian School-based Apprenticeship.**
Kitty te Riele, Natalie Brown, Becky Shelley, with Tess Crellin.

**It takes a special type of teacher: An investigation into the attributes of staff working with disengaged students.**
Funded by CALE Hothouse grant, 2018.
Kitty te Riele, led by Jeff Thomas.

**Child maltreatment, violence, offending and educational outcomes: review of the literature.**
Elaine Stratford, Roberta Julian, Becky Shelley, Doita Dutta.

**How convincing: Learning to write persuasively in regional secondary schools.**
Funded by CALE Hothouse grant, 2018.
Kitty te Riele mentor for lead CI Damon Thomas.
Putting the Spotlight on Learning, Motivation and Engagement
Funded by CALE Hothouse grant, 2018
Natalie Brown, led by Noleine Fitzallen (CALE)

STEAM HORIZONS: Engagement and Alignment through Interdisciplinary Education
Funded by CALE Hothouse grant, 2018
Natalie Brown, led by Abbey MacDonald (CALE)

Promoting Health Literacy in Tasmanian Primary Schools - Capturing, Curating and Evaluating Health Literacy Artefacts
Funded by CALE Hothouse grant, 2018
Becky Shelley, led by Kira Patterson (CALE)

Research students
Claire Tubman (PhD, 2017-2020). Consumer-brand relationships and student success at Australian regional higher education institutions.
Louisa Ellum (PhD, 2017-2021). Nature of partnerships in the alternative and flexible learning sector.
Nicola Shepherd (PhD, 2018-2023). Reengagement at TasTAFE: Challenges and Enablers for Early School Leavers.

For more information and other projects follow this link:
http://www.utas.edu.au/underwood-centre/research

Knowledge sharing

Books:


Book chapters:


Journal articles:


Conference Presentations:

Presentations to other audiences:


Shelley, B. (2018) "What is B4? And how can you play your part to make sure ‘every child in Tasmania is cared for and nurtured through the early years, no matter what.” Workshop, Southern Principals Forum, 22 August.

Shelley B. (2018) "Children's University Tasmania – evidence and issues", University of the Third Age, Rosny, 19 October.


Brown, N., Shelley B., and Ooi, Can Seng. (2018) "50 Things to Do on the West Coast before you are 13 and ¾ , Business Leaders Queenstown, 6 November.


Reports:


Our People

Peter Underwood Centre team 2018:

- Director, Professor Natalie Brown.
- Deputy Director, Professor Kitty te Riele.
- Deputy Director, Dr Becky Shelley.
- Research and Engagement Fellow, Melody West.
- Senior Project Manager Oliver Grant.
- Communications Manager Sean Stevenson.
- Executive Assistant Helen Eastley.
- Program Coordinator (Cradle Coast) Karen Eyles.
- Regional Lead (South) Georgia Sutton.
- Regional Lead (North) Marcel Kerrison.
- Regional Lead (North-West) Jesse Brennan.
- Community Engagement Development Officer Stuart Thorn.
- Research Associate (Literacy Review Project) Dr Sarah Stewart.
- Research Assistant Megan Lang.
- Research Assistant Tess Crellin.
- (Co-located) Department of Education Principal Education Officer - A-Lab Projects Rosemary Anderson.
"Education perhaps more than anything else is a passport to a better life." - Peter Underwood