University of Tasmania research project to help young Tasmanians set up healthy habits for life

The University of Tasmania is funding a project which aims to find lasting ways to improve Tasmania’s childhood and adolescent obesity and overweight statistics, which are some of the highest in the country.

The inaugural #ImReady project will help students at the Big Picture School at Inveresk develop new approaches to reduce the risk of developing chronic illnesses later in life.

University Faculty of Health Deputy Dean (Research) Professor Andrew Hills said there was an urgent need to address the nutrition and physical activity challenges facing adolescent girls in Tasmania, which are often neglected with many other big challenges happening at this stage of their lives.

#ImReady is an eight-week school based pilot program supporting the development of healthy lifestyle habits.

Throughout Term 3 local organisations will run sessions each Wednesday morning for a select group of students, encouraging them to stay connected with local groups after the program finishes.

The sessions include team building, healthy eating, Pilates, self-defence, parkrun, sexual and reproductive health, mindfulness and laser tag.

“A critical element to this program is that it is student-led. Students have been engaged in the design of the program to best identify which areas they would like to increase their knowledge and the activities they are most likely to engage with,” Professor Hills said.

“A particular focus of this work is the improvement of health literacy for the students, their families and the broader community.

“We’re excited to see what impact the #ImReady project can have in supporting sustainable behaviour change.”
The Big Picture School Principal James Price said his students were really excited to be involved with the #ImReady program.

“It supports our students to grow up to be the best people they can be, engaging with their community and staying healthier for longer,” he said.

“#ImReady provides us with the opportunity to extend student learning with hands-on, real life experience, that will set them up for life.”

#ImReady is a pilot project with the intention of collecting baseline data to inform a larger research project in the future. It is funded by the University of Tasmania Community Engagement Grant Scheme.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

WHEN: TODAY, Wednesday, July 26, 9:45 for interviews, class starts at 10am with photo and filming opportunities.
WHERE: Big Picture School, Inveresk.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

Professor Andrew Hills, Deputy Dean Research, Faculty of Health; James Price, Principal, Big Picture School.

Information released by:
University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office
Phone: 61 3 6226 2124
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au