



UNIVERSITY *of*
TASMANIA

Tuesday, 13 March 2018

Future doctors put emergency skills to the test

University of Tasmania medical students will put their disaster response skills into practice this week, during simulated mass-casualty training exercises in the North-West.

The Rural Clinical School (RCS) is facilitating its annual Emergency Skills course on the edge of the Tarkine (**Thursday, 15 March**) which immerses future doctors in realistic remote medical scenarios.

Students will be challenged to assess, diagnose and treat a number of coordinated pretend patients with varying symptoms in environments where limited resources are available.

They will also gain experience working with the emergency services to facilitate mock patient retrievals in areas that are difficult to access.

Dr Lizzi Shires, Director of the RCS, said students would be guided by emergency service representatives, health professionals and University staff.

"The medical students will be challenged to exercise time-critical judgement and respond to casualty events which they have no prior knowledge of," Dr Shires said.

"Each scenario has been designed to be as realistic as possible. This helps prepare students for experiencing and responding to the real thing when they are doctors.

"They will have to assess the environment and examine deteriorating and critically unwell patients who require immediate care. In some cases, there will be casualties who are unconscious and in need of CPR.

"The course is also an opportunity to get students thinking about achieving the best patient outcomes in partnership with the emergency services and local health partners when dealing with emergencies in rural or remote settings."

Coordinator of the wilderness program component Dr Nick Towle said Emergency Skills would push the students to put their clinical knowledge into practice.

"There will be five authentic wilderness emergencies taking place at the Julius River Forest Reserve, followed by a mass casualty incident near Smithton," Dr Towle said.

"The scenarios will throw up new challenges where the students are expected to respond efficiently, effectively and in some cases, improvise in locations where resources aren't readily available or accessible.

"While they might be good at responding in a typical clinical setting, it is important that students develop their skills in unfamiliar environments such as the remote wilderness."

The Emergency Skills course will commence at the Rural Clinical School on Wednesday, 14 March, with a hands-on skills rotation before students travel to Circular Head for the emergency exercises.

Residents and visitors in the municipality should be mindful of the training operation on Thursday, 15 March, which will result in a significant visual presence of emergency personnel at Julius River Forest Reserve between 10am – 1pm, and the Riverbend Youth Centre on Trowutta Road, Scotchtown, around 5pm.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

Thursday, 15 March

Wilderness emergency scenarios

10am – 1pm

Julius River Forest Reserve (Access off Sumac Road)

Students will be responding to realistic remote wilderness scenarios involving a number of casualties presenting with various medical conditions. Students will be working in teams to manage each situation with the support of staff and emergency service personnel as they treat patients and also undertake retrievals.

Mass casualty incident

5pm

Riverbend Youth Centre, 258 Trowutta Road, Scotchtown

Students will respond to an unforeseen mass casualty incident where they will be required to treat serious and life-threatening injuries, a local SES crew will conduct patient extrications at the scene and transport them to a mock field hospital. Students will work closely with the emergency services to reach the best and safest outcomes. The simulated scenario will result in a large visual presence in the area.

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