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## Peter Underwood Centre to strengthen connection with the West Coast

The Peter Underwood Centre will be delivering a showcase of its engagement activities during a three-day visit to the West Coast, beginning today **[Wednesday November 7]**.

Peter Underwood Centre director Professor Natalie Brown said the visit was the next step in developing ongoing connections with the West Coast community.

"We have chosen the West Coast to refine a model for taking our iconic projects, Engagement with Learning and Children's University Tasmania, to other communities around the State," Professor Brown said.

"It is imperative to provide equitable access to our activities throughout the state, and the West Coast community has already displayed a lot of support and energy towards us and taken on board our perspective that education is everyone's business."

The involvement of the Peter Underwood Centre follows a commitment by the University of Tasmania to address the challenges and barriers to accessing education and training on the West Coast.

The University has appointed a Community Learning Officer, West Coast Education Project, Alesha Harvey, to liaise with community, industry, schools and training organisations about educational initiatives already underway in the region, and to scope the possible creation of future initiatives.

Representatives from the Peter Underwood Centre will be offering a series of fun learning activities at the West Coast Community Services Hub, and schools in Queenstown, Strahan, Rosebery and Zeehan.

The Peter Underwood Centre Showcase will demonstrate the use of interactive technology such as Virtual Reality, 360-degree cameras, robotic vehicles, green screen, digital microscopes and more.

Professor Brown will be speaking at a meeting of the Education and Training Advisory Committee (ETAC) tonight, and the Centre will host a dinner for local

education and community leaders in Queenstown on Thursday night, which will be addressed by visiting scholar Professor Julian Sefton-Green.

"We will be exploring ways in which we can engage children and families with learning," she said.

"We will also be talking to teachers about how we can support professional learning.

"Our showcase will include a session at the Child and Family Centre.

"We have a major interest in the early years, and we are working in close collaboration with the B4 Early Years Coalition."

Another priority for the visit is to expedite the extension of Children's University Tasmania to the region.

The program, which provides opportunities for a diverse range of learning experiences outside of school hours, is now offered in 33 schools around the State and has close to 800 members.

"When we visited the West Coast last year there was a lot of interest in Children's University Tasmania, so we have responded to that," Professor Brown said.

The Peter Underwood Centre already has strong ties to the West Coast through the work of Department of Education curriculum officer Rose Anderson, who is co-located at the Centre's blended learning space, the A-Lab.

Students at the Mountain Heights School, in Queenstown, are developing science and geography content for 360-degree images of Queenstown, which are already being used as a learning tool with the A-Lab's immersive technology.

West Coast teachers are also accessing the A-Lab's professional learning program Digital Bytes.

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

**Media contact:** Sean Stevenson 0438 244 162, email: [sean.stevenson@utas.edu.au](mailto:sean.stevenson@utas.edu.au)

**Information released by:**

Communications and Media Office  
University of Tasmania  
+61 3 6226 2124

[Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)

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