

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tuesday, 2 January 2018

Tasmania's first rural interns revealed as University graduates hit the hospital wards

University of Tasmania medical graduates are beginning the next stage of their professional journeys as doctors in the North-West **today** (Tuesday, 2 January).

Twelve students who completed the final years of a Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery at the Rural Clinical School in Burnie are remaining in the region to kick-start their careers as hospital interns on the Coast.

Among the group are two of Tasmania's first-ever rural interns, who will head to Queenstown and King Island to start their internship year in a remote setting.

Six of their colleagues will also have the opportunity to rotate through this placement in addition to the traditional hospital rotations.

Director of the Rural Clinical School Dr Lizzi Shires said it was exciting to see University graduates filling all 12 of the 2018 internships offered in the region.

"This is a wonderful outcome for the North-West that will ultimately increase the capacity of rural medical services," Dr Shires said.

"We are proud that these graduates have opted to remain in the region to further their careers, and these rural intern posts will increase their rural skills and caring for people in the more remote areas of the North-West.

"It is exciting to see University graduates taking up the very first rural internships to ever be offered in Tasmania; an initiative which aims to get young doctors working in rural areas during the early stages of their careers.

"The first doctors to take up these posts have already been there as students and are keen to return.

"By having junior doctors in rural placements for longer, we anticipate they are more likely to return and practice in these areas after completing all of their training."

The 2018 North-West interns are undertaking an orientation program at the Rural Clinical School before commencing their hospital or rural placements.

University graduates taking up North-West internships in 2018 are: Jacqueline Lim (starting at Queenstown), Emily Doole (starting at King Island), Nathan Vos, Dong Cheah, Callan Oakeshott, Ben Dodds, Chris Etherington, William Hughes, Shivanthi Bartlett, Alex Zucchi, Ellen Bateman and Gabby Reardon; all of whom will be based in the North-West.

A further three University of Tasmania graduates will commence the first rural placements to be offered at St Helens, Huonville and Flinders Island next week.

Tasmanian Health Service Intern of the Year & Resident Medical Officer Awards:

In a further achievement for the University's Rural Clinical School, members of its alumni will be named as recipients of two prestigious health service awards at an event in Burnie **TOMORROW (Wednesday, 3 January)**.

The Intern of the Year Award and Resident Medical Officer Award recognise the achievements of a North-West intern and the region's top-performing junior doctor.

Recipients are selected following a poll of medical, nursing, allied health staff and management at the North-West Regional Hospital and Mersey Community Hospital.

Professor Ben Canny, Head of the University's School of Medicine said the awards reinforced a clear career path for local graduates.

"This is a wonderful example of the ongoing journey our graduates are making in the North-West as doctors after completing their degrees, particularly after studying at the Rural Clinical School," Professor Canny said.

"Many have demonstrated a commitment to remaining in the region to forge their careers through the internship year, and afterwards, by taking up roles as junior doctors.

"We are proud that our medical graduates are continuing to achieve great things."

The awards are presented in honour of Dr Paul Huang, a radiologist at the North-West Regional Hospital for many years until his retirement in the early 1990s, and Dr Richard Buttfeld, a former Director of Medical Services at the North-West Regional Hospital and then CEO of the North-West Health Region in the early 1990s.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:

What: 2018 internship welcome and awards event

When: **TOMORROW** Wednesday, 3 January, 1pm

Where: Rural Clinical School, North-West Regional Hospital, Brickport Road, Burnie

***The 2018 North-West interns will be available for photo/filming/interview opportunities at the Tasmanian Health Service Intern of the Year & Resident Medical Officer Awards event.**

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