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## **ISLAND Project exceeds participant target as it expands into south of State**

Tasmania is leading the way in dementia research with the response to the world's largest study into reducing the risk exceeding the initial participation target.

Launched in June this year, the ISLAND Project (Island Study Linking Ageing and Neurodegenerative Disease) aims to prevent dementia through empowering people to self-manage significant modifiable dementia risk factors.

The project aimed to recruit 10,000 community participants, aged 50 and over.

The project has reached its initial target of 10,000 participants in less than six months since the launch, with the project looking to recruit more participants as it expands into southern Tasmania.

St.LukesHealth is supporting the ISLAND project, signing a three-year partnership to enable the Wicking Centre to employ a southern-based project officer to build awareness of dementia and its risk factors within the Tasmanian community.

"We have had an overwhelming response from people wanting to participate in the ISLAND project," Distinguished Professor James Vickers said, Director of the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, which runs the project.

"The response reflects the desire from the Tasmanian community to learn more about dementia and understand how individuals can shift the modifiable risk factors associated with the disease.

"Having St.LukesHealth on board will help the Wicking Centre to further respond to the community need and go beyond our initial target of 10,000.

"The more people involved in the project, the better the outcome in trying to empower and educate the community about modifiable risk factors that could potentially lower the risk of dementia.

"This is important as Tasmania has the oldest population in the country, which is ageing faster than the national average, and age is the biggest risk factor for dementia."

The ISLAND Project is the first campaign in the world to target a whole population through a public health, research and educational campaign.

The project aims to develop a toolbox to assist participants in monitoring dementia risk factors and behaviours, through combining the Centre's Preventing Dementia MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) with community co-developed and led programs.

The project will also establish a state-wide registry to track the incidence of dementia.

The registry will also assist in understanding the impact of dementia across the health system in Tasmania.

The project currently has a North West-based project officer, and support from St.LukesHealth will enable the project to further expand into southern Tasmania.

The Wicking Centre is part of the University of Tasmania's College of Health and Medicine.

For more information about the project, or visit <https://islandproject.utas.edu.au/>

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