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MICHELLE O’BYRNE
Minister for Health

PROFESSOR PETER RATHJEN
Vice Chancellor, UTAS

North West Elphinstone Scholarships in Radiation Sciences awarded today

Three talented young North West students were presented with scholarships today to assist both their studies and their local community.

University of Tasmania students Tom Graham, Dylan Pettingill and Sarah Johnstone have each been granted an Elphinstone Scholarship in Radiation Sciences under Round One of the program.

The scholarship program has been jointly funded by local businessman Dale Elphinstone and the Tasmanian Government and is designed to ensure the North West retains university graduates who are trained to operate specialised equipment including a future MRI machine and linear accelerator.

The three students are all completing a Bachelor of Health Science/Medical radiation Science (Medical Imaging ) degree which is completed at UTAS and Charles Sturt University in Wagga.

19-year-old Sarah Johnstone, of Turners Beach is currently in her first year of studies, while 20-year-old Dylan Pettingill, of Burnie, and 21-year-old Thomas Graham, of Eugenana are both in the their third year.

The structure of the Elphinstone Scholarship in Medical Radiation Sciences (4.6 year degree) is as follows:

- **Year 1 and 2** (UTAS, Launceston campus) - $20,000 per year to cover accommodation and travel, HECS fees and an allowance for books and equipment.
- **Year 3 and 4** (Charles Sturt University, Wagga): $21,000 per year to cover accommodation and air travel, HECS fees and an allowance for books and equipment.
- **Year 5 residency** (6-8 months) - $14,000 to cover accommodation, HECS fees and an allowance for books and equipment.

Tasmanian Health Minister Michelle O'Byrne said the scholarships were a fantastic initiative in supporting the future expansion of cancer services on the North West West.

“Together with the Australian Government, we are investing more than $30 million in a new Cancer Care Centre at North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) to provide the region with comprehensive cancer care services,” Minister O'Byrne said.

“A future magnetic imaging machine (MRI) has also been funded for the NWRH through a generous donation by Mr Elphinstone.

“To provide these services in the North West we need to invest in the training of specialised health professionals.

“Today’s launch is an important step in the joint investment plan for the future of cancer care services in this region.”

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said the scholarships would help the recipients gain the essential knowledge and skills needed for forging a career in the area of medical radiation sciences.

“It is very pleasing to see these dedicated students rewarded for their hard work by the very generous Elphinstone Scholarships,” Prof Rathjen said.

"I extend my warm congratulations to the recipients.

“Not only do these generous scholarships help these students to learn new skills and gain valuable experience in the industry, they also enable them to focus full on their studies without the added stress of concern about money for textbooks and fees."

“It is also heartening to know that the scholarship recipients’ hard work now will reward them and their local North West community in the future.”

In return for the scholarships, the successful students today entered into a contract with the North West Area Health Service (NWAHS) to work in the North West region for a three year period, beginning within five years of graduation, subject to employment position being available within that time.

The recipients will also be given employment within the NWAHS during university holidays to encourage them to retain links with the region.

Ms O'Byrne again thanked the Elphinstone family for their generous donation towards the training of these local medical experts, as well as their earlier donation of $1.3m toward an MRI machine.
“Dale Elphinstone is very passionate about the provision of cancer services in the North West region. The region is very lucky to have an advocate like him who is willing to contribute in such a significant way to health services,” she said.

The Elphinstone Scholarships in Radiation Sciences are open to all students from North West Tasmania who are eligible to enter the combined UTAS/Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Health Science/Medical Radiation Science (Medical Imaging) course.

The $1.2m bonded scholarship program will run for the next five years.