



Tuesday 28 January 2020

A week on Maria Island: chance of a lifetime for budding marine biologists

Applications are now open for year 11 and 12 students from around Australia who want to experience life as a marine biologist for a week on Tasmania's rugged Maria Island.

Just 24 places are available for the six-day *XAS101: A Practical Introduction to Temperate Marine Biology* course during the April school holidays, including five days on Maria Island and one day at IMAS in Hobart.

Four Tasmanian and five interstate students will be awarded scholarships while 15 non-scholarship places will also be offered to successful applicants for the course, which runs from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 April.

The course usually costs \$645 but will be free for the nine scholarship winners, with those from interstate to be flown to Hobart to experience the unique environment that Tasmania has to offer.

Budding marine biologists [who wish to apply](#) will have to demonstrate a keen interest and/or experience in the marine environment, or socio-economic or geographic disadvantage.

Course coordinator Dr Scott Ling said the course allows Year 11 and 12 students to experience university-level units alongside their pre-tertiary studies.

"Maria Island is a beautiful, unique place and a fantastic location for budding marine biologists to get a taste of life as a scientist," Dr Ling said.

"The course is extremely popular, and each year we receive hundreds of high-quality applications from across the country, so competition for places is very strong.

"Those offered a place will have a once-in-a-lifetime experience while learning how to collect data in the field describing Tasmania's unique marine biodiversity.

"Students will go diving as well as monitoring marine life along the shore and will develop keen skills of observation and an eye for detail.

"Tasmania's East Coast is at the forefront of climate change, with the Tasman Sea warming faster than almost anywhere else in the world," Dr Ling said.

"Each year, we observe more changes, including the arrival of warm-water invasive species from northerly waters.

"The data collected by course participants will be used for real scientific research and contributes to our ongoing monitoring of changes along the Tasmanian coastline.

"Many of the students who've done the course enjoyed it so much that they've gone on to the IMAS degree program at the University of Tasmania, ranked one of the best places in the world to study marine science," Dr Ling said.

XAS101 is offered with a HECS-waiver so students will not attract any extra tuition fees, and successful completion can be used to contribute one unit (12.5%) to a University of Tasmania marine science degree.

To receive a scholarship application pack [visit the IMAS website](#) or copy this address into a web browser:

<http://www.imas.utas.edu.au/study/undergraduate/marinediscoverycompetition>

Scholarship applications close at midnight on Monday 24 February 2020.

Media contact: Andrew Rhodes (03) 6226 6683, email: ajrhodes@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

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

Media.Office@utas.edu.au

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