



UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA

Monday 3 June 2019

***** Embargoed until 9.30am, today (Monday, 3 June 2019) *****

Media opportunity – TODAY (Monday, 3 June) – (9.15am, Hobart/3.45pm, Ulverstone. Further details below story)

Tasmania to lead the world in reducing risk factors for dementia

A major research project designed to help prevent dementia through empowering people to self-manage significant modifiable dementia risk factors will be launched today (**Monday, 3 June**).

The ISLAND (Island Study Linking Ageing and Neurodegenerative Disease) Project, run by the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, will be the largest dementia study of its kind in the world.

The project will involve the whole of Tasmania, with the Wicking Dementia Centre seeking to recruit 10,000 community participants aged 50 and over to help shift the risk of the entire population of the State.

Wicking Dementia Centre Director Professor James Vickers said the project is long term and the first in the world to target a whole population through a public health and educational campaign.

“Age is the biggest risk factor for dementia, and Tasmania has the oldest population in the country which is ageing faster than the national average,” he said.

“Tasmania also has high rates of modifiable risk factors of dementia; however it has been estimated that a third of dementia cases may be prevented if the population can attend to these risk factors.”

The ISLAND Project aims to develop a toolbox to assist participants in monitoring dementia risk factors and behaviours, and will 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 will provide strategies for individuals and communities to promote and engage in activities to improve many dementia risk factors," Professor Vickers said.

The project will combine engagement in the Wicking Dementia Centre's internationally successful Preventing Dementia MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), with a variety of community co-developed and led programs, to empower and educate the community about modifiable factors that could potentially lower the risk of dementia.

The project will also see participants engage in a range of ancillary research studies to identify those at most risk of dementia through a combination of like factors, for example resilience, genetics, biomarkers, health data surveys and clinic activity studies.

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

Specific components of the ISLAND Project have been initially funded by the Medical Research Future Fund and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

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

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY – INTERVIEWS/PHOTOS – TODAY (Monday, 3 June 2019)

****Professor James Vickers will be available for interviews/photos in Hobart and Ulverstone as part of the launch****

HOBART: Interviews from 9.15am, launch at 9.30am at the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre. Medical Science Precinct (cnr of Liverpool and Campbell sts, Hobart).

ULVERSTONE: Interviews from 3.45pm, launch at 4pm at the Leven Centre, Mt St Vincent Nursing Home (75 South Road, West Ulverstone).

For media enquiries: Chantel Crossman, Wicking Dementia Centre Stakeholder Engagement Manager, 0417 717 710.

Information released by:

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