

Media release

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Hospital Pharmacists welcome fast-tracked UTas Pharmacy course for workforce sustainability

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has today welcomed and congratulated the University of Tasmania on its launch of the three-year Fast-Track Bachelor of Pharmacy with Honours degree, attended by SHPA Tasmanian Branch Chair, Kelly Beswick.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the launch of the innovative degree, to begin in 2023 – which will include student placements in Hospital Pharmacy departments – is welcomed by Hospital Pharmacists at a time when the sector faces workforce shortages, particularly in the regions.

‘Over the last eight years, the public and private Hospital Pharmacy workforce has almost doubled in Tasmania with 120 Hospital Pharmacists in 2014 to just over 200 today.

‘With 23 Hospital Pharmacy interns annually employed by the Tasmanian Health Service, this also represents the highest Hospital Pharmacy intern recruitment rate per-capita of all Australian jurisdictions.

‘Hospital Pharmacy will continue to grow as the Tasmanian Government is anticipated to further invest in our sectors’ skills and resources, such as through digital health pharmacists to ensure medicines safety for the Tasmanian Government’s statewide Electronic Medical Record system, to be implemented in the coming years as part of its Digital Health Strategy.

‘These exciting and emerging new roles are among the reasons 82% of pharmacy graduates want to work in the hospital sector. SHPA Tasmanian Branch has also identified emerging opioid stewardship roles across Tasmania and antimicrobial stewardship in North West Tasmanian hospitals as areas of necessary future investment.’

The new three-year Fast-Track Bachelor of Pharmacy will be delivered across Tasmania’s regions in Hobart, Launceston and the Cradle Coast, replacing the four-year degree based in the state’s capital.

Ms Michaels says, ‘It is exciting to see new and innovative delivery models that offers flexibility and reflects our contemporary world. More importantly, the more pharmacy students there are studying in the regions, the more likely these graduates will seek job opportunities in the regions where pharmacist shortages are felt the most. This will assist the Tasmanian Health Service to achieve staffing requirements described in SHPA’s [Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services](#).’

‘SHPA has introduced [Foundation Residencies](#) to early career Hospital Pharmacists across Hobart and Launceston since their 2017 launch, and we welcome further collaboration with the Tasmanian Health Service to expand the program to all sites across the state to ensure pharmacy graduates in Tasmania have the best possible start to their Hospital Pharmacy careers.’

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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