

Monday 28 May 2012

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Medical Research boosted in the North West with  
commencement of Research Fellow**

With an objective of supporting healthy aging in the community and effective integration of acute care access when and where required, Dr Judi Parson has commenced a new Research Fellowship based at the UTAS Rural Clinical School in Burnie.

Made possible by a generous family donation, the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation (RHHRF) has been able to support administration of this two-year appointment which is aimed to build research experience and practice delivery, focusing particularly on the local community.

RHHRF CEO, Heather Francis, said that investment in this form of research provides several benefits for the area. "Dr Parson's appointment as Research Fellow provides a focus on the needs of the region, with the research outcomes to provide valuable evidence around which to build upon existing models of care across the community - locally, nationally and internationally."

"The creation of this new role will drive what is known as a practice development research program, adding to a network of similar investigations occurring statewide. While Dr Parson's support is aimed to deliver better health outcomes across Tasmania over the longer term, her appointment as a Research Fellow in this region also allows her to work with others in building research momentum and capacity," she said.

Dr Parson said a vital first step of her Fellowship will be to profile the current level of community care available for older North West residents. "It will be important to identify the therapies currently available and to map access to other specialist services and clinics," she said.

Armed with that understanding, Dr Parson will drive a tailored research program which will have both an inter-professional and rural focus, responding to areas of need.

With the family's donation providing \$30,000 for 'seed funding' of these emerging projects, Dr Parson noted an anticipation that high calibre clinicians would be attracted to research these issues that impact upon aging and acute care. "These research team members will add equally to our health service delivery through adoption of improved practices," she said.

"This significant funding, provided through the RHH Research Foundation, is vital to establishment of statewide critical mass and will provide a springboard for research activity upon which future competitive research funding bids can then be built," she said.

Dr Parson has enjoyed a clinically diverse nursing career through which she has practiced in various specialty fields including paediatrics, aged care, and radiology. After extensive

national and international experience, Dr Parson returned to her native home in order to complete her PhD while residing in Smithton in 2004. Dr Parson's research interests include the psychosocial health of older Tasmanians and she is particularly eager to investigate the types of and access to therapeutic services currently available for older individuals in the North West region of Tasmania.

**For more info:** RHHRF CEO, Heather Francis - 0407 201 113

**Media event:** RHHRF CEO - Heather Francis  
New Research Fellow - Associate Professor, Judi Parson  
UTAS Rural Clinical School - Professor of Nursing, Isabelle Ellis

1.00pm, Tuesday 29 May  
Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame, Bells Parade, Latrobe