

Community News

Breaking the silence around violence



Participants walked a mile across Hobart in women's shoes for the Harcourts Foundation Walk a Mile in Their Shoes event on 1 September.

A LARGE crowd of Harcourts staff, family, friends and supporters have marched a mile in women's shoes to show solidarity and bring attention to the issue of violence against women.

Harcourts Foundation's Walk a Mile in Their Shoes raises awareness and much-needed funds to support White Ribbon Australia's work to end men's violence against women.

Now in its fifth year, Hobart was one of eight locations across Australia

to host the event, which saw participants march down Collins Court in Collins Street, along Elizabeth Street to Salamanca Square.

With more than 600 people registered nationwide, the event raised more than \$100,000 for the cause.

Harcourts International managing director Mike Green said violence against women was never a "private issue."

"We held this event to help break the silence around violence, to raise

awareness of the issue, as well as funds to support work to bring violence against women to an end," he said.

"The women lost are not just statistics – they are wives, mothers, daughters, granddaughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, friends and colleagues.

"More importantly, they are people and the impact of the violence perpetrated against them is widespread and long-standing.

"We want people to know that violence

against women is unacceptable, it is never the victim's fault, help is always available and if you see something, then you should definitely say something.

"People need to know that they can make a difference, bringing an end to men's violence against women will take a whole of community approach."

For more information about Walk a Mile in Their Shoes, visit www.mycause.com.au/events/walkamileintheirshoes.

The gateway to science innovation

FROM FRONT PAGE

WITH the demand for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related expertise in the workforce increasing, it has never been more important to ensure young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills for their future careers.

Tasked with encouraging more young women to develop a life-long love of learning in the sciences, St Mary's College is offering a STEM Inquiry Based Learning unit for year 10 students studying science in 2017.

As part of this unit, six students have teamed up with STEM volunteers from the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and CSIRO to conduct open-ended science investigations into contemporary STEM concepts.

The projects, which involve more than 100 hours of research in areas ranging from astrophysics to microbial biodegradation, will be eligible for submission into the CSIRO CREST program, UTAS Science Investigation Awards and Tasmanian Science Talent Search.

St Mary's College science coordinator Heather Ormatt said the program stimulated an interest in STEM learning by engaging students in "real world" activities beyond the classroom.

"This focus on translating research into practice complements the excellent science program we have at St Mary's College, which encourages our students to 'discover by doing' – to think, observe, question and solve problems," she said.

Among the unit's most valuable offerings are the connections that students forge with leading Tasmanian STEM researchers and practitioners, Mrs Ormatt said. "The projects acknowledge the significant impact that relationships with role models and mentors, especially female, have on girls' perceptions of their abilities to excel in science-based careers," she said.

St Mary's College year 10 student Eloise Deconinck is working alongside Dr Karen Barry, from UTAS, on an ongoing project that is examining the biodegradability properties of microbes (bacteria and fungi) found on plastics recovered from compost.

The 15-year-old was recently recognised for her innovative scientific research at the BHP Billiton Science and Engineering Awards, where she was named as a national finalist.

"This project gives us a taste of what university life will be like," Eloise said.

"We get to work in the lab and network with

students and teachers who have years of knowledge and experience.

"We have had opportunities to drive all aspects of the research, from being in contact with mentors to collecting and then applying the data."

Fellow year 10 student Saakshi Dhakal said it was vital that young women and girls considering a career in STEM had positive female role models to look up to.

"St Mary's College teaches us that science is a great pathway for women," the budding astrophysicist said, whose project is investigating the techniques used to determine the age of lesser-known stars.

"We are fortunate to have such wonderful teachers like Mrs Ormatt to encourage us to pursue a degree in science, along with fantastic facilities like our Women in Science Centre."

The students participating in the project are Chloe Cooper, who is looking at the relationship between insects and plant

pollination; Alana Bellette, who is studying the effects of climate change in different Tasmanian regions through the emergence times of plants, and Spriha Paudel and Keeley Hine-Haycock, whose joint investigation is testing possible drug treatments for dementia-related disease.

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