

Community Friends & Networks Programme (CFNP)

The Community Friends & Networks Programme (CFNP) is an exciting initiative which demonstrates UTAS' ongoing commitment to recognising the value of a positive broader student experience. It recognises the benefits of international students 'living' with the community beyond their educational institutions to fully embrace their experience of studying across the world. CFNP's purpose is to enhance the experience of a 'new to town' UTAS student by supporting them to build social connections and networks within the local Tasmanian community during their academic stay.

'Go Local! - People, Clubs, Events' is the CFNP strategy that links 'new to town' students to local life opportunities. For both students and volunteering Tasmanians it is an innovative way to expand social or cultural horizons. Both students and locals in the programme are currently reflecting that the experience has been so much more than they imagined.

In recognition of diverse needs and personalities, the programme is developing and exploring a range of initiatives that will offer CFNP participants a broader choice of opportunities through which to expand networks and gain insight into the local community life. Current initiatives being trialled in the South are: 'The Storytellers Program: where 'new to town' students and local school students build relationships through stories, activities and discussions exploring diversity, identity and themes such as citizenship and culture. Volunteering: Facilitated volunteer experiences that relate to an individual's personal or academic interests, and exploring Tasmania in a hands-on way. Partnerships: CFNP believes in the positive impact of mutually beneficial and effective partnerships, based on shared aspired outcomes around community engagement, social inclusion and local relevance.

The feedback to the CFNP programme is that international students are being able to actively engage with the community in a purposeful way, maximising participation, and creating meaningful relationships.

Key Words

Community engagement, connection, participation