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New website aims to help academics juggle family and career

The personal experience of a new mother juggling a career as a university researcher has led to the creation of a new website designed to help parents cope with the twin pressures of parenthood and academia.

The brainchild of Dr Kirsty Nash, an IMAS Research Fellow, akidemiclife.com was launched in Hobart today by the Governor of Tasmania, Professor Kate Warner, who raised a family while a senior academic in the University's Faculty of Law.

Dr Nash said she hoped the free resources provided by the website will empower and connect thousands of carers and parents around the world working in academic settings.

"The most important lesson I have learnt since I had my daughter is that the phrase 'it takes a village to raise a child' may be a cliché, but it is very true," Dr Nash said.

"Parents need immense support.

"Having a successful career in academia on top of being a parent is a massive challenge."

"I recently returned to work at the University of Tasmania after the birth of my daughter, a break that was extended by post-natal depression.

"I was incredibly lucky to receive an enormous amount of help over this period from both colleagues and support and health services around Hobart.

"It is this network of supporters that made my return to research possible."

Dr Nash said many parents, and mothers in particular, don't receive enough support and don't have time to search for help, as this type of information is widely scattered.

"I saw there was an immense need for a central information hub for parents to easily access resources that will help them pursue a successful academic career.

"I had already collected many of these resources for my own use and was in the fortunate position to be able to share this knowledge.

"I hope this site helps to make it easier for my university colleagues around the world to balance parenthood and research," Dr Nash said.

The site includes stories of other academics who've combined research with parenting, advice about how to manage issues such as leave, travel, finances and health and well-being, and links to relevant information from a number of countries around the world.

Media contact: Andrew Rhodes (03) 6226 6683, email: ajrhodes@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications and Media Office

University of Tasmania

+61 3 6226 2124

Media.Office@utas.edu.au

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