



Naarah Barnes, of Hobart, Steven Cabalzar, of Launceston, and Jess Edwards (right), of Smithton, with UTAS Indigenous higher education adviser Clair Andersen.

Picture: PHILLIP BIGGS

Program encourages Indigenous youths to teach

By ISABEL BIRD

INDIGENOUS teenagers have attended a workshop at the University of Tasmania that aims to increase the number of Indigenous teachers in the Australian education system.

Aboriginal experiences in education have often been negative, with culture and existence often denied.

The Tunapri program hopes to get more Aboriginal people into university study and working as teachers so they become the next generation of people to share culture and benefit the Aboriginal and wider community.

University of Tasmania education faculty and Riawunna staff, and members of the local Aboriginal community have worked together to offer and design the Tunapri program.

The attending teenagers, including Jess Edwards, 17, of Smithton, Naarah Barnes, 17, of Hobart, and Steven Cabalzar, 15, of Launceston, have discussed the Aboriginal experience of schooling, met with Aboriginal elders, and attended culture, community and connections to learning workshops as part of the two-day experience.

Jess said the workshop offered information about a career in teaching.

"It has been really insightful and has opened our eyes to the opportunities," she said.

Aboriginal Higher Education adviser Clair Anderson said it was also about improving Aboriginality in education.

"We want to support our other Aboriginal students in school so that they can have any career that they want," she said.

"We really want to firmly plant the seed that they should be going to university and getting the qualifications they need so they can make a real contribution."