**Victorian Pharmacy student of the year 2011**

**Narrator:** Sarah Carminati has become the fifth La Trobe University Bendigo student in eight years to win the prestigious Victorian Student Pharmacist of the Year Award.

**Sarah:** It was absolutely amazing, yeah it was a really, really wonderful experience. I was so happy and I thought all this hard work at University has finally paid off. It was also really good to represent La Trobe Pharmacy course at Bendigo, and I was really proud to represent them there up on stage there that night.

**Michael Angove:** It’s a very prestigious award in the profession and for Sarah it means that basically she can almost name the position that she wants to get, but also opens up a range of other opportunities as well, so research opportunities for instance. And I know Sarah has already been contacted by a number of Universities wanting her to do a PhD, and of course we’d like her to her PhD here as well, but essentially it really opens up the world of pharmacy for her and she’d be able to get a job in lots of different areas.

**Narrator:** The fourth year pharmacy student received the award for demonstrating outstanding work place skills under pressure.

**Sarah:** We had an unknown patient present at our mock pharmacy, and we had to be able to diagnose the patient, recommend treatment if it was appropriate and then also have the communication skills as well to be able to talk with the patient and to discuss the treatment options, so basically you’re dealing with an unknown situation.

**Michael Angove:** I think Pharmacy is so successful because of our unique program here, I think we give our students a lot more experience in actual communication skills and this award really is about how students communicate with patients. The other thing that we have is we have a big concentration on, particularly in third and fourth year of the program, on the knowledge the students have, the actual drug knowledge and the therapeutic knowledge. So because of those two focuses in communication and drug knowledge our students go out very well prepared for this sought of competition and for working life.

**Narrator:** But La Trobe Bendigo campus doesn’t just have a reputation for the calibre of its course work. Dr Angove said that the pharmacy department had also established a strong team of researchers.

**Michael Angove:** Because pharmacy is based on a science program, many of the teaching staff are science based, so we have a range of research interests in areas related to science and also pharmacy. So for instance, one of our successful areas is in the area of environmental science in waste water treatment. We’ve just won another big government grant, an ARC Linkage grant for $420.000 to look at ways of solving issues in wastewater treatment. Other areas of interest in research, more pharmacy related would be in Pharmacogenomics where we are trying to understand how individual genetics alters how drugs acts in individual patients.

**Narrator:** Andrew Skewes, Executive Director of the Bendigo campus said that allied health courses at La Trobe are the most sought after courses that the University offers.

**Andrew Skewes:** Well it’s the fact that students can see the career opportunities when they study a program like pharmacy. Right across regional Victoria there are many hospitals and local pharmacy practices that are expressing high demand for graduates, and it’s a good career, its a well paid job, its personal, its dealing with people and lots of students volunteer very a high entre scour to undertake the study.

**Sarah:** I’m going to be working next year in a major metropolitan hospital, and that would definitely be for next year and after that I’d like to stay in hospital and maybe even come back to do my PhD at University.

**Narrator:** For students such as Ms Carminati, the future is bright.

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