

NEWSFRONT

Doctors' service honoured



RECOGNITION: Unveiling a plaque for Czech doctors at Penguin are, from left, Miroslav Pisa of the Czech Embassy, Honorary Consul Milena Mills and Daniella Tymms, daughter of Dr Dobroslav Svoboda. Picture: CHRIS KIDD

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THE contribution made to rural health care in Tasmania by Czech refugees has been formally recognised.

Three doctors who arrived in Australia as political refugees and practised in Penguin have been named on a plaque at one of the town's medical centres.

The three doctors, Charles Matysek, Dobroslav Svoboda and Antonin Zvatora worked within the Tasmanian Government's public health

service at Penguin for a combined 34 years.

Their arrival in Tasmania to practise medicine was instigated by former Health Minister Reginald Turnbull in the 1950s.

Mr Turnbull, frustrated by the dearth of medical officers willing to work in the then free government health scheme facilitated laws to recognise the doctors' overseas qualifications.

The first Czech doctor to arrive in Penguin, Dr Matysek, later moved to Launceston

where he set up a private practice before relocating to Hobart and developing St Helen's Private Hospital in Macquarie St.

Dr Svoboda arrived in the seaside town in 1956 after locum work in Queenstown, Ouse and King Island.

He stayed for 14 years before moving to Hobart and St John's Park Hospital in New Town.

After retirement from full-time work, he worked as medical officer for the Clarence Council.

Dr Zvatora was posted to Penguin in 1971 and his wife, a dentist, was appointed to the school dental service.

He went into private practice after the government health scheme was disbanded.

Dr Svoboda's daughter, Daniella Tymms, organised the ceremony of recognition in conjunction with the Central Coast Council.

"The plaque marks a period when Tasmanian society engaged in improving health service with an openness to new arrivals," she said.