

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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Picking up a thread of history after more than 100 years

A University of Tasmania researcher has been funded by the Federal Government to revisit a commission to document Australia's history that was first granted soon after Federation.

The Australian Research Council has allocated more than \$220,000 – the fourth ARC funding instalment - to the project being led by School of History and Classics Senior Researcher Peter Chapman.

The funding will be used to research, edit, publish and complete the first and third series of Historical Records of Australia, containing about 60 volumes.

The expected outcome will be a new research base for writing and interpreting 19th Century Australian history.

The first component of the three-year project is the completion of the original Historical Records of Australia Series which was originally supported by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library shortly after Federation. Three new large volumes have already been published and two more are anticipated in 2008.

Mr Chapman said the research would also involve providing historical documentation on the continuing processes in Australia involving the indigenous community, governance of states, crime, punishment and emigration.

“These issues are at the heart of the political debates and developing policies of the era and are matters of significance in present Australia,” Mr Chapman said.

Mr Chapman said that attention would also be given to Tasmania's history as there were only six volumes published on Van Diemen's Land by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library before the series was abandoned.

“The volumes for Van Diemen's Land had only covered the period 1803-1827 which was at the beginning of a fundamental and dramatic development in the Colony's history which was to influence the development of later Australian colonies,” Mr Chapman said.

“There is detail and analysis of race relations with the indigenous people of Australia especially issues relating to military clashes, dispossession and the making, or not, of treaties.”

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