

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Signing makes Asia Institute a reality

A formal agreement to establish the Asia Institute Tasmania was officially signed today (**Friday, 7 February 2014**) by the University of Tasmania and the State Government.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) paves the way for a state-wide institute, which will build coalitions and partnerships of expertise across the University, business, industry, education and community.

The MoU was signed by the University of Tasmania's Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen and Tasmanian Premier Lara Giddings at the University's Inveresk campus.

Asia Institute Tasmania will draw on the University's academic expertise from a range of areas including language and culture, business, agriculture, law, health, science and maritime science.

"The Institute will play a lead role in strengthening Tasmania's international relations with Asia in the Asian Century," Professor Rathjen said.

"It will not only house the expertise from a broad sector, but bolster the State's ability to engage directly with Asia.

"It will deliver significant educational, cultural and financial opportunities across Tasmania, and for Tasmanians in Asia."

Establishing the Institute was a key component of the *Tasmania in the Asian Century White Paper*, launched last year.

Asian relations were important to the University's strategic direction, with plans to double the number of international students studying at UTAS to 8000 by 2018.

"We have considerable Asian expertise at UTAS which will help enhance and develop a number of degree programs relating to Asia including in-country placements, short courses and helping to develop an Asia-literate workforce in Tasmania," Professor Rathjen said.

"Along with the planned growth in international numbers, we will also be leveraging existing relationships with Asia through our research partnerships and via the more than 5,000 UTAS alumni spread throughout Asia."

New infrastructure will enhance the University's appeal to international students. "The University is currently investing more than \$340 million in capital works across the state – including student accommodation, research centres of excellence and cultural hubs.

"The University's strategy to grow international education here is helping underpin this significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy.

"The bright prospects offered by international education are widely recognised, having been added to the State's Economic Development Plan, along with the creative industries.

"A recent report by Deloitte looking into the future economic prosperity of the nation recognised international education as a key driver.

"For both the University, and State generally, Asia is going to be a key partner to delivering on the enormous potential of the future."

Last year, the State Government committed \$200,000 annual funding for the establishment of the Institute.

Media contact Jason Purdie: 0455 838 945.

Information released by:

The Communications and Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: (03) 6226 8518; 0429 336 328 (Peter Cochrane)

Email: Peter.Cochrane@utas.edu.au