

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Groundbreaking research into effectiveness of forensic science**

A groundbreaking research project by the University of Tasmania has received \$670,000 in Federal funding to assess, for the first time, the effectiveness of forensic science in the criminal justice system.

The project (LP0882797) has been selected by the Australian Research Council because of its global significance.

Police jurisdictions in Victoria and the ACT and the National Institute of Forensic Science have provided funding and resources for the project while a string of American organisations have offered support.

The project will also involve collaborations with researchers at the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Lausanne in Switzerland.

The research will focus for the first time on developing a system to assess the value of forensic science - such as DNA, fingerprinting and drug analysis - on police investigations, court proceedings and community wellbeing.

Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies Director and research Chief Investigator, Associate Professor Roberta Julian, said forensic science was increasingly relied on by law enforcement to solve crime and by the judicial system to prosecute offenders.

“To a large extent the policing and forensic community has been ‘flying blind’ in terms of the actual impact of its work,” she said.

A/Prof Julian said, under the current system, there was no method to determine:

- what cases to prioritise based on potential outcomes;
- what are the most effective forensic tools to use;
- the cost effectiveness of different techniques and the expense and backlog of DNA testing which could impact on an investigation and evidence presented to the court.

“It is always desirable to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery and this is particularly so for forensic science as the number of criminal incidents investigated greatly exceeds the available forensic resources that can be applied,” she said.

“This research will enable the better targeting of volume crime through the efficient and effective use of forensic services; there will be significant benefits to the Australian community through a reduction in the economic and social costs of crime.”

**Information Released by:**

**The Media Liaison Office, University of Tasmania**

**Phone: 6226 2124 Mobile: 0417 517 291**

**Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)**

**For interviews contact:**

**Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies**

**Director**

**Associate Professor Roberta Julian**

**Mobile: 0409 250 797 or 6226 2217**

**Email: [Roberta.Julian@utas.edu.au](mailto:Roberta.Julian@utas.edu.au)**