

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2008

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



What do rock lobsters eat for lunch?

The diet of the Southern rock lobster, the survival of a Tasmanian beetle and questionable techniques used to promote cigarettes are just some of the research topics to be outlined in the second annual UTAS *Sharing Excellence in Research* postgraduate conference this week (**Friday 5 September.**)

The conference has been organised by the Tasmanian University Postgraduate Association (TUPA) in association with the Dean of Graduate Research and will again showcase a wide variety of postgraduate research excellence across all faculties and campuses.

The conference will provide an important forum for discussion and feedback, and give Research Higher Degree candidates an opportunity to meet and share their ideas with others.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew said UTAS was extremely proud of its research record.

“We perform well above expectations for a university of our size with a national and international reputation across a range of research disciplines.

“This is something we work hard to maintain and develop, and postgraduate students play an integral part in the University’s research achievements and reputation,” Professor Le Grew said.

A keynote address by Hugh Kearns, Research Higher Degree Coordinator at Flinders University will be followed by sessions based around UTAS’ six theme areas: Antarctic and Marine Studies; Community, Place and Change; Sustainable Primary Production; Population and Health; Environment; and Frontier Technologies.

There will be a poster session and a closing awards ceremony with prizes awarded for the best presentations in each theme area.

For further information, please contact Kevin Redd, TUPA.

***A selection of conference topics and contact numbers are attached below.**

Information Released by:

Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: (03) 6226 2124 Mobile: 0417 517 297

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au

- **“Using DNA to Explore Lobster Diet”:** Kevin Redd

The goals of Kevin’s project are to examine the range of prey consumed by the Southern rock lobster (*Jasus edwardsii*) and to further understand the role this predator has in the marine environment. Newly emerging techniques in molecular biology will be used to identify prey species by their unique DNA signatures.

- **“Finding home far away from home: Resettlement, Place attachment and Identity among African Australians in Hobart”:** Kiros Zegeye

In the past decade Tasmania has received around 2000 African refugees whose settlement is supported through the Government funded Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Scheme, Settlement Grant Programs and other programs. The past experience of the majority of humanitarian entrants is different from other migrants: they have experienced war, torture, rape and other forms of gross human rights abuses. Kiros’s study highlights the complexity of resettlement and the impact of past emotional attachment to places on resettlement, identity and place making.

- **“Researching saproxylic beetles in Tasmania as a contribution to landscape-scale biodiversity conservation”:** Belinda Yaxley

This study focuses on providing ecological information about Tasmanian saproxylic beetles and their habitat which can then be related to forest management. Historically, European forest practices resulted in semi-natural forests with very little dead wood. It is this dead wood that is a source of food and habitat for saproxylic species, so many species are now unnaturally rare. Belinda says as intensive forestry in Tasmania is a much more recent phenomenon there is time to avoid mirroring the European situation where unnatural rarity prevails.

- **“Takeaway food consumption, diet quality and abdominal obesity in young adults”:** Kylie Smith

Takeaway food consumption is associated with weight status and poorer diet quality in the USA but little is known about the association in Australians. Kylie’s research is examining if takeaway food consumption is associated with abdominal obesity and poorer diet quality in young Australian adults.

- **“Tobacco industry scams and scandals”:** Kathryn Barnsley
Contact: Melita Griffin, Menzies Research Centre 0418 557 544

Marketing of cigarettes in Australia is heavily regulated but Kathryn’s research suggests the tobacco industry is brilliant at finding loopholes and exploiting them. This presentation is a potted history of some of the scandalous behaviours of the tobacco industry in the last 20 years, including smuggling, product placement, “front” organisations, defective filters, marketing to women and children, pesticide contamination, document destruction, racketeering and the use of Polonium 210.

- **“Community concerns about climate change: a case study of Tasmanian farmers”:** Aysha Fleming.

Australian agriculture is a high emitter of greenhouse gases and vulnerable to climate change: Tasmania will need to adapt to climate changes and to world market changes. Early preparation is essential to create benefits and avoid costs, so knowing how farmers are currently responding and any concerns they have needs to be addressed. Aysha’s research focuses on the apple and dairy industries and aims to reveal the wider social and cultural influences on discussions about climate change in order to best turn scientific information into appropriate action.