

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Order of Australia awarded to UTAS expert in food safety**

One of the world's leading food microbiologists, Professor Tom McMeekin, has been awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours for his contributions to agricultural microbiology, research and teaching.

Two other University of Tasmania luminaries, ceramicist Associate Professor Les Blakeborough and Dr Brian Bowring, a Clinical Senior Lecturer with the School of Medicine, have been made Members in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

Prof McMeekin is credited with founding the internationally regarded Food Safety Centre at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA), a co-venture between the University of Tasmania and the State Government.

The emeritus professor pioneered the development of predictive microbiology and established the University of Tasmania as the world leader in predictive modelling of microbial behaviour in foods.

"Prof McMeekin is a great example of the world-class specialists attracted to the University of Tasmania, who contribute much to the intellectual and cultural life of our community." the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania, Prof Peter Rathjen said today. "He came to Australia from Northern Island in 1974, intending to stay only for three years, but fortunately for us he stayed on to become internationally recognised for his work in the enhancement of food safety."

Director of TIA, Prof Holger Meinke, said: "As the founding father of the Food Safety Centre, Tom McMeekin has made an enormous contribution, not only to the field of microbiology, but also to Tasmania's reputation as a global leader in science innovation, research and education".

Prof McMeekin is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and has contributed to more than 200 publications, including the much-cited monograph Predictive Microbiology: theory and application, and has made more than 30 invited international conference and workshop presentations. He is an Executive Board Member of the

International Committee of Food Microbiology and Hygiene and an Editor of the *International Journal of Food Microbiology*.

Professor McMeekin held a personal Chair of Microbiology at the University of Tasmania before retiring from full-time employment in 2007.

Assoc Prof Blakeborough has been honoured for significant service to the visual arts as a ceramicist and educator and through professional artistic associations. He established the Ceramic Research Unit at the University of Tasmania in 1990 where, after years of experimentation, his team developed and trademarked an acclaimed porcelain known as Southern Ice.

Dr Bowring, of George Town, has been honoured for significant service to medicine in rural and regional areas, and as a general practitioner. A past Chair of the Rural Health Education Foundation, he has also been Chair of the Board of General Practice Training Tasmania, Chair of Rural Workforce Support Tasmania and Deputy Chair of Rural Health Workforce Australia.

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