

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Friday, 20 November, 2015

New technologies to unlock the secrets of the Tasmanian tiger

Unlocking the secrets of the Tasmanian tiger is among the topics to be explored at the biennial Humboldt Foundation conference hosted by the University of Tasmania this weekend.

The extinction of the iconic Tasmanian tiger, or thylacine, is a tragedy not just for posterity but also for our understanding of evolution.

However, the thylacine may not have taken all of its secrets to the grave.

New technologies are allowing us to piece together its genetic code so that we will soon be able to compare the sum of those pieces, the thylacine genome, with those of its doppelganger, the dog.

We may soon understand the molecular processes that drove the remarkable convergence in the appearance of this unique mammal with that of mans' best friend.

Dr Brandon Menzies, from the University of Melbourne, will present his lecture *Thylacine DNA: Life after Death*, at the launch of the conference.

The conference, which will be attended by the German Ambassador, Dr Christoph Müller, **will begin with a reception at Government House on Friday from 5:00pm**, followed by two days of scientific papers and discussions.

The Humboldt Foundation is a major driver of international research, granting fellowships to the very best of the world's researchers regardless of discipline or nationality.

There are currently twelve Humboldtians associated with the University of Tasmania – in areas including mathematics, philosophy, and physics, in addition to the significant collaboration that also exists between Tasmanian and German researchers in a range of areas including, Antarctic and Marine Science, Chemistry and Medicine.

Information released by:

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: 61 3 6324 3218

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au