

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Plasma - the future of energy

An internationally renowned physicist, who will be launching the world's first plasma-powered satellite into space, is giving a free public lecture in Hobart tomorrow.

Associate Professor Christine Charles will talk about plasma - a hot ionised gas containing positive and negative charges- which is used in plasma televisions and fluorescent lights.

Plasma accounts for more than 99% of the total mass of the universe and can be used in the future to build fuel cells to drive motorised vehicles for getting around town and transporting humans to other planets.

Assoc. Prof. Charles is building a plasma thrusters, which will be launched into space within the next four years, as part of a prototype satellite. It will be the first time in seven years that a piece of Australian hardware will be sent into space and the first time a satellite with a plasma engine will be tested.

A researcher at the Australian National University, Assoc. Prof. Charles, is touring Tasmanian schools this week to promote women in science as part of National Science Week, 15-23 August. She is accompanied by former Hobart school student, Jessica Hudspeth, who is conducting research into plasma with Assoc. Prof. Charles at ANU.

The public lecture is on Thursday, 13 August at 8pm, Physics Lecture Theatre 1, UTAS Sandy Bay campus.

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