

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Pugin's churches, the LGH chapel and *The Last Tasmanians* feature at architectural conference

Tasmanian architecture in the churches in Richmond, Colebrook and Oatlands designed by Augustus Pugin features strongly in a four-day conference of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand at the University of Tasmania's School of Architecture and Design in Launceston.

The conference convenor and SAHANZ president, Dr Stuart King of the University of Tasmania, said around 100 academics from across Australia and NZ are attending the conference, which began yesterday and is organised with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

The conference theme is *Fabulation: Myth, Nature and Heritage*, referring to extraordinary and fanciful representations in architectural history, and how the images and stories of architectural history have been fabulated.

Topics covered among the 85 conference papers include:

- **THE ARCHITECTURAL FICTIONS OF EARLY AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY:** Charles Woolley's 1866 photo of Truganini, William Lanney and Bessy Clarke is an image of unbearably melancholy not only because it is named *The Last Tasmanians* but because they are shown against a background of white Victorian domestic architecture. The practice of using architectural backdrops was common in Victorian photography and had specific connotations of civility, probity and good behaviour and so the true identity and belonging of these Aborigines was cast aside (Gene Bawden, Monash University);
- **PUGIN'S TASMANIAN ADVENTURE:** This paper is one of several celebrating the bicentenary this year of the birth of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, England's most influential early Victorian designer, who conceptualised the ideal city as a spiritual rather than a commercial enterprise. The perceived lack of craft skills in Tasmania led Pugin to adopt techniques for his buildings which would be unique in his career (Brian Andrews, Archdiocese of Hobart);
- **THE TIMBER AND THE TREES:** A new Tasmanian identity grew with the environmental protests against the Franklin dam and the

wilderness photography of Peter Dombrovskis. This is the context for considering the commissioning of Peter Taylor, Mervyn Gray and Kevin Perkins' suite of crucifix and Huon pine furnishings for Robert Morris-Nunn's St Paul's Chapel at the Launceston General Hospital, the initiating project for the Art for Public Buildings Scheme (Deborah Malor, UTAS).

## **MEDIA ARE WELCOME TO INTERVIEW CONFERENCE SPEAKERS**

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