

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Book club research project expands statewide

A University of Tasmania research project investigating Northern Tasmanian book clubs is going to be taken statewide and is keen to hear from more club members.

The Reading in the Regions survey has already made some exciting discoveries about the role of book clubs in community engagement and literacy, and will now encompass the whole of the state to build on these important findings.

Researcher Dr Nicholas Hookway, University School of Humanities, said “preliminary results indicate that book groups serve a really important community and educative role, by forming new social networks – and consolidating old ones – that may not otherwise happen in a tight-knit community,” he said.

Researcher Dr Robert Clarke said the initial results are very interesting.

“One of the benefits to conducting research in Tasmania is that we are geographically delimited, so it makes an effective sample,” he said.

Book clubs are generally established and guided through libraries, educational institutes or book stores, or are more informal gatherings. The research team is interested in all types of clubs.

Researcher and PhD candidate Rebekah Burgess said, “we have also found that people – especially women - find book groups are a rare forum in which they are enabled to stretch their curiosity and intellect, and engage deeply with current issues.”

As well as interviewing and observing book clubs, the research team

is building a database of book clubs. They are also encouraging club members to complete an online survey.

The survey is open to everyone involved in a face to face or online book group via a link on the University website: [www.utas.edu.au/arts/bookclubs](http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/bookclubs)

The survey takes only about 15 minutes to complete, with a small extra section for Secretaries.

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