

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Hydro Scholarship helping University PhD student map a changing Tasmania

Research underway at the University of Tasmania could lead to the automated generation of detailed maps of the state, powered by algorithms capable of learning.

A PhD student who graduated from the University with First Class Honours in Engineering, Willem Olding is the 2014 recipient of the Dr Sergio Giudici Hydro Tasmania Elite Research Scholarship.

The \$7,500 per annum award recognises excellence in a field of engineering relevant to Hydro Tasmania and will assist Willem's research, which aims to automate the creation of detailed maps using machine learning algorithms. Such maps are an important resource for land monitoring, which can be used to track deforestation, urban expansion, water catchments and environmental weeds.

"Producing these sorts of maps by hand from satellite imagery can take months or years and cost millions of dollars," Willem said.

"We aim to develop systems that can learn from existing maps and, using data from a range of satellite sensors, create new maps without human assistance."

Hydro Tasmania Chief Executive Officer Steve Davy said the business was proud to be supporting Tasmanian innovation.

"Hydro Tasmania has embraced future thinking for the past one hundred years, as a leader in renewable energy and engineering excellence," Mr Davy said.

"It's fitting that in our centenary year, we continue that tradition of innovation, both in our own business and by working with others like Willem, who are using cutting-edge technology to create a smarter future for our state."

The award recognizes the contribution Dr Giudici made to Hydro Tasmania and the State over many years. Graduating from the University of Tasmania with honours in Engineering, Dr Giudici was the first "new Australian" to win a Rhodes Scholarship.

During his 37 year career with the Hydro Electric Commission, he was instrumental in the development of the concrete-faced rock-fill dam, which are now common throughout the world.

University of Tasmania Advancement Office Executive Director Young Dawkins congratulated Willem on the Scholarship.

“The University of Tasmania is committed to fostering research that will have genuine impact for industry and the broader community and Willem’s work is a perfect example of that.

“It is wonderful to see one engineering graduate win an award named in honour of another who went on to contribute so much to Tasmania.”

**Information released by:**

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: 61 3 6324 3218

Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)