

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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University of Tasmania PhD candidate awarded Indigenous Fellowship in 2016 Endeavour Awards

North-West PhD student Emma Lee has become the first Tasmanian Aboriginal to win a prestigious Indigenous Fellowship.

Her award was the only Indigenous Fellowship in the 2016 Endeavour Scholarships and Fellowships round, an internationally competitive program that brings students from around the world to Australia, and sends Australian students overseas.

Ms Lee described the Fellowship as a “cloak of honour” she was proud to wear.

“I am humbled that I belong to a culture that has long cherished the right to knowledge,” she said.

“It is my intention to help carve out a space for other Indigenous people to apply for the Endeavour Award, particularly from the University of Tasmania, to support their aspirations by making the most of this opportunity.”

Ms Lee is currently at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Onati, the heart of Spain’s Basque Country, on a visiting scholarship. She will use the Fellowship to spend six months there next year to investigate Basque traditional fisheries.

“Our geographical coastline of Tasmania is testament to the power of Indigenous fisheries and sea country knowledge, through our important heritage places of living midden sites. I wish to learn from Basque traditional peoples their techniques and how they conserve and manage their precious fisheries resources,” she said.

“The lessons learnt will be valuable in building a legitimate platform to support our people already working in the commercial sector.”

Ms Lee will also look at the way the European Union has enshrined Basque traditional fisheries within their regulations and how policy initiatives are conserving their cultural practices.

Ms Lee said this knowledge would contribute to better collaboration between the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and government on understanding Indigenous fisheries and their contribution to conservation and economic growth.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Aboriginal Research and Leadership) Professor Maggie Walter congratulated Ms Lee on her achievement.

“This prestigious Fellowship will allow Emma to conduct research that is of huge cultural, economic and environmental significance to Tasmania, and will no doubt inform future policy direction by government,” Professor Walter said.

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