

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Monday, 20 June 2016

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## Tasmania's national parks to celebrate 100 years with Burnie forum

The diverse and far-reaching benefits of Tasmania's wilderness areas will be celebrated at an event helping mark 100 years since Mount Field and Freycinet were established as the state's first national parks.

*The Power of Parks*, a forum series hosted by the University of Tasmania in partnership with the Parks & Wildlife Service, will travel to the Cradle Coast campus this week, taking place Thursday evening.

University Vice-Chancellor Fellow and economist Saul Eslake will join Dr Bill Jackson, Adjunct Professor from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Dr Louise Mendel from the Tasmania Fire Service and Distinguished Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick from Geography and Spatial Sciences at the University of Tasmania to form a panel which will explore the significant values of Tasmania's parks.

Mr Eslake will discuss the economic importance of parks, while Dr Jackson will examine health benefits linked to the exposure of green spaces. Dr Mendel will share ways in which parks have helped shaped Tasmania's cultural identity, through history, work and leisure, and Professor Kirkpatrick, also the MC, will describe the natural and cultural values that make Tasmania's parks globally outstanding.

"Tasmania is one of the most significant highlights of biodiversity and geodiversity on this planet," Professor Kirkpatrick said.

"We have some of the highest concentrations of plant species, which have survived in unchanged form since the cretaceous period millions of years ago, before Australia and Tasmania broke off from Gondwana, including king billy pine and deciduous beech.

"We also have the biggest collection of carnivorous marsupial animals in the world and some of the most unusual and outstanding land forms. The landscape of our Western Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, which includes Mt Field National Park, evolved under the continuing management of our ancient Indigenous people and still contains their last glacial art."

Sam Cuff, Parks & Wildlife Service Community Engagement and Partnerships Officer, said he hoped the forum series would raise the profile of Tasmania's parks and remind the community that parks and reserves are there to be enjoyed by all.

"The forum series is an opportunity for locals to not only hear from renowned speakers in their fields articulating the diverse benefits of parks, but there will also be a chance for attendees to engage in a Q&A so they can learn more about the worth of Tasmanian parks and reserves and how they might look in another 100 years," Mr Cuff said.

"Visitors engage with these areas for recreational activities where they can forge cultural connections, tourists discover some of the planet's greatest treasures inside our Wilderness World Heritage area which contains scenes unlike anywhere else, and parks also provide a quiet green space for people to recharge their emotional and spiritual wellbeing."

The first forum in *The Power of Parks* series was held in Hobart during April. The third and final event will take place in Launceston on Thursday, 1 September.

Tasmanians are invited to register for the forum by clicking [here](#).

#### **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY:**

**What:** The Power of Parks Forum

**When:** Thursday, 23 June, 6pm

**Where:** Building D, Cradle Coast campus, 16 – 20 Mooreville Road, Burnie

**For more information contact: Sam Cuff 0400 968 570**

#### **Information released by:**

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