

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Scholarship recipient to demystify devil dens**

Jillian Smith of Hobart , recent recipient of the Dr Eric Guiler Tasmanian Devil Honours Scholarship, will travel to Launceston to meet her scholarship sponsor at the UTAS Foundation Dinner at the Hotel Grand Chancellor tonight (Thursday).

This premier black-tie event will welcome new scholarship students, acknowledge the generous support of donors and celebrate excellence, innovation and participation at UTAS.

The outstanding achievements of UTAS alumni will be recognised with the awarding of the UTAS Distinguished Alumni Award.

The scholarship Miss Smith received was funded by Venture Minerals, which will be represented at the dinner by its consultant engineer Malcolm Hillbeck.

The WA-based mining company is currently focusing on realising the full economic potential of the Mt Lindsay tin-tungsten-iron project in North-West Tasmania, where Venture has already defined one of the world's largest undeveloped tin projects and is currently completing a bankable feasibility study on the Mt Lindsay Project.

The Foundation Dinner will be an opportunity for Mr Hillbeck to meet and learn more about Miss Smith's research on Tasmanian devil dens and maternal dens.

Maternal dens where young devils are reared are critical habitat for this threatened species and imperative for the recovery of the population.

"I am looking at recognisable features of dens themselves and habitat characteristics around them," Miss Smith said.

"It is hoped that, if these can be defined, an effective search protocol can be developed which I will test in the field.

"This search protocol can then be passed on to land managers to aid the protection of den sites."

Jillian's research is being supervised by Dr Menna Jones from the UTAS School of Zoology.

Dr Jones was part of the research team awarded one of Australia's top science prizes, the Eureka Prize for Environmental Research, last year for its work in trying to save Tasmanian devils from extinction due to the Devil Facial Tumour Disease.

Save the Tasmanian Devil Appeal manager Rebecca Cuthill said that funding devil research is critical to fulfilling a key aim of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program, that of keeping Tasmanian devils sustainable in the wild.

"Through the generous support provided by Venture Minerals we are one step closer to saving our iconic devil from extinction," she said.

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