

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Research looks good for UTAS Future Fellows

Research investigating whether plant species will die or adapt to a future drier climate is part of six ARC Future Fellowships awarded to researchers at the University of Tasmania today.

The six UTAS based Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellowships totalling more than \$4 million were among 200 Future Fellowships announced by the Federal Innovation Minister, Senator Kim Carr.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew said the announcements reflect the University's strong commitment to research.

"This is fantastic news and on behalf of the whole of UTAS I offer congratulations to the six Future Fellows announced today," Prof. Le Grew said.

"The funding is indicative of the quality of research being undertaken by researchers at the University and augurs well for future research projects too."

Dr Timothy Brodribb from the School of Plant Science has been granted just over \$800,000 over five-years for his research examining past, present and future survival limits in the Australian vegetation landscape.

Another Future Fellow, Dr Menna Jones from the School of Zoology, has received more than \$700,000 over five-years to determine whether or not Tasmanian Devils are capable of adapting fast enough to survive the disease epidemic caused by a new contagious cancer, devil facial tumour disease, and evade extinction.

Dr Ingrid van der Mei from the Menzies Research Institute has been awarded \$570,000 over five-years for research on multiple sclerosis, focusing on its causes and the lifestyle factors that affect it. Vitamin D supplementation will be trialled as a treatment as part of the project.

Other successful ARC Future Fellows include Dr Barbara Holland from the School of Mathematics and Physics, for her project to create the statistical tools and software required for evolutionary biologists to understand how hybridisation has helped shape the Australian flora.

Research by Dr David McGuinness from School of Chemistry centres on the conversion of natural gas to liquid fuels (gasoline and diesel). This project aims to aims to develop methods by which some of the less valuable by-products can be upgraded to fuels and chemicals.

Dr Joselito Quirino from the School of Chemistry has been granted \$660,000 over five-years for a separation science project which will open new directions

for the sample preparation of small molecules, nanoparticles and bacterial cells prior to analysis and will reduce pollution from chemical laboratories.

The successful 2010 ARC Future Fellowships at UTAS include:

- Dr Timothy Brodribb from the UTAS School of Plant Science – *Drought and death: past, present and future survival limits in the Australian vegetation landscape* (\$812,513)
- Dr Menna Jones from the UTAS School of Zoology – *Can Tasmanian Devils survive by adapting to devil facial tumour disease?* (\$706,524)
- Dr Barbara Holland from the UTAS School of Mathematics and Physics – *Interpreting biological sequence information: untangling hybridisation* (\$532,376)
- Dr Ingrid van der Mei from the Menzies Research Institute – *From risk factor analysis to translation: multiple sclerosis and vitamin D deficiency* (\$570,552)
- Dr David McGuinness from UTAS School of Chemistry- *Upgrading of light gas-to-liquid products to fuels and chemicals* (\$807,002)
- Dr Joselito Quirino from the UTAS School of Chemistry – *Green sample preparation technologies for analytical chemistry* (\$664,332)

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