

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## University project builds research capacity in PNG

Lessons learnt from innovative University of Tasmania degrees in applied management and research are being offered to researchers in Papua New Guinea (PNG), through a project aimed at building positive outcomes for the country's long term fisheries management.

The four year \$650,000 dollar project is funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and will be delivered by the University of Tasmania in collaboration with the Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority (NFA).

The PNG aquaculture and fisheries industries are central to the food supply and livelihoods of coastal and inland communities.

NFA Principal Scientist, Aquaculture & Inland Fisheries Unit, Jacob Aruma Wani said that up-skilling staff in scientific and technical skills is essential for delivering effective fisheries research projects.

"We realised that we needed to develop our researchers' skills but we had no formal way to build on their capacity to manage our fisheries," Mr Wani said.

The University of Tasmania's role in the project is to deliver formal training to build research and project management capacity within the social, political and development circumstances prevailing in PNG. The first unit of this training course, the Graduate Certificate in Research, was offered last week in Port Moresby by Project Leader, University of Tasmania Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional Development) Professor Janelle Allison.

"We are offering one unit at a time, recognising the extra work load that study will place on the researchers. The first unit I taught builds on students' knowledge and skills in areas including global perspective, critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, collaboration, teamwork and inter-disciplinary thinking and working," Professor Allison said.

Professor Allison said that the students in Port Moresby will be taught by some of the University of Tasmania's top calibre educators including Dr Joy Rathjen and Professor Peter Frappell. The course will be run for three years with ongoing evaluation of the impact of the formal training on the quality of research in NFA projects.

"In the short term, we hope that engaging the researchers in these units will result in improved planning, delivery and extension of fisheries science. In the longer term we would hope to see increased effectiveness of NFA and better outcomes for the fisheries resources in PNG. We would also hope that this research into the capacity building can help to strengthen fisheries programs in Australia," Professor Allison said.

"The project is research focussed with an emphasis on the impact of formal training on improving research capacity. It will not be assessing the individuals who are participating in the Graduate Certificate of Research, but will look at the applied outcomes of formal training in terms of changes in the quality of research methodology and results."

**Information released by:**

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