

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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University of Tasmania research is world-class – and above

A national review of research excellence has placed the University of Tasmania among the best in the world.

The University was ranked at or above world standard in 48 out of 51 units rated in the 2015 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) results, released today.

At 94 percent, these results are a significant improvement over the 2012 ERA rankings where 71 percent of submitted units of evaluation were judged as performing at or above world standard.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said ERA confirmed the University of Tasmania's standing as a research-intensive institution of considerable strength and impact.

"These results demonstrate our commitment to academic excellence and the practical application of first-rate research," Professor Rathjen said.

"Far from being confined to paper, our research outcomes provide a platform for growing the state and national economies, in fields ranging from the humanities and the arts to agriculture and aquaculture, through to oceanography, chemistry, and the health and clinical sciences.

"Research will underpin an innovative future for Tasmania and for Australia. This University's ability to provide academic and intellectual leadership in shaping that future is clear, and so too is our growing capacity to do so."

ERA measures performance within each discipline at each university, highlighting national research strengths, as well as the strengths of individual universities.

Administered by the Australian Research Council, ERA may also be used for the allocation of government research funding.

The University of Tasmania achieved the highest possible rating, a 5 or 'well above world standard', in 16 specific discipline areas, up from 9 in 2012. These areas were: analytical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, geology, geophysics, oceanography, ecology, zoology, fisheries sciences, horticultural production, plant biology, clinical sciences, human movement and sports science, neurosciences, nursing, ophthalmology and optometry, and agriculture, land and farm management.

A further 14 discipline areas were rated at level 4, or above world standard. These were: philosophy, historical studies, sociology, law, applied mathematics, astronomical and space sciences, physical geography and environmental geoscience, ecological applications, environmental science and management, evolutionary biology, forestry sciences, geomatic engineering, materials engineering, and pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Brigid Heywood said the 2015 results showed the University's research investment and recruitment strategies were working successfully to underpin a significantly improved performance.

"Faculty restructures have also enabled new concentrations of researchers and interdisciplinary research strengths, adding to an already impressive breadth of expertise," Professor Heywood said.

"This has resulted in new ways for the University to work with its communities and stakeholders to deliver applied research, research that aligns with national interests and contributes to key global challenges."

Professor Heywood said the ERA results come in a year that has seen the University climb all three of the highest-profile international rankings systems, confirming its place among the best universities in the world.

After climbing the QS World University Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities, the University of Tasmania was ranked amongst the top 300 universities according to the Times Higher Education (THE) world university rankings, an improvement of well over 100 positions.

For further information:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/era-2015>