

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New University unit to research Tasmania's unique North

A new University unit headed by eminent historian Professor Henry Reynolds will research the unique features of the North of Tasmania.

The Community Place and Heritage Research Unit was launched today with the announcement of its first two projects – to follow in the footsteps of George Augustus Robinson through Tasmania's North-east and to explore the history of the gentry of the northern Midlands.

Professor Reynolds said the unit would gather researchers from varied disciplines, along with community researchers and local businesses, to discover and recognise what makes the North unique.

“There are many histories to be studied and stories to be told in northern Tasmania about locations, peoples, families, industries, businesses and institutions. These stories will change the way northern Tasmanians appreciate the region and their place here,” he said.

“I believe a greater understanding of this region will benefit us as a community enormously - it impacts on our sense of identity so that we can come to terms with the past and choose directions for the future.”

Professor Reynolds said that the Unit hoped to tackle the big issues which have shaped the region – Aboriginal, convict, gentry and business histories.

But the Unit's project manager, Dr Linn Miller, said researchers would not be concentrating on the past only.

“We'll be researching place and the influence of the landscape on the lives of people.

“Place is an aspect of living here that we take for granted but is quintessential.

“Walk into the Gorge, go to the East Coast, drive to work, look out of your front door. Often we don’t notice it until we return from a trip and then it knocks us over.

“A consciousness of place determines everything, from how we feel to how we market the region. We hope the Unit’s emphasis on place will help to usher in a greater appreciation of it.”

Former ABC broadcaster Anne Fitzgerald will focus on making the research accessible to the community.

“Each project will incorporate methods of its communication, whether that be through the media, film, audio, online or public forums,” she said.

“We are committed to maximum community engagement and film-makers, media outlets and publishers are eager to help us to do that.”

Media opportunity:

Who: Professor Henry Reynolds will be available for comment.

When: 11.15am today (Friday)

Where: Esplanade, Launceston (in front of The Custom House). If inclement weather, venue will be Riawunna, Newnham Campus.

For more information contact Anne Fitzgerald, ph. 63243215

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