

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: THURSDAY 27 AUGUST 2009

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

---



## **Nature and researchers unite to bring hoof grief relief for horses**

The healing powers of an endemic Tasmanian plant have been harnessed by UTAS researchers in a hoof grief relief ointment for horses.

And the creators of the kunzea cream believe it has the potential to out-perform other natural remedies on the market with its anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory action.

Two researchers from the School of Pharmacy, along with retired Longford pharmacist, Bob Armstrong who developed the original formula, have produced the ointment following demand by veterinarians and horse owners to find a cure for the common bacterial infection, greasy heel.

The research released at today's launch of the UTAS publication, *Research to Reality*, could also be further developed and released as a skin care product for humans in the future.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Johanna Laybourn-Parry, said this project was an example of how valuable intellectual property created in a university environment was being transferred into the commercial domain.

“With our commercialisation partner, UniQuest, there is a rich seam of IP being generated from UTAS academics and researchers into commercial markets in Australia and globally,” Prof. Laybourn-Parry said.

A key ingredient of the ointment is kunzea oil, which is obtained from the foliage of the Tasmanian native shrub *Kunzea ambigua* and is extracted commercially in Tasmania.

Project chief investigator, Dr Christian Narkowicz, said the ointment was scientifically-proven to be a safe and effective treatment for greasy heel, which is a form of dermatitis that causes lameness in horses and is notoriously difficult to cure.

Dr Narkowicz, said more than half of the 21 horses involved in the trial were completely cured and all cases improved after one week of treatment.

“The condition known as greasy heel is a common, problematic and progressive dermatitis that affects the legs of horses, resulting in bleeding sores, scabbing and hair loss,” Dr Narkowicz said.

“The kunzea oil ointment proved safe, fast-acting and effective in treating the horses in the study cohort and may offer a good treatment option for the general horse population.”

Dr Narkowicz said the product also had potential as a skin care product for humans and plans were being considered for its marketplace release.

Mr Armstrong, who developed the prototype kunzea ointment, says he thinks kunzea oil will prove to be a more effective anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory treatment than tea tree oil.

**Information Released by:**

**Media Office, University of Tasmania  
Phone: 6226 2124 Mobile: 0417 517 291  
Email: [Media.Office@utas.edu.au](mailto:Media.Office@utas.edu.au)**