

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Australian historians to converge on UTAS

UTAS historians will take the lead at the four-day annual conference of the Australian Historical Association, to be held at the Inveresk campus from July 4.

Organiser and head of the school of History and Classics Dr Tom Dunning said around 250 historians from around Australia will attend what he called “very much a working historians’ conference” which will also include historians from as far afield as the US and Finland.

One high point of the *History at the Edge* conference is sure to be a plenary session on the first full day, with the former Justice Michael Kirby speaking on Why Australia Doesn’t Have a Bill of Rights.

Other highlights will include UTAS Professor Henry Reynolds speaking on Australia’s Love Affair with War in the conference’s final plenary session on The Big Questions for Australian Historians, and the 2011 Vogel Prize winner Rohan Wilson in conversation with Professor Ann Curthoys of the University of Sydney about his book about the Aborigines of north-eastern Tasmania, *The Roving Party*.

During the week interested historians will be treated to guided tours of midlands properties Panshanger and Connorville, both of which are not ordinarily accessible to the public.

With eight concurrent sessions taking place at any one time, venues across the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Architecture and Design will be in use, with the conference dinner to be held in the Academy Gallery and diners surrounded by the current exhibition.

The focus of the conference will be Australian history with an even more definite emphasis on Tasmania.

National themes will encompass Australian masculinities, with papers on gentleman bushrangers, Marcus Clark and early colonial bohemia; Australian urban history and animal and plant stories with papers on the adoption of dogs by Tasmanian Aborigines and the decline of hemp cultivation.

Tasmanian themes will include new perspectives on Tasmanian aboriginal history, with a paper by UTAS historian Dr Shayne Breen on genocide in

Australian historiography and another by noted University of Newcastle historian Professor Lyndall Ryan, where she questions with the Black Line was an expensive mistake or a strategic success.

For Launcestonians a conference highlight will be a panel session on Anti-Transportation (in its Home City) with Professor Hilary Carey from the University of Newcastle examining the legacy of Reverend John West, anti-transportation campaigner, historian and first editor of the Examiner newspaper.

Dr Dunning said UTAS post-graduate students would have a significant role in presenting papers at the conference “because they are the historians of the future”.

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