

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Kelp is key component at the Riawunna Centre's Vicki West exhibition

Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Vicki West will be the first established artist to exhibit at the new UTAS Riawunna Centre Art Gallery.

From February 27 to March 27 her amazing contemporary pieces, many of them featuring the use of kelp collected from local beaches, will fill the lively new space which has also become an important showcase for the students of Riawunna and participants in the innovative Murina bridging program.

Curator and gallery manager Brigitte Wolfe said that Vicki was an obvious choice as an exhibitor, not only because of her strong local, national and international exhibition record, but just as importantly because she also undertook a bridging course at Riawunna Centre in the early 1990s and went on to complete her Bachelor Fine Arts in 1999.

She followed this with a First class Honours in 2001 and her Masters in 2008, all with the UTAS School of Visual and Performing Arts (now Tasmanian College of the Arts).

"Vicki's journey is just as inspirational as her art, which has a strong message to all about caring for our environment," Brigitte said.

"The exhibition is called *kerliggerener brayly*, which means kelp forest and visitors will instantly understand Vicki's relationship with the earth, flora and fauna when they see her work."

Photographs of previous works, now housed in national collections and interstate exhibitions, are on display along with beautiful woven baskets made from native grasses, silk-like printed fabric made from wattle bark and kelp, and stunning sculptures which introduce copper to give a modern feeling to natural fibres.

One ceiling-height installation features a light projection to simulate plankton among the giant kelp beds of Tasmania.

The Riawunna Art Gallery is open to the public from 9am-5pm weekdays (excluding public holidays).

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