

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



University joins elite Australian Government environmental research club

Three University of Tasmania projects are among 15 chosen across the nation to pursue some of Australia's most significant environmental investigations.

Researchers at the University have been awarded more than \$1.7 million out of the \$9 million allocated towards significant projects and fellowships by the Department of the Environment and Water Resources through the Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities (CERF) programme.

The \$100 million CERF initiative aims to improve Australia's capacity to understand and respond to priority environment concerns. The CERF programme will build critical mass in areas of Australia's environmental research strengths and national environmental research priorities.

The three-year funding packages have been provided for research considered by the Australian Government to be crucial in advancing the understanding of current and emerging challenges facing the conservation and use of Australia's environmental assets.

The successful projects and fellowships are:

Using tree rings of an Australian conifer as a bio-indicator of decadal-scale environmental change

School of Plant Science, Professor David Bowman's research will study the population growth of an Australia-wide native conifer to create new climate change data for the past 200 years with a focus on assessing changes in outback Australia

Volunteer monitoring of the state of Australian rocky reef communities

Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, senior research fellow, Dr Graham Edgar, will lead a team of researchers and elite recreational divers to generate a national framework for monitoring the state of the inshore environment and the identification of the threats and locations of greatest conservation concern.

Ecosystem model analysis to address fisheries management issues in south eastern Australia and the implications of climate change

The Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute will also host Dr Reginald Watson of the University of British Columbia to develop ecosystem models to address fisheries management issues in south eastern Australia, especially to assess the implications of climate change.

Acting Pro Vice Chancellor (Research), Professor Allan Canty said the funding windfall illustrated the Australian Government's increasing commitment to quality research in environmental and climate change matters.

"CERF funding is highly competitive among the nation's researchers," Prof. Canty said.

"To have three University projects selected out of 15 allocations is a reflection of the standard of our world-class researchers.

"Two of the projects are within the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute which is a joint venture between the State Government and the University of Tasmania."

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