

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: MONDAY, 5 MARCH 2007

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



***Whale Rider* Author visits UTAS**

Witi Ihimaera, arguably New Zealand's most important author is set to visit the University of Tasmania on an exclusive statewide tour. Ihimaera is the first published Maori novelist. Although he is the author of many books and short stories he is best known for the international acclaim achieved through the film version of his book, *The Whale Rider*.

Ihimaera will deliver a series of public lectures, during which he will discuss the uniqueness of New Zealand Literature and the challenges of preserving an indigenous literary voice.

Whale Rider was a film that touched the hearts of people around the world and like the book upon which it was based, the story reflects Ihimaera's rare gift of communicating spiritually significant themes within an entertaining and accessible way.

Ihimaera, currently a Professor of English at Auckland University, is an individual with a fascinating and diverse background. He has worked as a journalist, labourer and postman. He has also served within the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs with diplomatic posts in Canberra, New York and Washington DC. He is an accomplished opera librettist, anthologist and playwright. Ihimaera is a highly sought after speaker within international writers' festivals and literary circles. He is interested in the relationship between the past and the present, and themes of destiny, both in terms of individuals and the planet.

As a guest of the University of Tasmania, Ihimaera will share many of the personal and professional experiences that have enabled him to become one of the most significant writers today. The public lecture, entitled *Whale Rider: Riding the Whale to the World* will be delivered to audiences at all three UTAS campuses, in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart. This is a wonderful opportunity for the university and the community to hear from a remarkable, unique and internationally acclaimed author.

Witi Ihimaera Public Lectures: *Whale Rider: Riding the Whale to the World*

5.30pm Tuesday 13 March
Cradle Coast lecture at
Burnie TAFE lecture theatre

6pm Wed 14 March
Sir Raymond Ferrall
Centre, Newnham
campus

6pm Thurs 15 March
Stanley Burbury Theatre,
Sandy Bay campus

Information Released by:

The Media Office, University of Tasmania
Phone: 6226 2124 Mobile: 0417 517 291
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au