

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## MOUs pave way for more tourism research

Three Memorandums of Understanding signed today will boost research collaboration between the University of Tasmania and the tourism industry, one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy.

The MOUs formalise partnerships between the University and the Department of State Growth, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG).

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Brigid Heywood said the expertise and research capacity of the University would help underpin the ongoing expansion of the tourism industry in Tasmania.

“The University helps shape the economic and cultural future of our State and there can be no doubt that the role of tourism in that future is growing fast,” Professor Heywood said.

“It is exciting to see these partnerships, built on a history of collaboration, strengthening at such a pivotal moment for the industry.”

According to the latest statistics from Tourism Tasmania, the industry directly and indirectly contributes about \$2.3 billion a year to the State’s economy, and supports around 38,000 jobs.

The MOUs will see the three organisations collaborate with the University’s Tourism Research and Education Network (TRENd) to develop research projects and share access to facilities, technology, equipment and information.

TRENd Director Dr Anne Hardy said the Network was established to bring together scholars conducting tourism research in a broad cross-section of academic units across the University.

“TRENd’s goal is to strengthen capacity in tourism research and education across the University of Tasmania and to increase collaborative relationships with the tourism industry,” Dr Hardy said.

“These MOUs are significant because they formally recognise the strong and productive relationships that the University has had with the tourism industry for many years. It also ensures that we can develop new research projects that respond to industry needs.”

The MOUs were signed this morning at the QVMAG in Launceston, where new research into what motivates museum visitation was also released.

The research, led by Dr Kim Lehman, from the University’s Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, in collaboration with the QVMAG, surveyed more than 2000 visitors to the Launceston museum.

Dr Lehman said the work could be used to help expand audiences for regional cultural tourism attractions, and increase social and economic impacts.

“The traditional role of conserving and preserving cultural and natural artefacts is still important to visitors; the question is how can museums and art galleries retain, and satisfy, their core culturally-engaged visitor while seeking to attract non-visiting market segments.

“Our research is a necessary first step in a better understanding of what motivates visitation to cultural tourism attractions, and more broadly, a better understanding of the true value of cultural institutions to regional and local communities.”

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