

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Celebrations for Engineering milestone

A new world-class laboratory for research into renewable energy systems along with a new solar research facility have been opened at the University of Tasmania.

The Renewable Energy Laboratory in the UTAS School of Engineering's Centre for Renewable Energy and Power Systems (CREPS) will be used for teaching and experimental research in the area of renewable energy systems.

Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology Dean Professor Jim Reid said the opening of the new laboratory along with the solar research facility are part of the celebration of the School of Engineering's 50 year history at the Sandy Bay Campus.

"The University of Tasmania is certainly an emerging leader in renewable energy and power systems research and teaching," he said.

"As a University, it is exciting to be able to encourage and provide the facilities to allow our researchers and our students to seek solutions to problems we face as a society."

In an artistic tribute to Engineering, a new mosaic mural by Tom Samek, complementing one painted by the well-known Tasmanian artist in the 1970s which already hangs in the School's entrance, has also been unveiled.

Head of School of Engineering Prof Chris Letchford said the Engineering Building at the Sandy Bay Campus was the first permanent academic building to be built in 1959, when UTAS moved from the Queens Domain to Sandy Bay.

"Tom Samek painted one of his first murals in the Engineering Building's foyer in 1977. It is classed 'Head in a Landscape' and is largely a mechanical brain, with all Tom's artistic mischief thrown in," Prof Letchford said.

"The new mural is a charming addition to the School of Engineering's environment."

Prof Letchford said CREPS will establish UTAS as a world class research institution in the area of renewable energy and power engineering.

"Opening the new research laboratory and the solar research facility will significantly contribute to this goal," he said.

"The Renewable Energy Laboratory contains examples of equipment that will form the basis of the renewable energy industry in years to come, including doubly fed and brushless induction generators, permanent magnet poly-phase machines, solar powered inverter systems and diesel / hydrogen powered generators."

Prof Letchford said the laboratory also includes facilities that will permit the interconnection of this equipment to the power grid.

Experiments will be conducted on design, operation and control of renewable energy based power supply systems.

“Both postgraduate and undergraduate students will benefit from the use of the laboratory and will have the opportunity to design reliable renewable energy-based power supply systems.”

Prof Letchford said the solar research facility has been built as a result of a donation from Aurora Energy.

“Solar energy is clearly a fabulous renewable energy source. It is however intermittent and of variable output so managing that through storage and integrating with other energy sources will be important for electricity suppliers into the future,” he said.

“Through the new solar research facility, students and staff will be able to research managing such systems.”

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