

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Ants, sea level rise and sustainable housing

Young islanders, sea level rise and old houses will be among the wide range of topics covered in talks by staff and research students at the Annual UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Studies Conference today and tomorrow (Friday 2 July 2010).

Head of the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, Associate Professor Elaine Stratford, said the Annual Conference was a wonderful chance for the staff and students of the School to share their research.

“Geography and Environmental Studies is a field that covers much more than people realise, which is shown in the diverse range of topics our students and researchers work on,” Assoc Prof Stratford said.

Conference highlights include:

- Dr Stewart Williams will present ***For a Big Australia: Sizing up our geography, past, present and future***. Kevin Rudd introduced the notion of “a big Australia” in November 2009 with respect then to nation-building policy. However, questions about providing adequately for all Australians into the future quickly brought some down-to-earth focus on the capacity of our cities and their infrastructure and the availability of natural resources. Dr Williams will examine what associated notions of bigness might mean for the development of geographical practices.
- Dr Peter McQuillan will present: ***The biography and ecology of Tasmanian ants- an emerging frontier***. Tasmania has 120 species of ants and while most of us think of ants as a pest, native ants are an important part of the environment, dispersing the seeds of native plants and recycling dead bugs. Ants could even be used as indicators of changes in the environment.
- Associate Professor Elaine Stratford will present ***Fresh! A map of a dream of the future***. This talk examines Assoc Prof Stratford’s project Fresh! a joint project with Tasmanian Regional Arts funded by Arts Tasmania and which explores young islanders’ sense of resilience in the face of climate change.

- Phillipa Watson will present ***Barriers to renovation for housing sustainability in Tasmania***. This talk will discuss how Australian building legislation now incorporates significant environmental performance requirements for new housing and major housing renovations. These regulations are likely to be tightened over the coming decade. This talk will describe and analyse a range of individual, institutional and organisational barriers to renovation for housing sustainability in Tasmania.
- Geographers are frequently communicating their work to others. Dr Richard Mount will present ***How do you tell people about sea level rise impacts so they can hear it?*** This talk will examine the improvement of the quality of communication efforts about geographical and environmental research, using a recent study in north west Tasmania as an example.

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