

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: TUESDAY 14 JULY 2009

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New research needs old photos

A new research project underway at UTAS needs your old holiday beach photos.

Honours student Monica Hayes and her supervisor Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick, from the UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Studies, are using photographs of beaches to help determine the environmental changes that have taken place as a result of marram grass introduction.

Photos of coastlines taken from the air are available from the late 1940s onwards, but Monica and Prof. Kirkpatrick have been unable to find many photographs prior to this.

Prof. Kirkpatrick said the long, spiky marram grass was widely planted on Tasmanian beaches from the 1950s onwards for grazing and dune stabilisation.

Dune stabilisation stops sand blowing into pastures and onto roads and becoming a nuisance.

Studies from New Zealand and South-eastern Australia suggest that marram grass may displace local “sand binders”: plants that trap the sand so it cannot move.

Prof. Kirkpatrick said sea levels are rising and human pressure on the coast is increasing.

“The coast is important for nature conservation as well as for recreation,” he said.

“Therefore it’s vital to know how and why beaches have changed, as this can help predict how they may change in the future.”

Your old family holiday snaps may be invaluable for this purpose, particularly if they show the dunes on any of the following beaches: Wrinkler’s Beach (Scamander); Friendly Beaches; North Abbotsbury (Eddystone Point Beach); Maurouard Beach; Marion Bay; North Bay; and Beechford.

For more information/interviews, please contact: Monica Hayes
mlhayes@utas.edu.au

Information Released by:

Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: 6226 2124/2691 Mobile: 0417 517 291

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au