

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Tasmanian devil research update

The Tasmanian devil which showed a strong antibody response to the cancer decimating the devil population is now showing signs of the Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD.)

Associate Professor Greg Woods, of the Menzies Research Institute, in the University of Tasmania removed two five-cent piece sized growths from the Tasmanian devil known as Cedric on Monday.

Assoc Prof Woods said today the growths almost certainly indicate that Cedric is infected with DFTD.

The procedure comes after preliminary testing of the devil for DFTD.

Cedric had previously shown a strong antibody response when challenge with killed tumour cells and then live tumour cells.

Assoc. Prof Woods said the discovery was disappointing but the results would not be known for certain until approximately two weeks.

The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program chief scientist Professor Hamish McCallum said today that while the news on Dr Wood's research looked disappointing, the overall program was many faceted.

“From the very beginning of this program we have known that there would be no quick fixes for the devil – this is a complex disease which will take a complexity of science and sophisticated and targeted wildlife management strategies to tackle it,” Prof McCallum said.

“The work that Prof Woods is undertaking, along with the work of other scientific researchers in the program, is invaluable to unlocking the keys of DFTD,” he said.

“We need to do that step by step and the nature of science is that it is rarely a straightforward process.”

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