

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **'Horror' start to insect and spider conference in Hobart**

Hobart will be invaded by insect and spider experts from all over Australia and New Zealand this weekend.

The Australian Entomological Society will stage its Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference, and the Australasian Arachnological Society its 2012 Conference, from Sunday.

Insects and spiders represent more than 80 per cent of the world's animal species biodiversity.

The UTAS Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) is a major co-sponsor of the event, and Dr Geoff Allen, Associate Professor in Entomology, UTAS School of Agricultural Science/TIA, is co-convener with Dr Catherine Byrne from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

TIA research to be presented includes work on invasive earwigs and psyllids, flightless weevils, overwintering in ladybirds, leaf beetles in plantation forestry and collaborative work with New Zealand on the biocontrol of invasive eucalypt pests.

The conference will kick off on Sunday afternoon with an insect-inspired horror film festival at MONA.

Keynote speakers include the President of the Australian Entomological Society, Professor Ary Hoffman, from the University of Melbourne. Prof Hoffman is currently working on the eradication of Dengue Fever by applying novel genetic techniques to the mosquitoes which carry the disease, in work funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Other highlights include a symposium on the management and threats imposed by fruit flies in Australia and a symposium on the invertebrate discoveries uncovered during Australia's largest nature discovery project, Bush Blitz - a three-year multimillion dollar partnership across Australia's National Reserve System. Participants will also discuss insects, diseases and their interactions with humans in our urban environments.

**For the full program and other details go to:**

**<http://www.cdesign.com.au/aes2012/index.html>**

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