

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: THURSDAY 18 MARCH 2010

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Tasmanian researchers off to study in the US

Two Tasmanian researchers will head to the United States to study marine protected areas and renewable energy technology, as the 2010 winners of the Fulbright Tasmania Scholarship.

Associate Professor Graham Edgar, a marine ecologist at the Tasmania Aquaculture Fisheries Institute (TAFI), will research the effectiveness of marine protected areas as a tool for biodiversity conservation.

Simon Gamble, Manager of Technology and Commercialisation at Hydro Tasmania, will study the application of renewable energy technology in modern power systems.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Professor Daryl Le Grew congratulated the researchers for securing a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship.

“The Fulbright program gives researchers an opportunity to add value to their area of specialist study,” Professor Le Grew said.

Assoc Prof Edgar will spend four months at the Centre for Applied Biodiversity Science (Conservation International) in Washington, DC, and also work with researchers at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and Californian Channel Islands Marine Park.

“The aim of the project is to improve marine conservation planning through the development of models that accurately predict ecological benefits arising from one important tool available to managers, the declaration of marine protected areas, including their value protecting populations of threatened species,” Assoc Prof Edgar said.

“The project will also look at cost-effective ways of monitoring the inshore marine environment through information provided by volunteer divers trained in scientific survey techniques.”

“Ecological data provided by keen recreational divers can, in effect, allow researchers to remotely sense the marine environment at scales of time and space much larger than possible for scientific dive teams.”

Simon Gamble will spend four months with the US National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and will use the information gained to support the development of a renewable energy power system and research facility for the Bass Strait Islands.

“In recent years, Hydro Tasmania has undertaken several renewable energy developments on King Island with the aim to reduce dependence on diesel, reduce cost and greenhouse gas emissions,” Mr Gamble said.

His Fulbright Scholarship will also create relationships to assist building the UTAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Power Systems (CREPS).

The Fulbright Commission annually awards up to 25 Fulbright Scholarships for Australians to study in the United States.

For more information about the Fulbright Scholarships, visit: www.fulbright.com.au

Information Released by:

The Media Office, University of Tasmania

Phone: 62268519 Mobile: 0418 510 121

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au