

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



New Director for key marine and Antarctic research centre

The University of Tasmania has announced the appointment of the inaugural Executive Director of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).

Professor Millard (Mike) Coffin will take up his new position in Hobart around mid-October 2010.

Professor Coffin has most recently served as Director of Research at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, an integrated collaboration between the University of Southampton and the Natural Environment Research Council, UK.

UTAS Acting Vice-Chancellor David Rich said Professor Coffin will bring a wealth of experience to the newly created role.

“Professor Coffin brings the skills necessary to lead the IMAS towards fulfilling its potential as the leading institution for cool temperate and high latitude studies,” Professor Rich said.

“He has an internationally significant research record and the ability to generate increased research activity in this exciting and important area for Australia’s long-term future, as IMAS engages with State, national and international players.”

Hailing from the United States, Professor Coffin has a background in earth science, obtaining an AB from Dartmouth College and a MA, MPhil and PhD from Columbia University. He served as inaugural chair of the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) Science Planning Committee from 2003 to 2005. He has written more than 120 research papers.

The IMAS consolidates the University of Tasmania’s internationally recognised expertise in cool temperate marine and Antarctic research.

IMAS is largely science based with temperate aquaculture, fisheries management, biodiversity, ecosystem management and modelling, physical and biological research in the region from Tasmania to the Southern Ocean and further, to Antarctica. An underlying theme is environmental change, with a particular focus on climate studies.

IMAS brings together the well-established Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies (IASOS) and the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) and is in partnership with the Tasmanian Government.

IMAS will work with the CSIRO, the Antarctic Climate and Cooperative Research Centre, the Integrated Marine Observing System, the Australian Antarctic Division and industry stakeholders to create new research opportunities.

“Professor Coffin will strengthen the University’s alliances with these national bodies through enhanced collaboration,” Professor Rich said.

From 1 January 2010, IMAS has been operating as a teaching and research organisation providing undergraduate, honours and postgraduate-level training in all areas pertaining to Tasmania and southwards.

While IMAS will continue to operate at the Marine Research Laboratories in Taroona, it is planned that the current Sandy Bay components relocate to a purpose-built facility in Hobart, for which the University was granted \$45 million in the last federal Budget.

The new facility will provide strong support for Hobart’s role as a leading marine city and make IMAS the focus for visitors interested in Tasmania’s marine and Antarctic connections.

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