

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## World-renowned University of Tasmania alumni given institution's highest accolade

Two of the state's pioneering researchers have returned to Tasmania to receive one of the University of Tasmania's highest accolades.

Alumni Professor Roger Byard AO PSM and Dr Clare Smith will attend a gala dinner tonight in Hobart to be awarded the 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award and 2016 Foundation Graduate Award, respectively.

Professor Byard is one of Australia's foremost experts in forensic pathology and has contributed to a range of international and Australian groups aimed at preventing child accidents and deaths.

He was awarded the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal (HOSM) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) Operations Medal for disaster victim identification work in Bali after the bombings in 2002, and in Thailand after the tsunami in 2004.

He holds the George Richard Marks Chair of Pathology at the University of Adelaide and is a Senior Specialist Forensic at Forensic Science SA in Adelaide, Australia.

At just 27, Dr Smith became a leader in research into malaria through her discovery of a new antimalarial compound while she was a PhD student at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

Her discovery has had global impact, with clinical trials on the patented research now underway.

The now 30-year-old is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in eminent microbiologist Professor Chris Sasseti's Lab working to find new treatments for tuberculosis.

“These prestigious awards honour and recognise the tireless and dedicated efforts our alumni have devoted to their respective fields,” University Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen said.

“Professor Byard and Dr Smith are to be celebrated for their achievements, and service to the medical research and public health sectors.

“Their efforts have and continue to benefit communities across the globe, and the University of Tasmania is honoured their journey started here.”

The Distinguished Alumni Award honours the diversity and quality of work alumni make to the enrichment of society, and is typically awarded to an individual at the peak of their career.

The Foundation Graduate Award recognises a high achieving University of Tasmania graduate in their early to mid-career who demonstrates the potential to shape the world through their vision, leadership and professionalism.

### **Bio on each recipient:**

#### **Professor Roger Byard AO PSM (MBBS 1978, BMedSci 1975, University of Tasmania):**

Professor Byard has a specific interest in sudden infant and childhood death. He holds a number of fellowships including Royal College of Pathologists of United Kingdom (FRCPath), College of America Pathologists (FCAP), National Association of Medical Examiners in the United States and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RFCPC). He is also a registered expert with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. In 2013, he was made an Officer (AO) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to medicine in the field of forensic pathology as an academic, researcher and practitioner.

#### **Dr Clare Smith (BBiotech Hons 2007, PhD 2012, University of Tasmania):**

Dr Smith’s research efforts are focused on eliminating infectious diseases, including malaria and tuberculosis. Her work has been recognised with a number of awards including Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year (2014), Tasmanian Premier’s Young Achiever of the Year (2013) and the Tasmanian winner of the Australian Society for Medical Research Awards (2009). She received the Bede Morris Fellowship from the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian-European Malaria fellowship to collaborate with leading infectious disease researchers in Lisbon and Paris. Findings from this work have been published in leading international peer-reviewed journals. She is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in the US, where she has presented her research findings as an invited speaker at conferences across the globe. She was appointed to the secretariat of the International Mammalian Genome Society (IMGS) after being awarded the prestigious Verne Chapman Fellowship.

### **Information released by:**

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