

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Aboriginal Convicts focus of Reconciliation Week lecture

Aboriginal convicts traversed a colonial landscape replete with frontier conflict, soldiers, courtroom dramas, prisons, daring escapes and premature death.

Some of their stories will be told in a free public lecture hosted by Riawunna and the University Department of Rural Health and held at the UTAS Cradle Coast campus on **Friday 29 May at 6.30pm.**

UTAS lecturer Dr Kristyn Harman will present the lecture: *'These poor wretches are to be worked in irons', Aboriginal Convicts in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.*

In her recent research, Dr Harman found that 60 Aboriginal men from New South Wales were transported as convicts between the late 1700s and the 1860s. They were sent to Norfolk Island, Van Diemen's Land and the prison islands at Port Jackson.

"Most Australians know something about the country's convict past, but very few people realise that Aboriginal men were punished within the convict system," said Dr Harman.

"Some were worked in irons, others joined road gangs, but most fell ill and died within a very short time. Not many Aboriginal convicts survived to return home.

"This is a 19th century 'Aboriginal deaths in custody' story that needs to be told."

Dr Harman said the stories of these men are overwhelmingly sad. One, Yanem Goona, an old man from Victoria, was transported to Norfolk Island and cried every time someone mentioned home.

Like so many other Aboriginal convicts, Yanem Goona became ill. He was sent to Impression Bay, where he died in custody in 1848.

For more information and reservations phone (03) 6430 4949 or email ccc.support@utas.edu.au

Dr Harman is available for interview from Monday 25 May.

To organise interviews please contact Kath Mann, UTAS Cradle Coast campus Communications Officer, (03) 6430 4949

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