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Tuesday 19 June 2018

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## New book prize winner takes reader into the heart of Tasmania

A book which delves deep into Tasmania's Indigenous history has been awarded the inaugural Dick and Joan Green Family Award for Tasmanian History.

Historian and author Rebe Taylor was awarded the prestigious \$25,000 prize for *Into the Heart of Tasmania: A Search for Human Antiquity*, published by Melbourne University Press.

University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Rufus Black presented Dr Taylor with the award at a ceremony at the University Club yesterday evening.

"Thank you to the Green family for creating what is an incredibly generous but also really important award," said Dr Taylor.

"I have been writing and thinking about Tasmania since I was my daughter's age, and she's seven. [My family] went on holiday to Kangaroo Island in South Australia, and that's when I learnt that it was home to Tasmanian Aboriginal women who had been taken there.

"I used to think about [these women] as a child, and that's what made me want to write about history."

Based on extensive research in museum archives in Oxford and in Tasmania, the book takes the reader into the heart of debates over Tasmanian Aboriginal antiquity, adding to the growing body of work about Aboriginal lifeways in Tasmania dating back at least 41,000 years.

"Tasmanian history is very important to Tasmanians, but it has [also] always been very important to the world," Dr Taylor said. "The story of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people has been told again and again in the context of British history, [but] it has always been a story of shame.

"What I want to keep doing as a historian, and going forwards, is look to ways to tell that story, not always about shame and ending, but about the future, about endurance - that's what this book is about."

In her speech, Dr Taylor also thanked the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, publisher Melbourne University Press and the University of Tasmania for supporting the prize.

Photos of the night are available for distribution at <http://bit.ly/212af0L>

### **About the award**

Bestowed by the Green Family with the University of Tasmania's support, the biennial opportunity is worth \$25,000. The prize recognises an author of a high-quality published work that significantly contributes to the knowledge and understanding of Tasmania's history and cultural heritage, offered in honour of Dick and Joan Green – who were key drivers in the establishment of the National Trust in Tasmania and strong supporters of the arts and many community organisations.

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