



UNIVERSITY *of*
TASMANIA

Tuesday, 8 October 2019

University to cultivate global food-security research

University of Tasmania researchers will soon be exploring how to future-proof essential crops that help sustain global populations in the face of climate change.

Today, **(Tuesday, 8 October)** \$35 million in federal funding was announced to establish an Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Plant Success in Nature and Agriculture.

The University was a major partner responsible for submitting the successful bid.

Experts from the College of Sciences and Engineering will lead work for the Centre, focused on the resilience and suitability of agricultural plants like wheat, rice and corn for varying environments.

University Professor of Plant Physiology and Centre of Excellence Program Coordinator Tim Brodribb said it was significant to be leading research from Tasmania that would benefit the world.

"Our University will be working to understand the biology of resilient wild plants, and how this resilience can be translated to produce hardy crops," Professor Brodribb said.

"The green revolution has run its course so it is critical that we work to improve future harvests that can withstand the effects of climate change and meet the forecast increase in the world's population so that people don't go hungry.

"The University of Tasmania team includes world-experts in a diversity of areas who will be supporting this work, including a biological mathematician to help predict plant behaviour, and researchers who understand the genetics of flowering, symbiotic relationships between fungi and plants in addition to hormones and signalling.

"The funding will allow us to not only make a significant global contribution, but also establish new opportunities for our PhD students and early career post-doctoral researchers here in Tasmania.

“The idea of the Centre is to create a long-lasting legacy that delivers the next generation of biologists while making a profound and sustained change to the way we do things in the years to come.”

The funding bid was submitted in partnership with the University of Queensland where the Centre will be administered.

University Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Anthony Koutoulis said the announcement aligned with the institution’s commitment to lead research that was place-based, but globally connected.

“Tasmania is extremely well-positioned to lead projects in plant biology, and it is a tremendous achievement for our University to be acknowledged as a world-leader in this field,” Professor Koutoulis said.

“ARC Centres of Excellence are hugely ambitious and extremely competitive long-term research programs, so to be recognised in this latest funding announcement is both a testament and celebration of the high quality of research being led by our people from Tasmania for the world.”

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Information released by:

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