

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **New exhibition celebrates a generous bequest**

Some of Tasmania's most celebrated decorative arts will feature in a new exhibition opening this weekend at the City of Launceston's Queen Victoria Art Gallery at Royal Park.

*The Bessant Bequest: A Generous Gift of Tasmanian Decorative Arts* will showcase the collection of well-known Launceston collectors and antique dealers, Toni and Peter Bessant.

The collection was bequeathed to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 2008 and features rare examples of Tasmanian colonial furniture, Campbell's pottery, arts, crafts and textiles.

The exhibition includes an extraordinary double-ended sofa, made in about 1830-35. The unusually large piece is a rare example of the use of blackwood in colonial cabinetmaking.

Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten has acknowledged the Bessant's outstanding contribution to the decorative arts.

"Many locals will probably remember the Bessant's antique shop, *The Den of Antiquity* on Elizabeth Street. It was filled with glorious treasures," Mayor van Zetten said.

"This is a really fantastic exhibition. I'm sure many people will appreciate the detail and excellent preservation of these marvellous objects that tell a story of Tasmanian history."

The exhibition starts on Saturday 26 August and runs until February 2018.

The Mayor and Exhibition Curator John McPhee will be available for interview today at 11am at the Art Gallery at Royal Park.