



MEDIA RELEASE

RICHARD MARLES MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry

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\$300,000 FOR MUSEUMS TO INSPIRE AUSTRALIA IN BIODIVERSITY

Australian museums have been given \$300,000 from the Rudd Government to help raise awareness of Australia's biodiversity during the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity.

The Council of Australasian Museum Directors (CAMD) is using the funds to establish a national framework to support local International Year of Biodiversity action. This will include a national website, marketing and promotional activities and project officers to stage and support events.

CAMD will also support local awareness projects, ranging from walks and water-borne excursions, to performance and web-based activity through small grants rounds.

The first five projects from Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and South Australia were launched today by Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry, Richard Marles.

"This collaborative program developed by Australia's major museums is all about using local resources to raise awareness and inspire local people to value biodiversity," Mr Marles said.

"It's a great program because it aligns with the aims of the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity and is the first major initiative under *Inspiring Australia* a national strategy to promote engagement with science.

"The partnership between CAMD and the Australian Government's *Science Connections Program* in the delivery of these community activities is to be congratulated."

CAMD is offering local museums up to \$5,000 in seed funding for projects that raise awareness of biodiversity issues.

"Local museums with good ideas for projects to make people more aware of biodiversity issues are invited to apply for the second round of seed funding," Mr Marles said.

"The second round calls for good local projects that help communities explore and gain an appreciation of issues of biodiversity and I urge people to develop innovative projects and seek funding."

More information go to <http://grants.innovation.gov.au/SCOPE/Pages/Home.aspx> A list of the first five local projects is attached.

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CAMD International Year of Biodiversity Project Seed Grant Recipients

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery “A Year of Wonder in the Island Arc”

Tasmania, with its living cargo of plants and animals, has been a separate island for 12 000 years. The wide variety of landscapes and habitats has been protected from some of the effects of climate change, human impact and introduced species that have caused extinctions in mainland Australia. Through this program of public lectures, curatorial talks, sessions in the Zoology Gallery, and web based outreach; visitors will discover Tasmania's ancient origins, unique biodiversity and the unusually high numbers of endemic animal and plant species that are present here.

South Australian Maritime Museum “Diversity at Sea: Port River Dolphins”

The Diversity at Sea program will enable visitors to explore the rich biodiversity of South Australia's marine bioregions. The program will draw in depth on the local and topical example of the Port River dolphin pod. Visitors will engage in innovative and experiential experiments using the South Australian Maritime Museum's resources including the museum's historic launch to watch and listen to the dolphins in their natural habitat. The program is based on a cross-disciplinary collaboration between a history museum, a conservation society and a state department for environment.

The Bug Blitz Trust and partners “Ballarat Biodiversity Discovery”

Over a weekend, groups of visitors to Narmbool (a 2000 ha pastoral property near Ballarat with large tracts of bushland and biodiversity conservation zones and corridors) join the Sovereign Hill education team and scientists from Museum Victoria in exploring the insect and other fauna diversity of a unique part of western Victoria. Groups of between 20-30 people will walk the tracks on Narmbool, visiting sites to investigate terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate life.

Museum Victoria “The Art of Scientific Observation”

To celebrate the Year of Biodiversity, Museum Victoria is delivering a cross-disciplinary program of science, art and performance across Victoria during Science Week 2010. Entitled *The Art of Scientific Observation*, this outreach program is being developed with local scientific and cultural partners in regional centres. *The Art of Scientific Observation* aims to connect people with their local environment and foster collaboration between cultural and scientific organisations to engage new audiences via creative techniques including performance and drawing workshops. Through collaboration with local cultural centres and science research organisations, this project will attract participation from areas surrounding these regional centres.

Crack Theatre Festival “Biodiversity Performance”

The centre of this project is the development of a new cross-artform work at the intersection of the 'two cultures': Science and the Arts. This emerging field is a fertile space for creative experimentation. Project managers David Finnigan and Gillian Schwab have a strong background in interdisciplinary practice and in communicating science concepts through performance. Drawing on the resources of the Australian Museum, the project will be a convergence, a conversation and possibly a confrontation between artistic and scientific ways of seeing.