

## **QUEENSLAND MUSEUM HOME TO WORLD'S BEST DIGITAL IMAGING SYSTEM**

Minister for the Arts Rachel Nolan today announced that Queensland Museum is now home to a state-of-the-art, custom-made digital imaging system developed by world pioneer in cybertaxonomy, Roy Larimer.

“Based in the USA, the inventor of this revolutionary patented digital imaging system has worked closely with the Queensland Museum for more than two years to develop a tool considered the best and fastest technology for producing deep focus images of insects and other small specimens,” Ms Nolan said.

“For the first time, the Visionary Digital BK Plus Lab system will be used alongside the ‘Rolls Royce’ of cameras, the Hasselblad, to take incredibly detailed images of whole drawers of material and larger specimens. These can be put up on the web using zoom technology to hone in on individual specimens or features like feather details.

“Used by the FBI and featuring technology often used by computer gamers, the Visionary Digital system produces magnified images of tiny insects and other specimens with incredible depth of focus, giving the public and scientific community greater access to the many biological treasures the Museum holds and is constantly collecting.

“The photographs show more detail in one hit, from tiny hairs on delicate wings to little claws on feet than only a scientist sees focusing down a microscope.

“The system can take and process images in less than two minutes – a task that currently takes about 30 minutes to produce with a smaller and optically poorer final result,” Ms Nolan said.

The whole project has been made possible with the assistance of the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA), a Federal Government project in partnership with museums and herbaria throughout Australia to improve access to biological data. The ALA is also providing a new 20 terabyte server to store images; making them more accessible for members of the public.

Special Visionary Digital features developed specifically for the Queensland Museum include a 30 cm square light pad to give perfect backlighting of large specimens and new colour-balanced LED modelling lights, which will allow video as well as still photography.

The system uniquely combines fibre optic flash illumination with a computer-controlled lift carrying a camera and a hand built super-fast computer enabling a series of photos to be taken from top to bottom of focus and combining them into one sharp photograph.

Queensland Museum Collection Manager, scientific illustrator and photographer, Mr Geoff Thompson, used and studied Roy’s earlier systems during his 2005 Queensland-Smithsonian Fellowship in Washington DC and said the new digital imaging system was an impressive tool that would provide much higher-quality and new images faster than ever before possible.

“This technology enables Queensland Museum to share images of specimens with other scientists throughout the world, helping the research community to better identify new species,” Mr Thompson said.

“Using this technology also ensures that once an image has been taken, we do not have to further risk precious specimens again for new images in the foreseeable future.”

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