

## **MEDIA RELEASE FOR ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA LAUNCH**

Anyone interested in natural history, including scientists, will soon have online access to a wealth of information on Australia's biodiversity through the Atlas of Living Australia.

Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research will launch the project on Wednesday 28 July 2010 at the Melbourne Museum.

"The Atlas of Living Australia is a collaborative, national project to assist Australia's natural history collections and biodiversity researchers to publish their data online," Senator Carr said.

"The Atlas is helping to bring together distribution data for Australian plants, animals and microorganisms, and combining it with images, literature, identification tools and molecular data to allow researchers and the public to explore and analyse this information in new ways.

"The Atlas will be an invaluable resource for biodiversity research in Australia."

The Atlas is funded by the Australian Government under the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy and further supported by the Super Science Initiative funded from the Education Investment Fund.

The project is being co-ordinated by the CSIRO in collaboration with the Australian natural history collections community.

CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Megan Clark welcomed the South Australian Museum, the Western Australian Museum and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory as new partners in the Atlas project.

Dr Clark also announced a new partnership between the Atlas and Birds Australia to work together on sharing data on Australia's birdlife from the Australian bird watching community.

"CSIRO is committed to the Atlas project and will use Atlas infrastructure to share data from the Australian National Herbarium, Insect Collection, Wildlife Collection and Fish Collection," Dr Clark said.

"CSIRO Publishing also plans to allow the Atlas full access to 50 years of archival material from the Australian Journal of Zoology."

Dr Robin Hirst, Director of Collections, Research and Exhibitions at Museum Victoria, believes the citizen science portal is an exciting part of the Atlas project.

"The citizen science portal will enable members of the community to contribute their data, sightings and images to the knowledge-bank on Australia's biodiversity, making it available to researchers," Dr Hirst said.

"To facilitate this, the Atlas is developing a suite of online tools and resources, including mapping, imaging and identification tools, and a state-of-the-art application for mobile devices."

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The Atlas of Living Australia is a collaboration between CSIRO; the Australian Museum; Museum Victoria; the Queensland Museum; the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery; Southern Cross University; the University of Adelaide; the Councils of Heads of Australasian Herbaria, Australian Faunal Collections, Australian Entomological Collections, Australian Collections of Microorganisms and Australasian Museum Directors; and the Australian Government Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA), including the Australian Biological Resources Study.

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