

## Parasites inspire public

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**The Australian Society for Parasitology Inc. (ASP) has won an Inspiring Australia grant to run a series of free public events to explore the world of parasites.**

**This project is one of 63 *Unlocking Australia's Potential* science communication grants announced today by the Minister for Science and Research, Senator Chris Evans.**

“Parasites are barometers for the health of any ecosystem and public knowledge about them, and the scientists who research and combat parasitic disease, can only be beneficial,” said Professor Nick Smith (James Cook University) who is convenor of the ASP Network for Parasitology.

“Parasites are a part of everyone’s life; they infect our pets, the meat and crops we eat, and us. They also infect our iconic marsupial wildlife and the fish in our unique oceans and reefs, sometimes with devastating consequences,” Prof Smith said.

“Parasites are a fascinating and very popular science topic. There is a gross-out factor that both repels and intrigues people to want to know more,” Lisa Jones, communications coordinator for the ASP Network for Parasitology said. “We have public events planned across Australia suitable for children, teens and adults. We want to enable audiences to get “under the skin” of Australia’s parasitologists, and the best way we have found to do this is by engaging scientists, communicators and the general public in discussions about, and activities that describe, the lifecycle of parasites and how parasites fit in with their individual lives.” she said.

This Inspiring Australia initiative is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education in partnership with the Australian Society for Parasitology Inc.

### **About the *Unlocking Australia's Potential* grants**

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A total of \$5 million has been awarded across the country.

The prime objective of the grants program is to increase the engagement of Australians in science and it has prioritised projects that engage people who may not have had previous access to or interest in science-communication activities. Inspiring Australia is an initiative of the Australian Government.

For more information about the national program and a complete list of grant recipients go online to [www.scienceinpublic.com.au/inspiringaus](http://www.scienceinpublic.com.au/inspiringaus).

**For more information, amazing parasite images, or to arrange an interview contact Lisa Jones 040 5620 747, 07 4042 1311 or email [Lisa.Jones1@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Lisa.Jones1@jcu.edu.au)**

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An Australian Government Initiative

