



Media Release



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Botanical interns start to bloom

Ten tertiary students from around Australia will graduate today from the Student Volunteer Botanical Internship Program (SVBIP) after spending the last seven weeks working as botanical researchers in Canberra.

The annual SVBIP is run by the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research, a joint venture between CSIRO Plant Industry and the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG).

During the program students obtain professional botany skills, working closely with scientists from the Australian National Herbarium (ANH) and the ANBG. Topics such as specimen collection, plant identification and taxonomy are covered in practical sessions and lectures.

“The practical nature of the Program is a real drawcard for students as it builds on their tertiary training,” says SVBIP Coordinator, Bronwyn Collins of CSIRO Plant Industry. “They especially enjoy the field trip to Jervis Bay where they can really demonstrate what they’ve learnt during the Program.”

As well as research skills, students are introduced to other factors involved in successfully pursuing a science career such as how to effectively communicate ideas and how to attract research funding.

“The Program aims to give students a real-world experience, so we cover things like compiling a grant proposal and where to find jobs. Guest speakers come in to talk to the students about jobs in the public and private sectors and conservation agencies,” Ms Collins says.

Students also make practical contributions to Australia’s botanical science, providing support for ongoing scientific projects and adding to and maintaining plant collections in the ANH.

Charlotte Hurry from Monash University says: “I don’t think any of us realised how much of an impact this internship would have upon our lives. We’ve had the opportunity to work with inspirational people whose love of plants and generosity of knowledge has given us the tools to progress with our careers.”

The students will celebrate their graduation today with a special ceremony held at the ANBG Theatre from 11.15 am followed by a barbecue at the Australian National Herbarium.

The Botanical Internship Program is conducted by the Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research – a joint venture between CSIRO Plant Industry and the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Further Information:

Bronwyn Collins, CSIRO Plant Industry
For more information about the Program visit:

02 6246 5133, Bronwyn.Collins@csiro.au
www.cpbr.gov.au/intern.

Media Assistance:

Alexandra Pelvin, CSIRO Plant Industry

02 6246 5485, 0414 654 633
Alex.Pelvin@csiro.au

www.csiro.au

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