



The role of museums in training the next generation of systematists – challenges and opportunities.

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The national distributed faunal collections housed in Australia’s major public museums have long played a significant, if understated, role in systematics training. Access to authoritative collections of specimens, and to the expertise of those staff employed at museums, are both central elements of a modern postgraduate training programme in faunal taxonomy or systematics. However, the specific ways in which individual institutions and museum staff facilitate this training are many and varied, with numerous opportunities but also significant challenges. There is an underlying ‘tension’ that has always existed between publicly-funded (usually State or Territory) museums and those universities charged with directly administering training programmes for students, resulting in a sometimes difficult balance of competing priorities. In this short presentation, I will explore the central role of museums in training the next generation of Australian systematists, highlight the major challenges and opportunities, and discuss some of the ways in which museum institutions can successfully balance the demands of staff and resources to deliver optimal outcomes for students.

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