



MEDIA RELEASE

22 November 2018

BUSH BLITZ EXPEDITION VENTURES TO NATION'S CAPITAL

From 26 November to 6 December, Bush Blitz, Australia's largest nature discovery program, will be scouring various locations, including in and around Canberra itself, with the aim of discovering a range of new species.

Parks Australia Bush Blitz Manager Jo Harding said some of the best taxonomists in Australia will be focusing on national parks and selected urban conservation areas across the ACT to discover new species.

"The Bush Blitz program has been running for close to a decade with the goal of revealing the unknown biodiversity of Australia," Ms Harding said. "Since its inception we've completed 36 expeditions to all corners of our vast continent, and discovered more than 1,630 new species."

This will be the first expedition staged since the Australian Government and BHP announced a joint funding commitment of \$11 million for the Bush Blitz program through to 2023. Established in 2010, Bush Blitz is a globally unique partnership between the Australian Government through Parks Australia, BHP, and Earthwatch Australia.

"Biodiversity knows no boundaries," said Earthwatch CEO Cassandra Nichols. "Whether we are in a remote undisturbed landscape or a highly developed city, nature exists."

"On this Bush Blitz expedition we will endeavour to showcase the plants and animals that live right here in the Capital and just how important your own backyard is."

This will be the second time that Bush Blitz has journeyed to the ACT. In 2013, an expedition to Namadgi and Kosciuszko National Parks discovered 71 new species. That expedition revealed a stunning variety of moths, bugs, beetles, spiders and plants that were new to science.

While Namadgi National Park will once again be an important location, this expedition will also take in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, Birrigai Outdoor Education Centre, the Australian National Botanic Gardens, with a special investigation of the biodiversity in the gardens of Parliament House.

BHP Head of Community and Indigenous Affairs Simon Corrigan said this latest partnership with the Australian Government and Earthwatch Australia provides opportunities to engage directly with land managers and communities on the importance of understanding and protecting biodiversity.

"Bush Blitz aims to build resilience in our landscapes by increasing the collection and sharing of scientific knowledge," Mr Corrigan said.

"By engaging scientists, Indigenous communities, teachers and land managers in species discovery, Bush Blitz builds Australia's capacity to manage land and improves our understanding of the significant role biodiversity plays in healthy, sustainable ecosystems."

Five teachers from across Australia will take part in the ACT Bush Blitz as part of the Bush Blitz TeachLive project. They will work with field researchers, while streaming 'live' back to their classes through the Bush Blitz TeachLive website, blogs, vlogs, social media and video conferencing.

Public events will also be held, giving everyone the chance to be part of the Bush Blitz experience through fun hands-on activities including:

- *Bush Blitz TeachLive teacher workshop* from 2–5.30pm, Friday 30 November 2018 at the Birrigai Outdoor Education Centre (bookings essential).
- *Bush Blitz community day* from 10am – 3pm, Sunday 2 December 2018 at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Bush Blitz works closely with Traditional Owners, land managers, taxonomists and teachers through this science program to help raise public awareness about biodiversity research, taxonomy and land management.

For more information about the ACT Bush Blitz and the program of events, visit the Bush Blitz website at bushblitz.org.au.

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Images from the previous Bush Blitz expeditions are available for download from the [Bush Blitz gallery](#).

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Below is a schedule of media photo opportunities during the ACT Bush Blitz 2018 expedition (NOT FOR PUBLICATION):

Date	Field work	Other
Tuesday, 27 – Thursday, 29 Nov	Scientific teams will be collecting primarily via helicopter in Namadgi NP and Tidbinbilla, helicopter will take off and land at Namadgi visitors centre, some vehicle base collection will also occur.	Field lab at Birrigai will be set up, some scientists may be available
Friday, 30 Nov	Some scientific teams will be collecting via road in Namadgi NP and Tidbinbilla, an invertebrate team will collect at Parliament House in the morning.	A teacher workshop will be held at Birrigai from 2-5pm
Saturday, 1 Dec	Some scientific teams will be collecting via road in Namadgi NP and Tidbinbilla	Some teams may collect at ANBG, Birrigai field lab will have some scientists
Sunday, 2 Dec	Bush Blitz in the Gardens event at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) – COMMUNITY DAY	
Tuesday, 4 Dec	Some scientific teams will be collecting via road in Namadgi NP and Tidbinbilla	Some teams may collect at ANBG, Birrigai field lab will have some scientists
Wednesday, 5 Dec	Some scientific teams will be collecting via road in Namadgi NP and Tidbinbilla	Some teams may collect at ANBG, Birrigai field lab will have some scientists