

What's in a feather? Stems for necks

“Explaining diversity of colour is a fundamental question in biology”

The amazing diversity of colours in birds and how climate change may affect this is the subject of a major study by Deakin University.

The study is also looking into how and why birds see more colours than humans.

Deakin Professor Andy Bennett leads an international team of scientists who have been studying parrots, in particular the Crimson Rosella, in a hunt for answers to these questions.

The team – which also includes the CSIRO and



Dutch and UK scientists – has been studying this parrot for five years, with field sites across Victoria, NSW, South Australia and Queensland.

“Explaining diversity of colour is a fundamental

question in biology,” Bennett said.

“We’re trying to explain what maintains colour variability in parrots, particularly the Crimson Rosella which in southern

Victoria is deep crimson red but along the Murray and Murrumbidgee is a pale yellow. In South Australia it is a splotchy orangey-yellow,” he said.



Melbourne is set to host the world’s first clinical trials of a new medical treatment that could give hope to millions of people suffering neck spinal pain and injuries.

Monash scientists Professor Graham Jenkin and neurosurgical registrar Dr Tony Goldschlager, together

with Melbourne-based biotechnology company Mesoblast Limited, have pioneered a new treatment using a unique population of adult stem cells that has significantly increased the success rate and shortened recovery times of neck spinal fusion surgery in preclinical trials in animals.



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