

# Secrets of Marine Stingers

Written by Kandy Curran, Thursday 12 May 2016



Photo of Dr Gershwin with an Irukandji specimen

Image: *Kevin Smith*

Real life stories of life threatening jellyfish stings in Australian waters had the audience wide eyed and perched on the edge of their seats in Broome.

The presentation "Secrets of marine stingers" was delivered by Dr Lisa Gershwin, as part of the highly successful 2016 Science on the Broome Coast series.

Dr Gershwin, Director of the Marine Stinger Advisory Service, has a wealth of experience in the jelly world, having researched stingers for 25 years, named the two species of Irukandji in Broome's waters and recently published the bestselling science book *Stung!*

Whilst the waters of the Kimberley coast are thought to have at least 200 species of jellyfish, with the great majority non-toxic, it's the Irukandji jellies, ranging as far south as Shark Bay, that pack a toxic punch and are to be avoided at all times.

With the cerulean waters of Broome a major tourism attraction for beachgoers and fishers, there was a lot of interest from visitors and locals in Dr Gershwin's presentation, which covered the toxic stingers that can occur in Broome's waters, the meaning behind the names Dr Gershwin has given the two Irukandji species, current treatments for stings and enjoying the water without being stung.

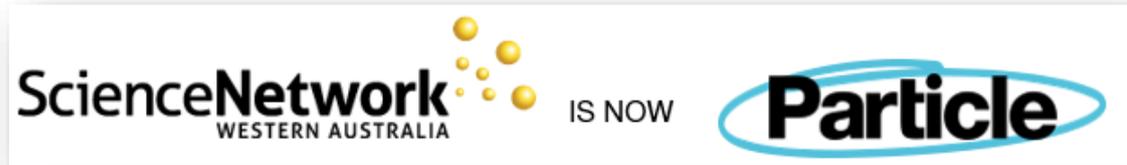
The presentation, connected with an audience of over 100 people and attracted a stream of questions.

Do turtles eat Irukandji? Is there any way of predicting when Irukandji will be in nearshore waters? What time of year have Irukandji stings occurred, and how do they breed?

Dr Gershwin told real life stories while handing around specimens of Irukandji. The biggest challenge for the Roebuck Bay Working Group was getting the audience to go home!

The next Science on the Broome Coast presentation, **Sea Turtles: Iconic ambassadors linking marine habitats, cultures and marine habitats in northern WA** is on June 8, 2016 at the University of Notre Dame Multipurpose Hall.

This innovative Science on the Broome Coast series is sponsored by Inspiring Australia, The University of Notre dame Broome, Yawuru Land and Sea Unit, Western Australia Marine Science Institution, Rangelands NRM through the Federal Government Landcare Program and the Department of Parks and Wildlife.



ScienceNetwork WA has closed its doors to make way for Particle, Scitech's new science news and story source. Check out the latest stories at [particle.scitech.org.au](http://particle.scitech.org.au).