



WINTER WONDERINGS

ECHIDNAS

Echidnas are an intriguing animal. They have spines like a porcupine, a beak like a bird, a pouch like a kangaroo, and lays eggs like a reptile. These Australian natives are a true gem and one well worth exploring with children of all ages. There are many books and resources about echidnas to support your teachings but first, it's important to brush up on a little knowledge yourself. Here are 5 facts to get you started!

- 1 Echidnas are mammals but they lay eggs. The only other mammal to do this is the platypus. When they are born, they are about the size of a jellybean. A baby echidna is called a puggle.
- 2 They form mating 'trains' during breeding season, with the female at the front and males behind.
- 3 Echidnas have no teeth, but they do have very long sticky tongues for slurping up ants, worms and insects. Their tongues can be up to 15 centimetres! *Think of creative ways to use non-standard units of measuring to demonstrate this to young children.*
- 4 They have large claws to help rip open logs and dig in the ground.
- 5 A short beaked echidna can be seen on an Australian 5 cent coin.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE NPSA TEAM

As years pass, we get older and wiser... but we never stop learning. The animal kingdom is one that amazes me time and time again. As I stop the car to let a koala cross the road or see the kookaburra in my garden rest upon a branch, closer to me than it's ever dared before, I can't help but smile from ear to ear. It's such a privilege to live amongst such creatures and to learn about them and their place in the world. These experiences in nature are unplanned, unexpected and amidst our busy day to day lives seem to have the capacity to cast a spell of pure serenity... even just for a moment. ~ Lisa