Cures OR Conservation
The future and history of animals in Traditional Medicine

Year 10-11

Learning Outcomes:
At the end of the session:

- All students will understand the natural world, including animals, holds potential medical cures; however, uncontrolled exploitation of the natural world as medicine will lead to extinctions.

- Most students will understand the development process of new drugs as being very long and involving many steps, including preclinical and clinical testing.

- Some students will recognise the value of considering traditional medicine as a source of information to be scientifically studied rather than dismissed.

Session Outline:
Human cultures around the world and historically have used and continue to use animals and part of animals as medicine. Students will learn some the scientifically proven medicines which are based on chemicals and compounds found in animals. We then discuss the history of European Medicine and how animals have been used. This leads into modern Traditional Medicine, and the students get an opportunity to examine real animal artefacts and learn their Traditional Medical uses. Then we walk through the process of how scientists create new medicines, including preclinical and clinical testing. Throughout all of this we discuss the inherit environmental problems of endangered animals used in medicine with specific examples of rhino horn (which is not medicine) and bear bile (which has medicinal value) and how these needs can be balanced.

Please note, no live animals are used in this session.