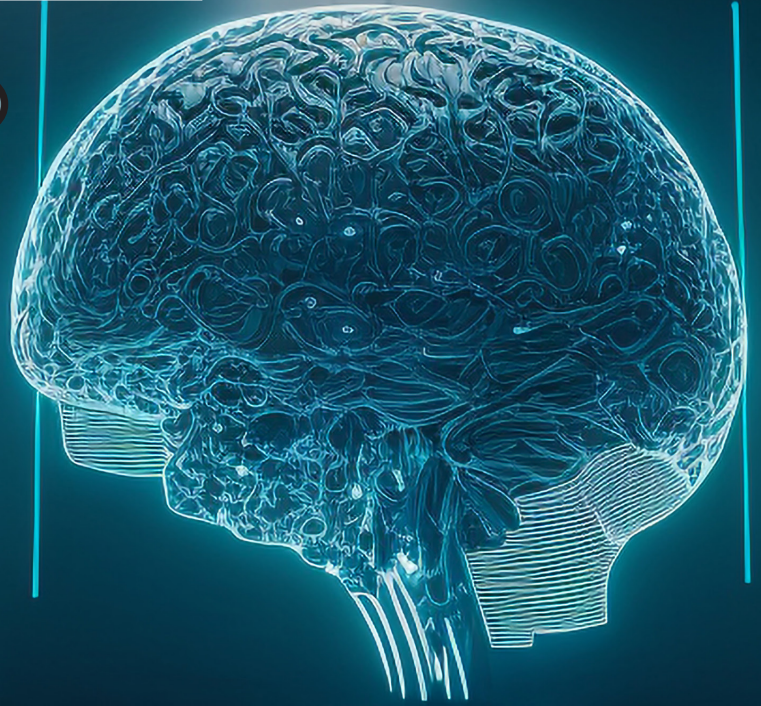


Annual Report

1 JULY 2022 - 30 JUNE 2023



Australian Science Media
Centre Inc.

Annual Review 1 July 2022 to
30 June 2023

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Centre

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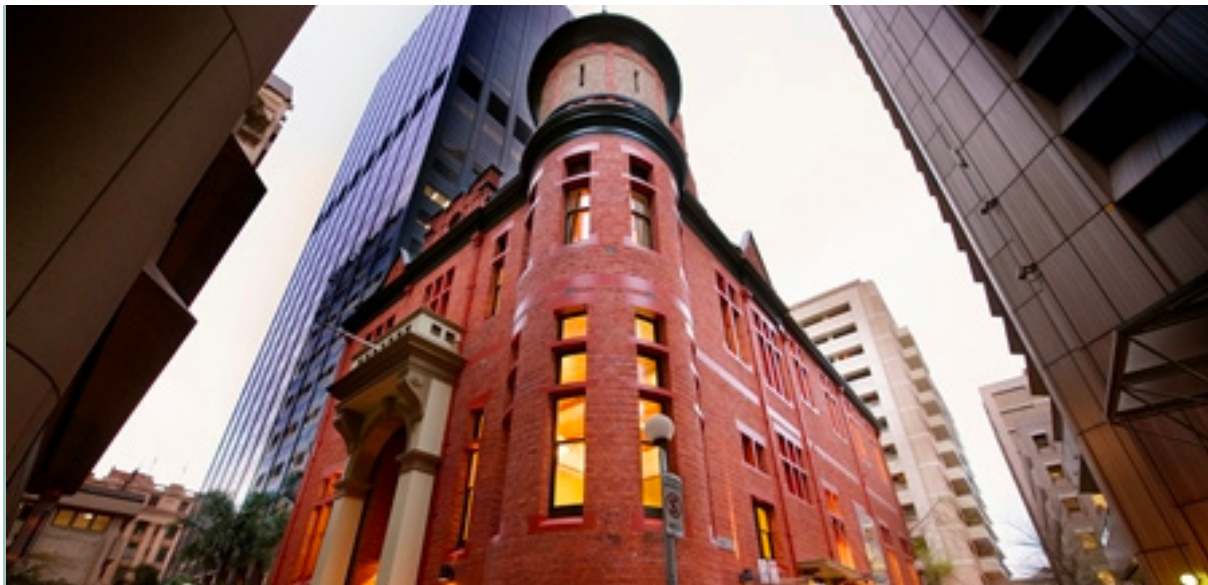
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The Year in Review



The AusSMC was as busy as ever this year, with a number of projects in full swing and a news agenda packed with stories informed by science. Over 100 Expert Reactions and briefings were utilised in more than 37,000 news items in Australia and overseas. COVID-19 was still dominating the news agenda through 2022 but that changed in 2023, with interest in the virus waning – we did 13 Expert Reactions and briefings on COVID-19 this year, compared to 48 in 2021-22 and 76 in 2020-21.

Collectively, the 180 AusSMC Expert Reactions and briefings on COVID-19 informed 68,579 news stories since the start of the pandemic, not including coverage of the hundreds of research papers uploaded to Scimex by the Centre and by universities and research institutes around the country.

While it was fantastic that we were able to help journalists and inform the public during the pandemic, we're pleased to be able to focus on other important topics such as vaping, climate change, biodiversity loss and energy, to name just a few that we worked on this year (see p16-19 for a full list). We were also able to collaborate with multiple

organisations including the Academy of Science, the RiAus and the ANU on the complex and perplexing case of Kathleen Folbigg and the genetic mutations of her children. There is no doubt that the science in this case was instrumental to her release in June.

The slowing of news on the pandemic has also given us more time to focus on projects and we made up for lost time with five major projects in 2022-23 running alongside our daily news work.

In November we began work on resources to help experts manage online harassment, thanks to support from CSIRO, Flinders University, The University of Sydney and Springer Nature. In December we wrapped up the first stage of our work with ABC International Development and the NZ Science Media Centre to expand Scimex into the Pacific and in February we brought 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers together at NITV-SBS for two days of intensive media training with support from CSL, CSIRO and NITV. In March we started on a new series of collaborative journalism projects with Australian Community Media, News.com.au, Pedestrian, SBS and

the Brisbane Times with funding from the Walkley Foundation's META Public Interest Journalism fund. And in April-May we conducted five online and in-person media workshops for Victorian women in STEM from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds thanks to support from the Victorian Government.

An important aspect of all of these projects is a strong focus on diversity and ensuring that journalists and the public get to hear from a wide array of experts, both men and women, from different cultural backgrounds. It benefits all of us when we hear more from Indigenous researchers, women and the wonderful array of experts who reflect our multicultural country.

None of this would be possible without the loyal sponsors, Board members and dedicated AusSMC staff who believe that evidence is critical in a healthy democracy. Thank you!

Peter Yates AM
Chair

Dr Susannah Elliott
CEO

By the Numbers

6221

EXPERTS ON THE AUSSMC DATABASE
INCLUDING 492 NEW EXPERTS

37078

MEDIA CLIPS FROM AUSSMC BRIEFINGS AND EXPERT
REACTIONS

1942

ACTIVE JOURNALISTS REGISTERED
WITH THE AUSSMC INCLUDING 378
NEW REGISTRATIONS

3060

STORIES PUBLISHED ON SCIMEX

107

SETS OF EXPERT REACTIONS
AND BRIEFINGS DISTRIBUTED TO
JOURNALISTS - INVOLVING 719
INDIVIDUAL EXPERT COMMENTS

989049

SCIMEX PAGE VIEWS
(7.9% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR)

Latest Developments

Strengthening engagement with the Pacific

2022 saw the conclusion of the AusSMC and SMC NZ's Pacific engagement project, supported by ABC International Development. Having made adaptations to Scimex to better accommodate Pacific researchers and journalists using the

site for content relevant to the region, the SMCs took advantage of ABCID's existing role as a trusted voice in the Asia Pacific region to connect with Pacific media outlets and research organisations. The SMCs conducted meetings with 16 Pacific based or Pacific focused media outlets and the AusSMC also conducted two online media briefings/training sessions for journalists to show the value of Scimex. One of these sessions also featured a news briefing previewing

the COP15 Biodiversity Conference and what Pacific countries could expect from the event. Following these briefings, many of the journalists who registered for the seminar went on to register with Scimex. There are now 13 journalists based across the Pacific signed up to Scimex. Following conversations with various research organisations in the region, there are now also 20 experts based in the Pacific with an expert profile on Scimex.

Briefing on what to expect from the COP15 Biodiversity Conference



Supporting scientists experiencing online harassment

The AusSMC is developing training and support resources for scientists experiencing online abuse and harassment, thanks to financial support from Flinders University, Springer Nature, The University of Sydney, and CSIRO. The AusSMC

has collaborated with media and communications professionals as well as scientists with lived experience of harassment to develop these resources. Two draft guides for scientists have been developed, with one focused on helping scientists prepare for media engagement in a way that minimises harassment and online abuse, and a second focused on what to do if online abuse occurs. In May, we collaborated with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to

deliver a workshop on "Social Media Self Defence for Women in STEM". The AusSMC also collaborated with the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma to deliver a training session for science journalists on managing online abuse and harassment. The project is expected to continue in 2023-2024 with additional workshops and the publication of the guides and resources online.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Indigenous Media Mentoring Program

The AusSMC's Indigenous Media Mentoring Program continued in 2023, supported by CSL and CSIRO. The program returned to its in-person format, with twelve competitively selected Indigenous scientists from across the country participating in a suite of hands-on media training sessions at the SBS/NITV studios in Sydney in February. Before the sessions, the scientists attended

an introductory session via Zoom with the AusSMC's Joe Milton and Ballardong Noongar journalist Sarah Collard from the Guardian, where they were introduced to one another and set a task of preparing a story pitch for their research. For the in-person sessions, Indigenous scientists and journalists were enlisted as mentors for the two-day program, which included mock on-camera interviews and advice on their story pitches. Following the training, many of the scientists went on to appear in news stories across media companies

including SBS, ABC, Koori Mail and the Medical Republic while two have signed up for expert profiles on Scimex. Feedback from surveys post-training shows all participants would recommend the program to colleagues, and they felt they had improved their ability to tell their story to the media. Many reported wanting to seek opportunities for media coverage in the future, and feeling more prepared to do so.



CALD Women in STEM

In September 2022, the AusSMC signed a partnership agreement with the Victorian Government to hold a series of workshops for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women in STEM following a successful pilot series in 2022. Two 90-minute

online workshops were held in April 2023 including an introduction to the media, interview preparation training, a presentation from the office of the eSafety Commissioner on how to keep safe online and tips from a CALD expert with media experience. Workshop attendees were then invited to join three advanced workshops in May, two online and one in person

in Melbourne. Participants prepared a story pitch in advance of the workshops, and then were given a mock interview on their topic by the AusSMC's Joe Milton. All participants were given a video copy of their interview along with feedback to consider when doing media interviews in the future.

Participants in the CALD Women in STEM workshops undertaking mock interviews via Zoom



LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

August 2022: Superstars of STEM workshop in Sydney



Superstars of STEM

The AusSMC is a major partner in the Superstars of STEM program run by Science and Technology Australia. The initiative aims to smash gender assumptions about who can work in science, technology, engineering, and maths. Open to women and non-binary people, the AusSMC runs the media skills component of the program. In 2022, the AusSMC was able to return to in-person sessions after mostly running the program online during the pandemic. Three in-person workshops were hosted in August with the support of SBS and Nine across Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. 60 women participated across the three workshops, which consisted of newsroom visits, presentations from journalists and the opportunity to ask the journalists questions and practice being interviewed in a professional setting.

Collaborative Journalism

The AusSMC received a grant from the Walkley Foundation and Meta to undertake a series of collaborative journalism projects with newsrooms around Australia, allowing journalists to take a deeper look at science stories they would usually not have the time to cover in great detail. The AusSMC conducted brainstorming sessions with various media organisations with a diverse range of key audiences to identify topics newsrooms felt they could cover in more detail given the time and resources the AusSMC could offer. The AusSMC then reached out to affiliated universities and research organisations to find experts who could best assist newsrooms in their projects. Projects are currently underway with Australian Community Media's agricultural team, the Brisbane Times, Pedestrian, SBS and News.com.au, all to be completed in late 2023 or early 2024.

Scimex survey

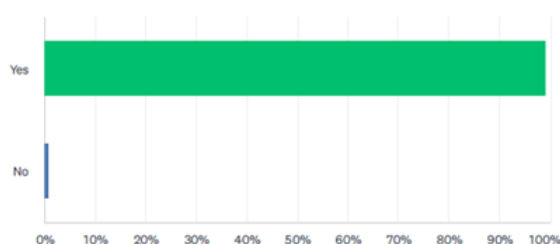
A survey of journalists registered with the AusSMC was conducted between May and June 2023, with 143 responses received. The purpose of the survey was to find out whether Scimex, and the AusSMC's services for journalists

more generally, were still fit for purpose and whether any changes need to be made. When we asked about specific AusSMC activities, the most popular were our expert reactions followed closely by Scimex Daily, SMC Picks, news briefings, find an expert database and media enquiries service, with

87% of responders saying Scimex met their needs very or extremely well. The journalists were also invited to provide feedback about what could be improved on the site and what they would like to see on Scimex in the future, which will inform the AusSMC's next strategic plan and future upgrades to the site.

Q16 Would you recommend the AusSMC services (eg Scimex, Expert Reactions, media briefings) to a journalist colleague?

Answered: 127 Skipped: 16



Media Snapshots

Expert Reactions and media briefings help provide context and independent commentary on breaking news and complex or controversial research. Our media team organised 107 Expert Reactions and media briefings during the year (including three briefings with attached expert reactions) contributing to nearly 40,000 news items in Australia and overseas. Below is a sample of the stories we triggered or contributed to.

► Submersible visiting Titanic wreck reported missing - June 2023

For a few days in June, the world was captivated by the story of the Titan submersible, which was reported missing on its way to visit the Titanic. Four days later, debris was discovered that indicated the submersible had suffered a catastrophic implosion. While the search was ongoing, the AusSMC reached out to media teams and found three Australian experts able to comment on the challenges of searching for a submersible in deep water, and what could have possibly gone wrong. Within a list of possible explanations, Associate Professor Eric Fusil from the University of Adelaide Shipbuilding Hub predicted a risk of implosion if the submersible was not perfectly round. "Any out of circularity defect could result in a near instantaneous



implosion (less than 40 milliseconds) at such depths", he said. As the search continued and in the aftermath of the discovery of debris, the experts were quoted 4308 times, including more than 3300 media hits from overseas.

► Kathleen Folbigg pardoned - June 2023

After 20 years in prison, Australian Kathleen Folbigg was pardoned after an inquiry found there was scientific evidence that cast doubt on whether she was responsible for the sudden deaths of her four children from 1989 to 1999. Research on gene mutations has progressed significantly since Ms Folbigg was originally tried, and scientists now believe there may have been a genetic condition that lead to all four children dying suddenly at a similar age. Experts in genetics, forensic science and law spoke to the AusSMC about the decision to pardon Ms Folbigg, discussing the long-standing campaign for her freedom, and what this case can teach us about the relationship between science and the law. Dr Ben Livings, Associate Professor of Criminal Law and Evidence at UniSA, told the AusSMC that while the law deals in the "binary guilty-not guilty," science was often less simple. "Kathleen Folbigg's conviction has long seemed to many to have been unjust. Her pardon and release from prison raise significant



questions for how science and experts should be used in criminal trials," he said. In the days after Ms Folbigg was pardoned, experts featured in the Expert Reaction were quoted in the media 575 times.

► **Government to crack down on vaping in Australia** - May 2023

Ahead of the 2023 Federal Budget, the Australian Government announced a series of measures they would be introducing to crack down on vaping in the country, including tighter controls on the importation of non-prescription e-cigarettes and non-prescription sales within Australia. Vaping experts participated in an AusSMC Expert Reaction on these measures, discussing the potential harms of vaping and the risks it poses to children, but also the role of vaping in reducing the smoking of cigarettes in Australia. Some experts argued restriction of vaping would drive some people who are dependent on nicotine back to smoking, which is a more harmful form of nicotine consumption. However, others told the AusSMC the current accessibility of vapes and efforts to market them to young people was creating a major public health issue for Australian children. They said currently in Australia even vaping products labelled as non-



nicotine could contain the drug, alongside a cocktail of other potentially harmful chemicals. Experts featured in the Expert Reaction were quoted 594 times in the media.

► **Is the Southern Ocean about to have its own 'Day After Tomorrow' moment?** - March 2023

The AusSMC was approached by UNSW researcher Matthew England for assistance informing journalists and the public about new research which suggested the Antarctic Ocean circulation could be on the brink of collapse. The study showed that, under future climate scenarios, increasing meltwater coming from Antarctica will drive a slowdown in the circulation of nearby deep ocean water, known as Antarctic Bottom Water. Which would profoundly alter the ocean's overturning of heat, freshwater, oxygen, carbon and nutrients. The AusSMC hosted a briefing with Prof England and other Australian researchers on the paper, and worked with the researchers on a media release which drew parallels between this scenario and The movie 'The Day After Tomorrow', which tells a fictional story of a dramatised version of a similar circulation collapse of the North Atlantic Ocean.



The AusSMC also collected comments from experts not involved in the research. Experts featured in the briefing and Expert Reaction were quoted 1262 times in the media. In May, another paper from Australian researchers came out which showed evidence of the Antarctic Ocean circulation already slowing, and the AusSMC put together another Expert Reaction with the featured experts receiving 175 media hits.

► **IPCC Synthesis report - Aussie authors speak** - March 2023

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its synthesis report in March 2023, pulling together the findings of six reports released by IPCC since 2015. The synthesis report covered the science, impacts and mitigation of climate change, including special focuses on the land, oceans and ice, and the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees. Three of the report's core writing team are Australian, and they joined the AusSMC for a briefing ahead of the release of the report in collaboration with the IPCC. A key message from the report was the consequences of global warming we are already facing, however the experts were optimistic that we are capable of



reducing emissions enough to reduce future harm. The speakers were quoted 1331 times in the media following the briefing, and an AusSMC Expert Reaction with independent experts generated a further 71 media hits.

► **TGA approves the use of psychedelics for mental health treatment** - February 2023

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) announced in February that from July 1, medicines containing the psychedelic substances psilocybin (found in magic mushrooms) and MDMA could be prescribed by authorised psychiatrists for mental health treatments. MDMA is now allowed for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder while psilocybin can be used for treatment-resistant depression. The AusSMC collected comments from experts who were able to explain the current research says about the effectiveness of these treatments, as well as the current unknowns. Some of the experts who commented are doing their own research into the safety and efficacy of psychedelic treatments for mental health. Many welcomed the move, citing potential benefits for communities struggling with hard-to-treat mental health disorders such as the defence community, and the future potential for Australian companies



to commercialise psychedelic therapies. However, several experts also stressed the potential risks of use of these treatments without the supervision of trained and authorised psychiatrists and noted the current lack of long-term data that would need to be rectified. 815 media stories quoted the experts featured in the Expert Reaction in the days following the TGA announcement.

► **Radioactive capsule lost in WA desert** - January 2023

A tiny capsule about the size of a pea made global headlines at the start of 2023. The radioactive capsule contained Caesium-137, and went missing while in transit from a mine in WA's Pilbara region to a depot in Perth. The capsule posed potential health risks if someone had picked it up without knowing what it was, and Professor Dale Bailey from the University of Sydney said the search was "akin to finding a needle in a haystack" over 1400 kilometres. The AusSMC collected comments from experts in radioactive materials, who gave context on how dangerous this capsule was, and why it existed. Professor Joël Brugger from Monash University explained how concerned someone should be if they found the capsule. "If you find the capsule and do NOT pick it up, then you are pretty safe. Distance is your friend; at one metre you can stay next to the capsule for 24 hours, and get as

much exposure as the average Australian gets annually from medical X-rays. At 10 meters, you can start feeling fully safe," he said. The capsule was eventually found on the side of the road, with experts who featured in the AusSMC alert quoted 1168 times during the search.



► **What can we expect from the COP27 Climate Conference?** - November 2022

The COP27 UN Climate Change Conference was held in Egypt in November 2022, with delegations from around the world meeting to discuss action to tackle climate change. The AusSMC recruited three leading Australian climate experts for a media briefing ahead of the conference predominantly to allow journalists to ask questions around what would make COP27 a success or failure, what journalists should pay particular attention to during the conference and what the sticking points were likely to be. The conference concluded in mid-November with the release of a final agreement, at which point the AusSMC



gathered expert comments to assess what was achieved. The experts featured in the pre-COP27 briefing were quoted in the media nearly 500 times during the conference, while the Expert Reaction following the agreement generated over 300 additional media hits.

► **Earliest known Stone Age surgery discovered** - September 2022

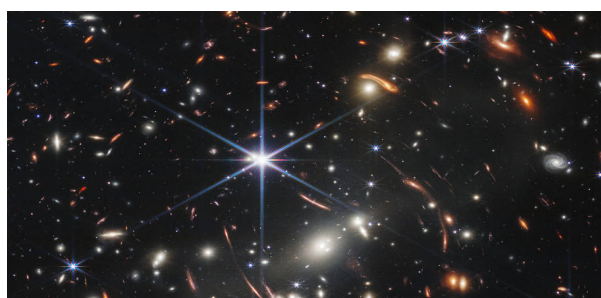
A team of Indonesian and Australian archaeologists co-led by Griffith University academics published research in *Nature* in September on what is thought to be the earliest known evidence of surgery. The team discovered skeletal remains of a young hunter-gatherer whose lower left leg was amputated by a skilled prehistoric surgeon 31,000 years ago – tens of thousands of years earlier than other instances of stone age operations. The skeleton showed evidence the amputation was done when the individual was a child and was successful, with the child living for many years after the amputation. Research team members from Griffith University, the University of Western Australia and Southern Cross University joined the AusSMC for an embargoed briefing to discuss their findings with the media.



The briefing was accompanied by a media release from Griffith University and a set of multimedia made available on Scimex. 2371 media stories featured the five briefing participants in the days after the paper was published.

► **James Webb Telescope's first image released** - July 2022

The very first image from the James Webb Space Telescope was released in July 2022. NASA's James Webb Telescope was launched in late 2021 with the capacity to produce deeper and sharper infrared images of the distant universe. The image showed a myriad of galaxies as they appeared up to 4.6 to 13 billion years in the past. The AusSMC collected comments from Australian space experts who expressed their excitement at seeing the image, as well as sharing the ways the JWST will be able to progress space research around the world. University of New South Wales astronomer Kim-Vy Tran described the way the JWST is able to produce more detailed images than its predecessor, the Hubble Telescope. "It's like before we could see just the trees in the forest,



but now we can see down to the branches and even the leaves of individual trees," she said. The researchers who participated in the Expert Reaction were quoted nearly 1500 times in the media in the following days.

► **Fourth dose COVID boosters for the over 30s** - July 2022

While media interest in COVID-19 stories has declined since 2020-2021, the AusSMC continues to collate expert comments when there are new developments relevant to Australians. In July 2022, Health Minister Mark Butler announced all Australians over the age of 30 would be eligible to receive a fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose. While the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation specifically recommended people aged 50 to 64 should receive the fourth dose, those aged 30 to 49 were simply given the option. The AusSMC sought expert comments, with vaccine and infectious disease experts giving their perspective on why only older Australians were being actively encouraged to receive the fourth dose, and what younger Australians should consider when choosing whether to seek the booster. Experts told the AusSMC that the risk-



benefit ratio was different for younger people, who were less likely to require additional protection from COVID-19 outside their first three vaccines, and had a higher risk of the rare adverse effects the vaccines could cause such as myocarditis. The experts featured in the AusSMC alert were quoted in just over 1800 media stories.

AusSMC Staff

For the second year in a row, the AusSMC has retained the same team of 10 staff members.

The team's hours also remained consistent this year, with 8.8 full-time equivalents during 2022-2023.

Staff at the Centre during the year were:

Dr Susannah Elliott, CEO

Lyndal Byford, Director of News & Partnerships

Dr Joseph Milton, Senior Media Officer

Nigel Kerby, Project Manager

Marilyn Arnold, Office Manager

Deb Shaw, Project Officer

Ben Kaldi, Science Information Officer

Olivia Henry, Media Officer

Rachel McDonald, Media Officer

Steven Mew, Media Officer



Dr Susannah Elliott
Chief Executive
Officer



Lyndal Byford
Director of News &
Partnerships



Dr Joseph Milton
Senior Media Officer



Marilyn Arnold
Office Manager



Ben Kaldi
Science Information
Officer



Deb Shaw
Project Officer



Nigel Kerby
Project Manager



Olivia Henry
Media Officer



Steven Mew
Media Officer



Rachel McDonald
Media Officer

AusSMC Staff Activity

Staff were regularly in demand to help report science and manage media interest

In February 2023, the AusSMC's Director of News and Partnerships Lyndal Byford was awarded the Unsung Hero of Australian Science Communication prize by The Australian Science Communicators (ASC). The award recognises individuals who have made a significant impact in the communication of science but have not yet been acknowledged adequately for their contributions.

Among the news outlets benefitting from Lyndal's expertise is ABC's Mediawatch, which regularly communicates with the AusSMC around potential segments on scientific misinformation. In June, Mediawatch approached the AusSMC about a media release claiming garlic could fight flu and COVID-19, which was not accompanied by peer-reviewed research. Lyndal tracked down experts to provide commentary for the segment, as well as a statement from the research institute involved providing clarification.

The AusSMC continues to provide training to both journalists and

scientists to better prepare the two to engage with one another. Joe Milton held 38 training sessions for researchers this year, including

Commissioner as part of the AusSMC's ongoing efforts to support scientists experiencing online harassment.

September 2022: Global SMC meeting in London



several intensive 'interview bootcamp' workshops for experts, along with tailored or individual training on a case-by-case basis. Joe also held six training sessions for journalists to improve their science reporting skills.

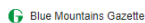
In May, Lyndal also held a 90-minute social media self defence training session for women in STEM in collaboration with the eSafety

In September 2022, Lyndal and CEO Susannah attended the Global SMC meeting in London. The meeting included the established SMCs from the UK, NZ and Germany, along with newer and emerging SMCs in Taiwan, Africa and Spain. The meeting was an opportunity to learn from each other and explore opportunities to collaborate.



AusSMC mentions in the Media

The Centre's name appeared in the media well over 1500 times reaching an audience of over 40 million



Blue Mountains Gazette

Weird science 2022: Strangest discoveries of the year

Video by [Australian Science Media Centre](#). Goldfish that can drive ... This year's top 10 weird science stories, collated by the Australian Science Media Centre...

12 Dec 2022



No, Queensland's proposed anti-discrimination laws won't see people jailed for merely 'offensive' posts on social media

Gideon Meyerowitz-Katz, an epidemiologist with the University of Wollongong told the [Australian Science Media Centre](#) that such research was "the very first..."

8 June 2023

AusSMC Board

The Board is chaired by Peter Yates AM and meets four times a year. Deputy chairs are Robyn Williams from the ABC and Professor Merlin Crossley from the University of New South Wales. The Centre's Audit Risk and Remuneration Committee is Chaired by Dr Michael Ellies. At 30 June, board members included:

Peter Yates AM (Chair) Chairman, Business and Economics Board, Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Melbourne

Dr Amanda Caples Lead Scientist, Victorian Government

Jim Carroll Private Consultant

Professor Caroline McMillen Chief Scientist for South Australia

Professor Merlin Crossley Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, The University of New South Wales

Professor Aleks Owczarek Dean of the Faculty of Science, The University of Melbourne

Dr Michael Ellies Non-Executive Director

Alexander Needs Partnership and Strategy Director, Nine Entertainment Co.

Melvin Mansell State Editorial Director, SA, WA, NT & TAS, News Corp Australia

Professor Melissa Brown Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, The University of Queensland

Professor Robert Saint Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Flinders University

Robyn Williams Presenter, Science Show, ABC

The Hon Peter Malinauskas MP Premier of South Australia

Tanya Bowes Director of Corporate Affairs, CSIRO

David Swinbanks Chairman, Springer Nature, Australia and New Zealand

Will Berryman Executive Director/ Council Member, The Royal Institution of Australia (RiAus)

Professor James Wallman Dean of Science, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

Professor David Lloyd Vice Chancellor & President, University of South Australia

Professor Laura Parry Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research Excellence, The University of Adelaide

Professor Emma Johnston Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, The University of Sydney

Mike Thornton Chief Transformation Officer, AIA Australia

A/Professor Darren Saunders Deputy Chief Scientist and Engineer for New South Wales

June 2023: AusSMC Board meetings are now a hybrid with Board members attending in person or online



List of Media Briefings and Expert Reactions

The following is a full list of the media briefings ([blue](#)) and Expert Reactions the Australian Science Media Centre organised over the past year. Collectively, they generated over 37,000 media hits in Australia and overseas.

2022

► July 2022

- Australia is about to reach 10,000 COVID deaths
- Flooding hits Sydney and regional NSW
- 4th dose COVID boosters for the over 30s
- 1 in 5 people rely on wild species for income and food
- [Energy crisis - Report snapshot shows the state of renewables in Australia](#)
- James Webb Telescope's first image released
- Rising COVID-19 cases and reduced restrictions - what's going on?
- Can COVID-19 vaccines impact your menstrual cycle?
- State of the Environment report
- Moderna COVID-19 jab approved by TGA for kids as young as 6 months
- UK passes 40°C 'milestone' and Europe burns
- Foot-and-mouth disease threat
- Monkeypox a "disease of national significance". What now?

► August 2022

- ACCC predicts gas shortfall in 2023 - Interim gas report
- Murray River report confirms 450GL target won't be met
- More coral, more bleaching and starfish outbreaks: Great Barrier Reef health report
- New Langya virus infects 35 people in China
- BOM has declared 70% chance of a third consecutive La Niña year
- What do we know about 'tomato flu'?
- [20 ways Australia can prepare for the next pandemic - CSIRO report](#)

► September 2022

- [Earliest known Stone Age surgery discovered](#)
 - The climate science is clear: we are heading in the wrong direction
 - Triple-dip La Niña confirmed as BoM makes declaration
 - Thousands of criminal cases to be re-examined following forensic inquiry
 - NASA's DART mission smashes into an asteroid
 - Paracetamol during pregnancy and sleep and attention problems in kids
 - Mandatory COVID-19 isolation to be dropped
-

► October 2022

- New Threatened Species Action Plan aims for zero extinctions
 - Brain disease risk more than double among former rugby players
 - What do Omicron-specific vaccines mean for Australia's COVID-19 immunity?
 - Widespread flooding across the eastern states
 - Great Barrier Reef to get a \$204m boost
 - NSW govt report on the use of animals in medical research
 - Do mobile phones on Wi-Fi impact sperm?
 - Federal Government releases Budget for 2022-2023
 - Could a little caffeine during your pregnancy make your offspring short?
 - Power prices - why are they so high and what can we do about it?
-

► November 2022

- [Ask the experts: What can we expect from the COP27 Climate Conference?](#)
 - Large river dams could be threatening platypus populations
 - [Global carbon emissions back to pre-pandemic levels](#)
 - 4th COVID-19 wave
 - Continued flooding across eastern Australia
 - [Australia's 4th COVID wave is swelling just in time for summer - Ask the experts](#)
 - COP27 - what was achieved?
 - State of the Climate 2022
 - NSW woman dies from Legionella bacteria in potting mix
 - [Sneaky superbugs - Scientists find a new way bacteria can beat our antibiotics](#)
 - UN-backed report calls for GBR to be placed on 'in danger' list
 - World's largest volcano erupts in Hawaii
-

► December 2022

- Trial results for potential HIV vaccine show promise
- Construction starts on world's largest radio telescopes in Australia and South Africa
- [Ask the experts: What can Pacific countries expect from the COP15 Biodiversity Conference](#)
- Reports of a nuclear fusion breakthrough
- COP15 global agreement on biodiversity reached
- Mum's diabetes could be linked to neurodevelopmental delays in kids

2023

► January 2023

- [Time to get cracking with carbon dioxide removal – report](#)
- Radioactive capsule lost in WA desert
- WHO says pandemic is not over but in 'transition'

► February 2023

- TGA approves the use of psychedelics for mental health treatment
- 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Türkiye and Syria
- How well does a prior COVID-19 infection protect you the next time around?
- One in five kids and teens struggle with disordered eating
- Some types of maternal infection may be linked to childhood leukaemia
- Stem cell transplant sends another HIV patient into remission
- National conversation to reset Australia's science vision
- Australia needs to act now to stop superbugs
- TGA cancels and recalls cough medicines containing pholcodine

► March 2023

- 'Oceans treaty' agreement reached
- How the Black Summer bushfires depleted the ozone layer
- 170 trillion bits of plastic are floating on the world's oceans
- Satellite observations show worldwide water extremes increasing since 2002
- La Niña has ended, El Niño watch begins
- Fish kills at Menindee under investigation
- Lord Howe Island closed to tourists over myrtle rust risk
- [IPCC Synthesis report - Aussie authors speak](#)
- Most of Australia's reef species have declined in population over the last decade
- Labor-Greens climate deal to place hard cap on emissions
- [Is the Southern Ocean about to have its own 'Day After Tomorrow' moment?](#)
- Second coronal hole detected on the sun in one week

► April 2023

- Just three years of exposure to air pollution could increase your lung cancer risk
- Solar eclipse set to stun in WA
- Australia's electric vehicle strategy released
- Australian Research Council (ARC) Review
- Long COVID Inquiry report
- [BCG vaccine's lack of protection against COVID-19 highlights importance of trials even during a pandemic](#)

► May 2023

- Government to crack down on vaping in Australia
- Paracetamol pack size to be reduced to tackle overdoses
- Drug reported to slow Alzheimer's progression by 35%
- Federal Budget 2023-2024
- First draft of human 'pangenome' reference sequence captures more human diversity
- The 2019 bushfires may have influenced La Niña 2020-22
- One of the next 5 years is set to be the hottest on record, says WMO report
- Power prices set to jump by up to 25%
- The deep ocean circulation around Antarctica has already slowed by 30%, confirming predictions

► June 2023

- 1.5 degrees of global warming will expose far too many people to harm
- Can garlic fight flu and COVID-19?
- Australia considers ban on 'high-risk' uses of AI
- Kathleen Folbigg pardoned
- Bureau of Meteorology issues El Niño ALERT
- Australia to set mandatory targets to cut packaging waste
- Potential synthetic human embryos created
- Submersible visiting Titanic wreck reported missing
- [Treated Fukushima wastewater soon to be released in the Pacific](#)
- More embryo models made from stem cells
- HRT menopause treatment may be linked to a higher risk of dementia
- [Psychedelic therapies available in Australia from July 1st](#)
- Reports artificial sweetener aspartame to be labelled possibly carcinogenic

Partners and Affiliates

All support is capped at 10 per cent of the AusSMC's budget to maintain the Centre's independence. The AusSMC is grateful to the following supporters during 2022-23:

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OTHER SUPPORTERS AND PROJECT SPONSORS



Financials

Income	2023(\$)	2022 (\$)
Sponsorships	792,700	738,400
Collaborative Journalism project	110,100	-
Scimex	23,000	33,000
Indigenous Media Mentoring	31,000	9,600
Harassment program	40,000	-
Affiliation	155,800	143,500
Cost recovery	18,500	22,100
Subscriptions and uploads	15,600	13,000
Pacific Project	67,500	25,400
Other income	23,000	8,000
Interest received	8,300	200
Foreign currency exchange gain	-	1,900

Total Income	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
	1,285,500	995,100

Expenditure	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Salaries and wages	879,900	890,400
Indigenous Media Mentoring	8,400	5,800
Pacific Project	49,600	-
JNI Collaborative Journalism Project	8,900	6,000
Scimex	79,600	77,900
Media team/briefings	10,200	11,500
Office expenses	75,000	79,600
Depreciation	2,300	2,600
Travel expenses	34,000	9,300
Marketing and development costs	4,600	1,100
Other expenses	2,500	12,400
Google COVID-19 grant funds expended	-	67,200
Harassment program	20,300	-

Total Expenditure	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
	1,175,300	1,163,800

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Surplus	110,100	-168,600
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive surplus for the year	110,100	-168,600
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	1,056,100	946,000



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