



Annual Report

1 JULY 2021 - 30 JUNE 2022

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Australian Science Media
Centre Inc.

Annual Review 1 July 2021 to
30 June 2022

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The Year in Review



It has been another remarkable year in which science continued to dominate the headlines in Australia and overseas. Experts and their media teams from all over the country worked with the AusSMC to inform the public on a range of very important topics, from the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the monkeypox outbreak and the devastating floods in NSW and QLD. Independent commentary from these dedicated experts helped inform close to 40,000 articles this year alone, 30% in international media outlets.

We know from their feedback how much stretched journalists appreciate quick reaction from experts and access to expertise through the database on our news platform, Scimex.org. The expert search is now the second most popular part of the site after the newsfeed and another 355 experts created profiles this year to make themselves available to the media. Many of them are from diverse backgrounds - of the 1,900 experts who have created a media profile, 450

(24%) speak a language other than English. More than 40% are women.

Thanks to our Indigenous Media Mentoring Program (supported by NITV-SBS and CSL) and our collaboration with the NZ Science Media Centre, 36 experts on the Scimex database have Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or Māori heritage, and our media workshops for Women in STEM from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds supported by the Victorian Government has seen an increase in women from CALD backgrounds engaging with the media through Scimex.

Scimex is well on the way to becoming even more diverse thanks to a grant from ABC International Development in February that has enabled us to start expanding the portal into the Pacific, supporting Pacific Island journalists to cover topics such as climate change and emerging diseases and encouraging experts in the Pacific to create a profile. This is all being done in collaboration with the NZ Science Media Centre, one of seven Science

Media Centres now operating in different countries (UK, Australia, NZ, Germany, Taiwan, Kenya and Spain) with the new Spanish Science Media Centre launching in March.

As if all of this wasn't enough, we started a new project in 2021 to shine a light on the harassment of experts after they provide comment to the media. While we had anecdotal evidence of experts being harassed, a survey we did with COVID-19 experts showed that the problem is worse than we imagined, with up to 20% receiving threats of violence. While distressing, this has enabled us to put effort into developing tools and resources for experts to help them protect themselves against online abuse. Watch this space!

We are incredibly grateful to our supporters and to the Board and hard working staff who keep the AusSMC wheels spinning.

Peter Yates AM
Chair

Dr Susannah Elliott
CEO

By the Numbers

5860

**EXPERTS ON THE AUSSMC DATABASE
INCLUDING 355 NEW EXPERTS**

39351

**MEDIA CLIPS FROM AUSSMC BRIEFINGS AND EXPERT
REACTIONS**

1725

**ACTIVE JOURNALISTS REGISTERED
WITH THE AUSSMC INCLUDING 331
NEW REGISTRATIONS**

3390

STORIES PUBLISHED ON SCIMEX

120

**SETS OF EXPERT REACTIONS
AND BRIEFINGS DISTRIBUTED TO
JOURNALISTS - INVOLVING 662
INDIVIDUAL EXPERT COMMENTS**

916485

**SCIMEX PAGE VIEWS
(17.05% INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR)**

Latest Developments

Supporting scientists and journalists experiencing harassment and abuse

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extent to which both researchers and journalists are increasingly facing harassment and personal threats designed to intimidate and silence. An AusSMC report released in October 2021 found that around 1 in 5 Australian scientists surveyed by the Australian Science Media Centre (AusSMC) said they experienced death threats and/or threats of physical or sexual

violence after speaking to the media about COVID-19. A follow-up international survey, conducted by the journal Nature found similar if slightly higher levels of abuse in other countries. Of these scientists, between 40 and 60 per cent said the trolling and personal attacks impacted their willingness to speak to the media in the future. Scientists are key providers of information for the Australian public, helping us to make the best possible decisions about our lives, especially during times of crisis. Threats directed at experts can shut down important conversations, remove key voices from a debate, and ultimately poses a threat to public debate and the health of Australia's democracy. It is an ongoing issue for

both science and the media. In order to address this issue, in December 2021 the Australian Science Media Centre conducted an online webinar for media and communications teams and other stakeholders within the research sector, encouraging universities and other employers of scientists to review their policies and practices on this issue, and providing them with guidance on how to better support experts within their institutions. In the future, the AusSMC hopes to continue work in this space, including developing a series of training resources to help scientists both prepare for and respond to trolling and abuse.

Lyndal Byford discusses expert harassment on Ten's The Project

LYNDAL BYFORD
AUST. SCIENCE MEDIA

Trolling, abuse, death threats: a COVID scientist's lot

I don't read comments on articles I write or look at reviews following TV or radio appearances or follow the comments in the newspapers where I am cited. It is too out there a constant presence for many of my fellow scientists during these long hard days of COVID, during which many of us have endured trolling, abuse and threats of violence and even death. I regularly drop off social media for periods when the hashtag too intense. But like social media following threats of violence and threats of sexual violence. My former workplace received many unsolicited comments about me from "anonymous" colleagues, members of the public and so-called "researchers". These comments and messages were about how I got my job, when my qualifications and my professional and my character. I received abusive messages and messages threatening letters to the press. My workplace took the threats seriously and took steps to get them sorted to and out of my office and took multiple actions to get them sorted. Others checked the mail and reported back to me. I was successful in achieving an AVO against one of the "researchers" whose identity was known to me. I don't think I did a good enough job of explaining how I felt at the time. I was apparently - looking back for the most part - I was honest at the time and my husband described the incident. He made me looking outside. My husband was threatened as he lay injured on the ground. He sustained a broken rib, a collapsed lung and a herniated disc. He nearly died. I took this attack professionally and personally. What the only things taken were none of my research letters and personal files. My office was ransacked. This is an extreme example of what happened to me. The trolling and abuse. But these experiences are not unique. They are experienced by many of my colleagues. But we don't really talk about it - and so. This week the Australian Science Media Centre reported that it did scientists working on COVID, who it reported, reported a sense of trolling. One in five experienced threats of violence or death. The experience of colleagues internationally seems hardly different. With a call to Waterford, Ireland, where I was interviewed. And that week I got a bunch of inappropriate comments on a published article, a week after the street after being on the TV (and I was wearing a mask) and a few days that were sexually explicit and disgusting. We review the past of being harassed, the name-calling and vilification - and we keep going. What? Because the science we do is needed to deal with a worldwide outbreak that continues to threaten and spread. We do it for us, for each other and for the people we serve. The science we do is because they can. It's time to disempower the troll. Speaking out, supporting our scientists and having each other's back is our power. The Australian Science Media Centre is a public health and equity voice character at the University of Sydney.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

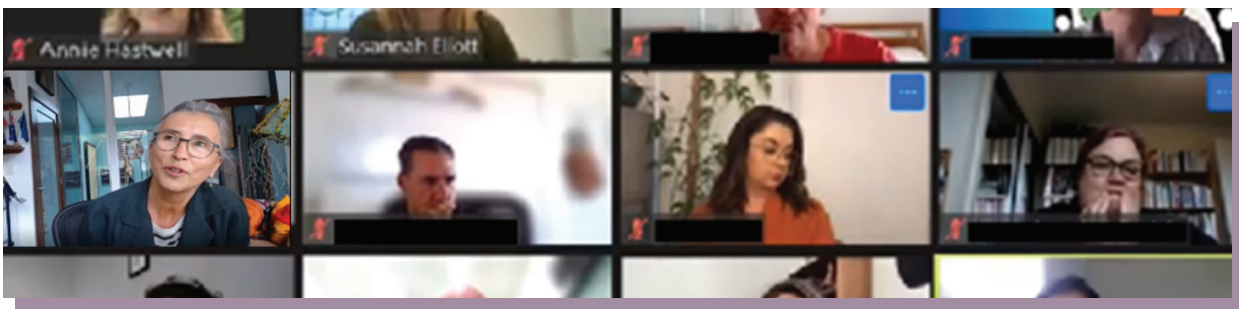
Indigenous Media Mentoring Program

The AusSMC's Indigenous Media Mentoring Program continued in 2021, supported by SBS and CSL. The program provides media training to Indigenous scientists, addressing the needs of these talented individuals and giving them the skills and the confidence to engage with the media.

In August a 2-hour pre-training session with one of the program

mentors (Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver and SBS journalist Henry Zwartz) was delivered as background and introduction for the main training a month later, where eight Indigenous scientists from across the country came together for two days of online training and networking, which ordinarily would have taken place at the SBS/NITV Sydney studios. The experience included discussions with Indigenous journalists and mentors, a pitching session with *The Conversation*, and mock TV and radio interviews with several SBS

journalists. On Day 2 SBS journalist Dr Florencia Melgar delivered the acknowledgement of country in her native Spanish language with a traditional burning of palo santo. We were fortunate to secure UQ's Professor James Ward as a mentor for the 2021 program, together with longstanding mentor Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver from the University of Sydney. Another long-time advocate of the program, freelance journalist Rae Johnston, acted as facilitator, presenter, and mentor.



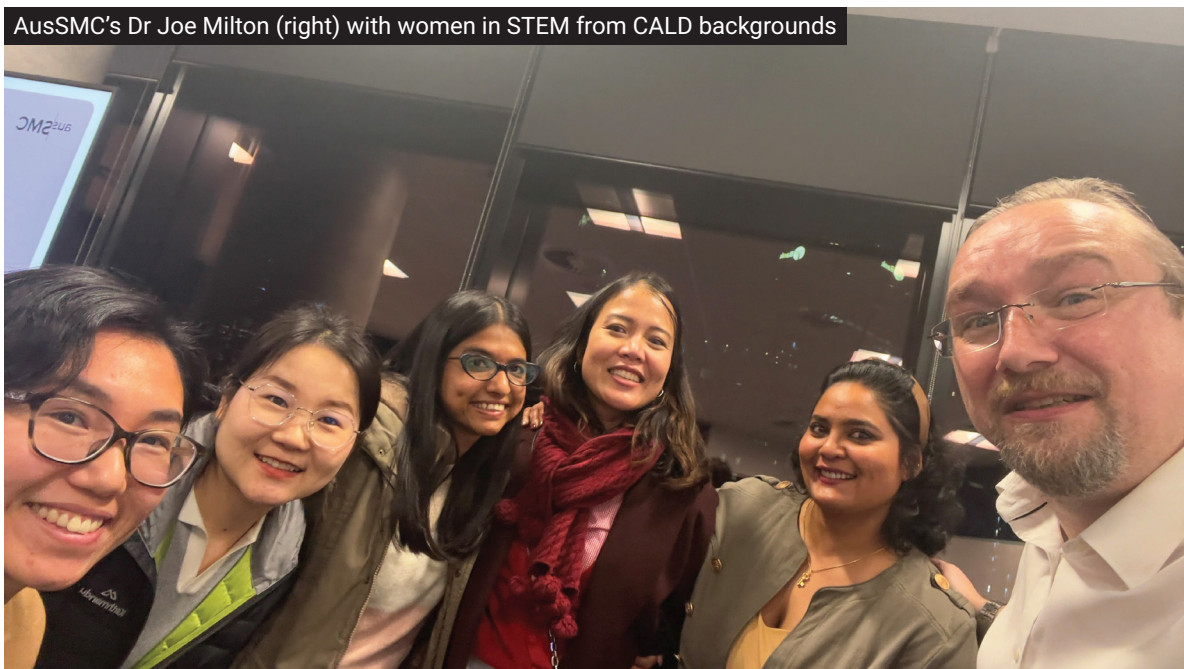
CALD Women in STEM

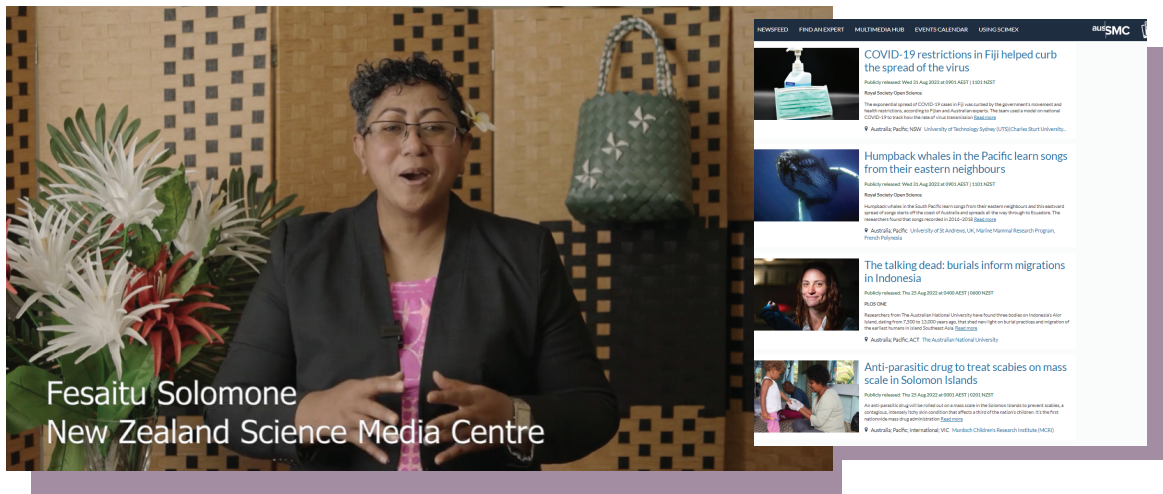
In 2022, the AusSMC hosted two online and three in-person media training workshops for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women in STEM. Supported by the Victorian Government, the project was a collaboration with STEM Sisters

founder Ruwangi Fernando with the aim of improving the visibility of CALD experts in the media by providing them with an understanding of the media landscape and connecting them with journalists. 50-70 women attended each of the online workshops, which included advice on how science reporting functions in Australia, the opportunities

available for CALD women and a Q&A with two female journalists. Twenty women attended across the in-person workshops in Melbourne, which included media interview tips, strategies for dealing with trolls and racism following media appearances and a Q&A with a CALD researcher with experience engaging with media.

AusSMC's Dr Joe Milton (right) with women in STEM from CALD backgrounds





Fesaitu Solomone
New Zealand Science Media Centre

Pacific Engagement Project

This year, the Australian and New Zealand Science Media Centres teamed up to begin engaging with research organisations, experts and journalists in the Pacific Islands to extend our services to them. Supported by ABC International Development, the SMCs added a tag to Scimex that allows users to receive Scimex content relevant to the Pacific and search for Pacific stories on Scimex. Through our networks in Australia and New Zealand and ABCID’s networks in the Pacific, the SMCs have been reaching out to experts and encouraging them to sign up for a Scimex profile, with nearly 60 experts with Pacific-relevant expertise now on the site. The SMCs are currently in the process of hosting media training for Pacific journalists in collaboration with experts in the region with the aim of improving science literacy among Pacific journalists and offering them ongoing support covering breaking science news stories through Scimex.

COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub

March 2022 saw the conclusion of the COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub, a collaboration between AusSMC and media literacy and technology nonprofit, Meedan. The Vaccine Media Hub served as an online repository of evidence-based information about COVID-19 vaccines, and related materials for journalists and fact checkers around the world. Supported with a grant from Google, the primary aim of the Hub was to provide quality information from trusted sources that could be utilised by journalists and fact checkers for the benefit of the public. The hub brought together a global network of information first responders to collaborate on supporting journalists and fact-checkers through this challenging time. The hub attracted 3.7 million page views since launch and involved 10 contributing organisations (AusSMC, Meedan’s Health Desk team, UKSMC, NZSMC, German SMC, SciLine (USA), Canada SMC, African SMC, Taiwan SMC and SINC Spain).

Green Zone Collaborative Journalism Project

Funded by the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas, the Collaborative Journalism Project aimed to deliver expert knowledge

and skills into collaborating newsrooms to produce new and exclusive content on topical issues.

Following on from various projects the previous year, August 2021 saw the conclusion of the Adelaide Advertiser’s collaboration with the AusSMC.

The Green Zone series supported a successful campaign to have

Adelaide recognised as a National Park City in late 2021. The series produced a range of articles and videos including a list of South Australia’s top 50 environmentalists, written in collaboration with the AusSMC. The project also saw the launch of an environmental award – the Pelzer Prize to acknowledge local environmental heroes, which was won by Jill Woodlands.



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 120 Expert Reactions and media briefings during the year (including three in Q&A style and five that accompanied our briefings) contributing to nearly 40,000 news items in Australia and overseas.

Below is a sample of the stories we triggered or contributed to.

► **First Aussie data on Omicron shows why boosters are key** - December 2021

As Omicron began to change the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2021, researchers at the Kirby Institute at UNSW were some of the first to look at the variant in the lab and test how effective vaccines and treatments were likely to be against it. Publishing their research as a preprint, the team said they found Omicron was more evasive than previous variants, but a third vaccine dose showed signs of boosting the antibody response against it. The AusSMC worked with the Kirby team to host a briefing discussing their findings, allowing the researchers to put potentially concerning findings around the variant's resistance to vaccines in a lab setting into context and get the message out to media that Omicron meant boosters would become even more necessary.

Twenty-four journalists attended the briefing



and the Scimex page had nearly 400 unique views. The briefing itself generated 800 media hits, while independent experts invited by the AusSMC to comment on the data were quoted in a further 100 news items.

► **Getting your head around the Doherty Institute-led modelling** - September 2021 & November 2021

In 2021, a consortium led by the Doherty Institute was tasked with modelling COVID-19 outcomes to advise National Cabinet on its pandemic plans. In September and November, the AusSMC hosted briefings alongside the consortium to give journalists an opportunity to ask questions and get their head around the advice as it was updated. The September advice modelled likely outcomes if COVID-19 spread in the community, and recommended the government keep cases suppressed until the country reached 80% vaccination coverage. The November advice focused on specific settings such as schools and First Nations communities and how harm could be prevented as the virus spread through the population.

The two briefings had about 80 journalists in attendance between them with 554 views on Scimex combined. Experts who participated in the



briefing were quoted in 1375 media items in September and another 890 in November.

▶ **IPCC briefing series**

-August 2021, February 2022 and April 2022

This year, the AusSMC hosted three embargoed briefings in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ahead of their climate reports in August 2021, February and April 2022. The first report outlined what we know about the physical science of climate change - how and why the climate is changing and how humans are contributing. The second outlined the impacts climate change will have and is already having, including Australia’s vulnerability for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere to mitigate climate change. Australian authors were invited to speak about their contributions to the reports, with authors and independent experts also contributing to expert reactions under embargo. Through the briefings, the experts were able to communicate the key messages from the reports and provide



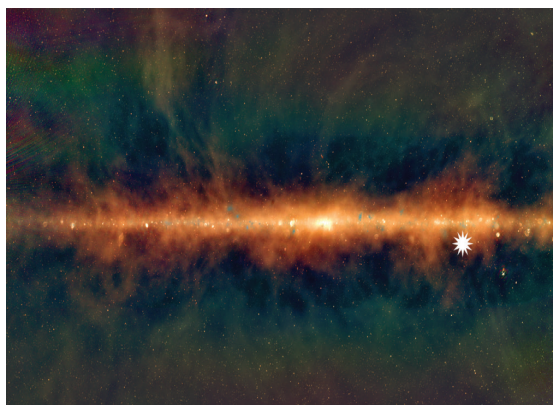
an Australian perspective for journalists. Altogether the briefing series and accompanying Expert Reactions generated nearly 4500 media stories.

▶ **Mysterious object unlike anything astronomers have seen before**

– January 2022

A team led by WA’s International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR) discovered a strange object spinning around in space releasing giant bursts of energy periodically, unlike anything astronomers have seen before. The object sends out a beam of radiation that crosses the team’s line of sight, and for one minute in every 20, is one of the brightest radio sources in the sky. Ahead of publishing their discovery in Nature, ICRAR partnered with the AusSMC for a briefing where authors discussed their discovery and what the object could be. They said it could be a neutron star or a white dwarf—a collapsed core of a star—with an ultra-powerful magnetic field.

Fourteen journalists attended the briefing including several from international media organisations including Associated Press and South China

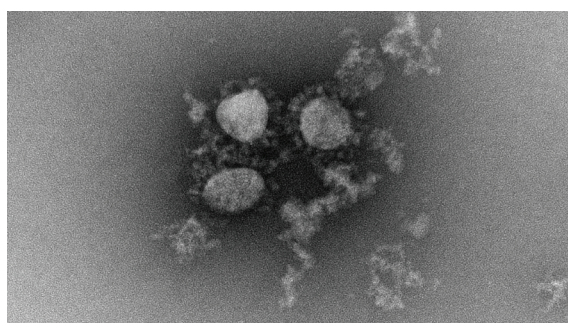


Morning Post. The story generated 1142 media hits, 922 of which were published internationally.

▶ **Omicron – new variant of concern**

- November 2021

Overnight on Friday November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization officially declared Omicron a COVID-19 variant of concern. To assist journalists reporting this over the weekend with limited staff and access to experts, the AusSMC rounded up comments from some of our most consistent COVID-19 experts. While the experts noted research around Omicron was at an early stage and it was hard to predict how much of a concern the variant was, they were able to give insight into the type of mutations Omicron had, how they were associated with higher evasiveness and how real-world data from other countries indicated it may be more transmissible than previous variants. As Omicron continued to dominate the news cycle throughout the week, the AusSMC followed up



with a Q&A asking experts to go into more detail about how it could impact our pandemic strategy, modeling and vaccination programs. Experts featured in these two Expert Reactions were quoted in 3000 media stories that week.

▶ **COVID-19 cases booming as Christmas is looming**
- December 2021

With reduced COVID-19 restrictions and the arrival of Omicron causing unprecedented case numbers across the country leading into festive season, there were a lot of questions to answer around the new face of the pandemic just as newsrooms and the list of available experts began shrinking for Christmas. Early in the week of Christmas Day, the AusSMC compiled comments from our COVID-19 experts answering some of these questions; how to reduce risk over Christmas, what role contact tracing would play amid high cases and what the research was telling us around the effectiveness of boosters and the severity of Omicron. The AusSMC aimed to provide some well-rounded, informative COVID-19 commentary to assist newsrooms to put together scientific content during what can often be a difficult period to put together news.



The experts featured in the Expert Reaction were quoted in 1492 media stories over the festive period, and the Scimex page received nearly 300 unique page views throughout late December into January 2022.

▶ **Floods wreak havoc in south-east Queensland and NSW**
- February 2022

Late February saw much of NSW and South East Queensland hit with major flooding with devastating impacts on regional towns including Lismore and Gympie and the major cities of Brisbane and Sydney also impacted. The AusSMC collected quotes from a wide range of experts, with climate experts explaining the impact of La Niña and its connection to climate change.

Dr Tom Mortlock from the UNSW Climate Change Research Centre provided a response to politicians who referred to the floods as a ‘one in 1000 year event’, saying “It is likely we will not be waiting another 1000 years for this to happen again, and we certainly should not be planning as if this were the case.”

Other experts provided commentary around flood safety advice, insurance matters, psychological impacts, tourism impacts and early warning

systems, while Professor Jamie Pittock from ANU called for the government to “permanently reduce flood risk by beginning to relocate the most flood prone homes and businesses”.

The featured experts were quoted in 1769 news items, 586 of which were from overseas media outlets.



▶ **Tonga volcano eruption**
– January 2022

The Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai volcano erupted in January, triggering towering ash plumes and destructive tsunami waves in Tonga. The AusSMC collected comments from Australian experts who were able to put this eruption in context, with volcanologist Dr Chris First describing it as “one of the world’s biggest volcanic eruptions since the early 1990s.” The experts explained the history of volcanic eruptions in the region, the science behind this particular eruption, the likely impacts it would have on Tonga and surrounding areas including ash fall and tsunami and the support the region would require to manage resulting emergencies.



Experts quoted in the reaction were quoted in 782 news items including 313 from media outlets outside Australia.

▶ **Australia’s gas crisis**
– June 2022

The east coast experienced soaring gas prices in mid 2022 amid the global fallout of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, causing the Australian Energy Market Operator to trigger the Gas Supply Guarantee Mechanism which calls for the market to release supply and come up with a plan to address a potential shortfall. The AusSMC’s Expert Reaction provided comments from experts on how the overseas conflict coupled with supply chain issues locally were causing the higher prices. Monash Energy Institute director Professor Ariel Liebman described the situation as a “perfect storm” of international conflict, cold weather and long-standing issues with the Australian gas market, with the country exporting its gas without adequately reserving supplies for Australians.

“The best immediate solution would be to pull the



so-called ‘gas trigger’ to requisition supplies of gas intended for export. In addition, the government should also seriously consider a full gas reservation policy for the entire country, similar to the one in Western Australia and the United States,” Professor Liebman said. The experts featured were quoted nearly 800 times in the wake of the Expert Reaction.

▶ **Honey bee parasite Varroa mites detected in NSW**
- June 2022

Beekeepers in some areas of New South Wales were forced to destroy their hives in an effort to eradicate an invasive and deadly parasite called the Varroa mite, which was detected in biosecurity hives at the Port of Newcastle in June. Experts who provided quotes for the AusSMC’s Expert Reaction were able to explain how serious the outbreak was and how the mite had impacted bee populations in other countries.

Experts including Dr Cooper Schouten from Southern Cross University explained how the impact would be different for Australia’s native bees, telling the AusSMC that “these mites can’t reproduce on, or directly harm, our native bees, but the viruses the mites may be carrying could have the potential for spillover.” Dr Joel Mackay from



the University of Sydney spoke about his team’s research in developing insecticides that can target Varroa mites without harming bees, providing an opportunity for a research-focused follow-up story.

Experts from this Expert Reaction were quoted 658 times in the wake of the alert.

▶ **Fire at Ukrainian nuclear power plant**
- March 2022

During intense fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces, a fire which broke out in a training building outside the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Enerhodar, Ukraine sparked worldwide concern. The experts the AusSMC contacted for comment on this breaking news story were able to put the story in perspective. “Though highly concerning, this is not tracking to be another Chernobyl,” Associate Professor Nigel Marks from Curtin University said, explaining how secure the power plant would be, and how Russian forces were likely taking steps to avoid a nuclear incident.

Dr Edward Obbard from UNSW used the Expert Reaction to urge journalists to “forego the temptation to contribute to quasi-apocalyptic media coverage of the risks at nuclear power



installations,” saying the availability of nuclear power was vital for some European countries including Ukraine.

This Expert Reaction contributed significantly to global coverage of the story, with 574 of the 642 media items quoting the experts published outside of Australia.

AusSMC Staff

After joining the AusSMC last year, the Centre's newest staff member Rachel McDonald continued with the team as a media officer and in 2022 began collaborating with the New Zealand Science Media Centre to work on the Pacific engagement project.

The team remained consistent this year, with 8.8 full-time equivalents during 2021-2022.

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 discuss interesting science stories in the media.

In December 2021 we conducted an online training session which consisted of a 1-hour webinar for media and communications teams and other stakeholders within the research sector on the harassment of scientists. This session was designed to encourage universities and other employers of scientists to review their policies and practices on this issue and provide them with guidance on how to better support experts within their institutions. Speakers included ABC's Social Media Wellbeing Advisor, Nicolle White, Dr Evita March who is an expert on the psychology of cyber

abuse, and Dr Natalia D'Souza who researches workplace cyberbullying and online abuse. The event was attended by over 100 people and was well received by attendees with many requesting a similar session for researchers.

Joe, Lyndal, Olivia and Susannah continued to do regular slots on 'Research Filter' on ABC Radio National's Drive program. The team also continue to do ABC Darwin and a monthly science segment on Sunday nights with ABC Nightlife. One of these appearances by Olivia was used by the ABC to create an

online news story which then also went on to generate further interview opportunities in May.

Olivia and Steven are now also doing a regular radio slot on 5AU/5CS which encompasses regional South Australia including the Mid North, Clare Valley, Yorke Peninsula, Spencer Gulf, as well as the Flinders Ranges and Roxby Downs.

In December 2021 the AusSMC also released our Top Ten Science Stories, and Top Ten Weird Science Stories. These helped to generate coverage over the usually quiet holiday period.

Study to find the most boring jobs and hobbies comes up with surprising results

ABC RN / By Sophie Kesteven and Andy Park for RN Drive

Posted Sat 21 May 2022 at 5:30am, updated Sat 21 May 2022 at 10:55am



Top Stories

'Australia has been slow out of the box', but a major car maker is planning to go electric-only

Christchurch attacker appealing convictions and sentence















The nightmare outcome of the US midterms? Failed candidates who refuse to concede defeat

'We have interfered, are interfering and will interfere': Putin ally admits meddling with US elections

Full report into so-called 'sports rorts scandal' released

AusSMC mentions in the Media

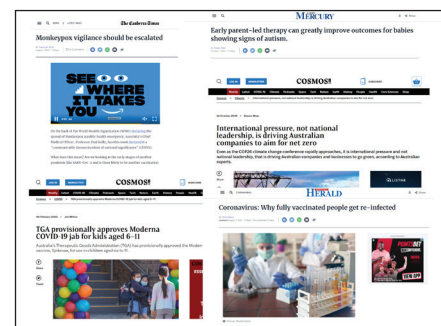
The Centre's name appeared in the media well over 1000 times in 2021-2022

<p>Cosmos Magazine Top 10 Science Stories 2021 Cosmos » Biology » Top 10 Science Stories of 2021, according to the Australian Science Media Centre. 31 December 2021 / Australian Science Media Centre. 31 Dec 2021</p>		<p>Phys.org Shock waves, landslides may have caused 'rare' volcano ... "The tsunamis could have been triggered by shock waves propagating through water," he commented on the Australian Science Media Centre. 17 Jan 2022</p>	
<p>Nature COVID scientists in the public eye need protection from threats ... to Nature's survey, which was based on a poll conducted by the Australian Science Media Centre, an organization that connects scientists to journalists. 13 Oct 2021</p>		<p>Herald Sun Everyday act that increases spread of Covid Dr Joel Rindelaub, an aerosol chemist with the University of Auckland, told Australian Science Media Centre that larger particle sizes produced during... 22 June 2022</p>	
<p>Insurance Business AIA Australia welcomes new chair of the board He is the chairman of the Royal Institution of Australia, the Australian Science Media Centre, the Faculty of Business and Economics at Melbourne University... 9 July 2021</p>		<p>Sydney Morning Herald Is media coverage of COVID-19 too negative? Lyndal Byford, director of news at the Australian Science Media Centre – she's been as close to this as anyone – says the coverage has fairly reflected the... 19 Oct 2021</p>	
<p>Nature Social-media platforms failing to tackle abuse of scientists In December 2021, the Australian Science Media Centre in Adelaide held a webinar that provided practical advice to scientists on how to protect themselves... 28 Jan 2022</p>		<p>Herald Sun Royal Children's Hospital issues ED warning He told the Australian Science Media Centre these new Omicron variants, are descended from BA2 Omicron — referred to as "stealth omicron". 9 May 2022</p>	
<p>The Advertiser Bugs, bears, pigeons and possums: Hard to find Adelaide wildlife book goes digital ... Green Adelaide, the University of Adelaide and the Australian Science Media Centre, we wanted to bring the beautiful guidebook into the digital age. 30 Sept 2021</p>		<p>The Cairns Post UK scientist taps investors to fund Alzheimer's drug trial Mr Yates has known Baroness Greenfield since she was the "thinker in Residence" at Adelaide's Australian Science Media Centre, set up to counter inaccurate... 3 June 2022</p>	
<p>Cosmos Magazine What drives Australian companies to set net zero targets? This article originally appeared in Science Deadline, a weekly newsletter from the Australian Science Media Centre. Originally published by Cosmos as... 24 Oct 2021</p>		<p>South China Morning Post World scrambles to contain Omicron coronavirus variant ... transmissibility of the variant, while others can help it evade the immune system: a worrying combination," he told the Australian Science Media Centre. 27 Nov 2021</p>	
<p>ABC Scientists talking about COVID-19 are copping widespread abuse and death threats, survey finds ... Germany, Canada, and Taiwan was triggered by a smaller study of Australian scientists by the Australian Science Media Centre, also published in Nature. 13 Oct 2021</p>		<p>NewsHub Coronavirus: Scientists in NZ and overseas reveal the abuse they get for talking about COVID-19, including 'death threats and endless hatred' ... radios and in our newsfeeds," said Lyndal Byford of the Australian Science Media Centre. "They helped all of us understand this awful virus." 14 Oct 2021</p>	

The AusSMC's survey on threats and trolling experienced by Australian scientists speaking to the media about COVID-19 and subsequent international survey by the journal Nature generated over 150 media hits for the Centre.

The AusSMC team this year extended an invitation to Cosmos Magazine

and Australian Community Media to redistribute news content put together by the media team for the AusSMC's weekly Science Deadline newsletter, with many stories being distributed across hundreds of regional news sites including an article by Susannah on monkeypox.



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 Former Head of News & Current Affairs, SBS

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

Professor Graham Durant AM Director, Questacon

Jeremy Houghton Head of Strategy & Corporate Affairs, AIA Australia

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

Professor Chris Moran Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Curtin University

David Swinbanks Chairman, Springer Nature, Australia and New Zealand

Professor Duncan Ivison Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), The University of Sydney

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 Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), The University of Adelaide

June 2022: 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 39,000 media hits in Australia and overseas.

2021

▶ July 2021

- Closure of lab animal supplier could have major impacts for Australian medical research
- COVID-19 Lambda variant in Australia since April
- The origins of COVID-19 (*preprint)
- AstraZeneca advice changes amid Sydney outbreak
- [What is 'gain of function' research?](#)
- COVID-19 Delta variant is more infectious, but is it more lethal?
- Two more deaths linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine
- Pfizer vaccine provisionally approved for Australian teens
- Where to next for the Great Barrier Reef?
- Why are fully vaccinated people still catching COVID-19?
- NSW announces 239 new COVID-19 cases - what is working and what needs work?
- Will vaccines help get NSW out of lockdown?

▶ August 2021

- Sunscreen recalled over benzene concerns
- Doherty Institute modelling shows way out of lockdowns
- TGA approves Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for use in Australia
- [IPCC landmark climate science report - Aussie authors speak](#)
- Modelling predicts 80 per cent adult COVID-19 vaccination won't be enough
- [Aussie made satellites blast off to the International Space Station](#)
- Pfizer recommended for kids 12 and up
- Could South Africa's new, mutated variant be worse than Delta?

► September 2021

- [COVID Vaccine Hub: Getting your head around the vaccine data](#)
- [Australia must reach net-zero emissions - Can technology get us there?](#)
- Rapid antigen tests for COVID-19
- Australia must leave 95% of its coal in the ground to limit global warming to 1.5 °C
- Q&A: The Mu variant and future of 'endemic' COVID-19
- NSW roadmap to freedom
- Smoke from 2019/20 bushfires spawns phytoplankton bloom larger than Australia
- [Getting your head around the Doherty Institute-led modelling](#)
- [Early help can reduce autism behaviours in kids](#)
- Magnitude 5.8 earthquake felt across south-east Australia
- Pregnant women should be limiting their paracetamol use
- Home tests for COVID-19 approved by TGA
- [How are we treating COVID-19 in Australia?](#)

► October 2021

- Q&A: Is Merck's COVID-19 pill molnupiravir a game-changer?
- ATAGI recommends booster shots for severely immunocompromised
- [CSIRO's Bushfire Best Practice Guide](#)
- NSW opening up for the fully vaccinated
- Pandemic levels of abuse directed at COVID experts
- Net zero by 2050 (Prior to government announcement)
- Australia set to sign up to net Zero 2050 (Following the National Party's approval of the plan)
- 'The Australian Way' - Australian plan for net zero by 2050
- TGA approves Pfizer boosters, to be available from Nov 8

► November 2021

- [CO2 emissions reaching pre-pandemic levels - Annual Global Carbon Budget](#)
- [Live from Glasgow - COP26 and the decarbonisation challenge](#)
- [New Doherty Institute modelling – your questions answered](#)
- Pfizer vax appears safe in kids aged 5 – 11
- Draft agreement for COP26 released
- Aussie scientists react to COP26 agreement
- Floods heading for Forbes in NSW
- BoM declares a La Niña
- [Aussie fire seasons with over a million hectares burnt are increasing](#)
- Omicron, new variant of concern
- Omicron COVID variant - your questions answered
- Victoria creates Australia's first mRNA COVID vaccine

▶ December 2021

- Mitochondrial donation legislation passed after conscience vote
- Possible mechanism for AstraZeneca vaccine blood clots identified
- Aussie kids aged 5-11 set to be eligible for Pfizer in January
- How do the vaccines hold up against Omicron?
- Will this be our wettest and wildest summer yet?
- Australia to manufacture mRNA vaccines
- Changes to ARC funding arrangements
- Epileptic kids in small cannabis study have 86% fewer seizures
- [First Aussie data on Omicron shows why boosters are key](#)
- COVID-19 cases booming as Christmas is looming
- NASA's James Webb Space Telescope launch

2022

▶ January 2022

- Q&A: Are our masks up to scratch in the Omicron era?
- Tonga volcano eruption
- Omicron is soaring, but what about the next variant?
- 2021 was one of the seven warmest years on record, says WMO
- [Aussie reliance on foreign satellites a risk, Science Academy to launch 10 year space science plan](#)
- TGA approves first oral treatments for COVID-19
- Novavax becomes fourth COVID-19 vaccine provisionally approved by TGA
- [Mysterious object unlike anything astronomers have seen before](#)
- \$1 billion in funding for the Great Barrier Reef
- Should we be worried about the new Omicron sub variant BA.2?

▶ February 2022

- Contacts for Beijing Winter Olympics 2022
- TGA provisionally approves AstraZeneca boosters for ages 18+
- The iconic koala is now listed as endangered
- Booster effectiveness waning after four months, says CDC
- TGA provisionally approves Moderna vaccine for kids aged 6-11
- TGA provisionally approves AstraZeneca's preventative COVID-19 medication
- TGA cracks down on social media marketing of health products
- Floods wreak havoc in south-east Queensland and NSW
- [IPCC report on climate impacts](#)

▶ March 2022

- Aussie bushfires may be depleting the ozone
- Fire at Ukrainian nuclear power plant
- Mosquito-borne disease concerns as Japanese encephalitis cases rise
- “Significant” brain changes documented after mild COVID-19
- IVF kids may be more likely to have a good quality of life
- Artificial sweeteners could be associated with increased cancer risk
- ATAGI recommends second ‘winter booster dose’ for vulnerable Australians
- Half of COVID-19 researchers say they never experienced harassment until the pandemic began
- Mass bleaching event on GBR confirmed
- More flooding on the way for NSW and Queensland
- Federal Budget 2022/23
- Maeve’s Law on mitochondrial donation passes

▶ April 2022

- [IPCC report on climate change mitigation - Aussie authors speak](#)
- Living near fracking sites while pregnant could be bad for bub
- [Influenza in times of COVID-19](#)
- Mysterious hepatitis outbreak in kids

▶ May 2022

- New Omicron subvariants in Australia
- 50:50 chance of reaching 1.5°C threshold at least once before 2026
- GBR summer snapshot - more bleaching and hottest temps on record
- First images of a black hole in our galaxy
- More flooding in Queensland
- Four climate change records broken in 2021 - WMO State of the Climate Report
- Rainforest trees have been dying faster since the 1980s
- Australia’s first ‘probable’ case of monkeypox

▶ June 2022

- Australia’s gas crisis
- Eating more fish may be linked to higher melanoma risk
- Super-rare space dirt found in Ryugu asteroid samples dropped in South Australian outback
- AEMO warns of power shortfalls across five states
- Early treatment can help prevent anal cancer
- First quantum integrated circuit manufactured at the atomic scale
- Honey bee parasite Varroa mites detected in NSW
- Pfizer cleared to apply for COVID vaccine approval for under 5s

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 2021-22:

FOUNDATION PARTNERS



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OTHER SUPPORTERS AND PROJECT SPONSORS



Financials

Income	2022 (\$)	2021(\$)
Sponsorships	738,400	725,200
COVID-19 Vaccine Media Hub	-	1,263,600
Scimex	33,000	30,600
Indigenous Media Mentoring	9,600	-
Judith Neilson Institute (JNI)	-	-
Affiliation	143,500	166,300
Cost recovery	22,100	21,200
Subscriptions and uploads	13,000	17,100
Pacific Project	25,400	-
Other income	8,000	37,500
Interest received	200	500
Foreign currency exchange gain	1,900	20,400

Total Income	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
	995,100	2,282,400

Expenditure	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Salaries and wages	890,400	849,000
Indigenous Media Mentoring	5,800	4,500
Google Project	-	15,500
JNI Collaborative Journalism Project	6,000	12,000
Scimex	77,900	76,000
Media team/briefings	11,500	11,000
Office expenses	79,600	94,000
Depreciation	2,600	2,300
Travel expenses	9,300	2,500
Marketing and development costs	1,100	200
Other expenses	12,400	12,200
Google COVID-19 grant funds expended	67,200	1,007,000

Total Expenditure	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
	1,163,800	2,086,200

	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Surplus	(168,600)	196,100
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive surplus for the year	(168,600)	196,100
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	946,000	1,114,600



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