

The background is a dark blue field filled with abstract, glowing elements. On the left side, there are dense, overlapping loops of bright yellow and orange lines, resembling a tangled fiber optic cable or a complex network. Scattered across the entire blue field are numerous small, light blue squares, some of which are slightly larger and more prominent than others. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and scientific complexity.

ausSMC

australian science media centre

ANNUAL REVIEW

1 JULY 2012 TO 30 JUNE 2013

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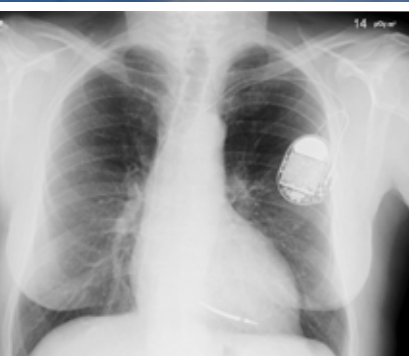
Australian Science Media Centre Inc.
Annual Review 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013

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Cover Image: CERN Higgs Boson

Inside Cover Images (from top left): The Island of Stromboli, Steven W. Dengler | Xray image of installed pacemaker showing wire routing, Herzschriftmacher auf Roentgenbild | Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant, Alvin Ward | Kangaroo sign at Stuart highway, Jpp | AusSMC briefing, AusSMC | Wind turbines Holderness, Tom Corser www.tomcorser.com | Nellis Solar Power Plant, Nellis Air Force Base US



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2012 must surely go down in history as a tipping point for the Australian media. A long time in the making, the industry finally hit a difficult inflection point resulting in the redundancy of well over 1,000 journalists and massive structural changes within news rooms. The impact was felt strongly by the scientific community, with many excellent science, environment and health reporters with many years of experience leaving the industry.

One might think that this would mean declining media registrations at the Science Media Centre and perhaps less demand for the service. Instead, media registrations have continued to climb and it seems that resource stretched news rooms need the AusSMC now more than ever. Some newsrooms have no dedicated science reporter, with general reporters covering everything from crime and sport to the latest scientific breakthrough or difficult subjects like climate change and coal seam gas.

In response to these challenging times, the Science Media Centre has sought to help journalists adapt and explore new ways of working. In September we launched Scientists in Newsrooms, a pilot project supported by the Victorian Government that saw scientists placed with the Herald Sun, The Age and Crikey. Scientists spent 2-3 weeks with journalists, writing collaborative content and providing scientific advice on a variety of issues. The successful pilot led to a grant from Federal Government Inspiring Australia initiative for a national Scientists in Residence program in 2013-14.

In November, our new free online resource for scientists was launched by Robyn Williams and George Negus at an event in Canberra. ScienceMediaSavvy.org was created with support from CSIRO and provides scientists with information on the news cycle with a series of short videos on working with print/online, radio and television and with guidance from well-known journalists and scientists familiar with the media limelight.

The Centre also began work on a major online news portal, The Science Media Exchange. Funded by Inspiring Australia with support from the Myer Foundation and the New Zealand Science Media Centre, the portal will be a hub of science news, images and expertise in Australia and New Zealand and will be a significant new resource for journalists and the scientific community in Australia and NZ.

All this has been done whilst maintaining our traditional role, including reacting to 94 breaking stories, holding 30 national news briefings, taking 1790 inquiries from journalists, floating 1,320 new science stories to the media and contributing to nearly 15,000 news stories in 2012-13.

None of this would have been possible without significant support from our Foundation and Gold sponsors including some of Australia's leading media companies and research organisations, state governments and businesses. It also would not have happened without the tireless efforts of AusSMC staff. So we end the year with a note of thanks to the sponsors and staff that make AusSMC what it is.

Susannah Elliott

Peter Yates

Dr Susannah Elliott, CEO



Mr Peter Yates AM, Chairman



SNAPSHOT

390 EXPERTS JOINED THE AusSMC DATABASE

OVER 3550
AUSTRALIAN EXPERTS ON
THE SMC DATABASE

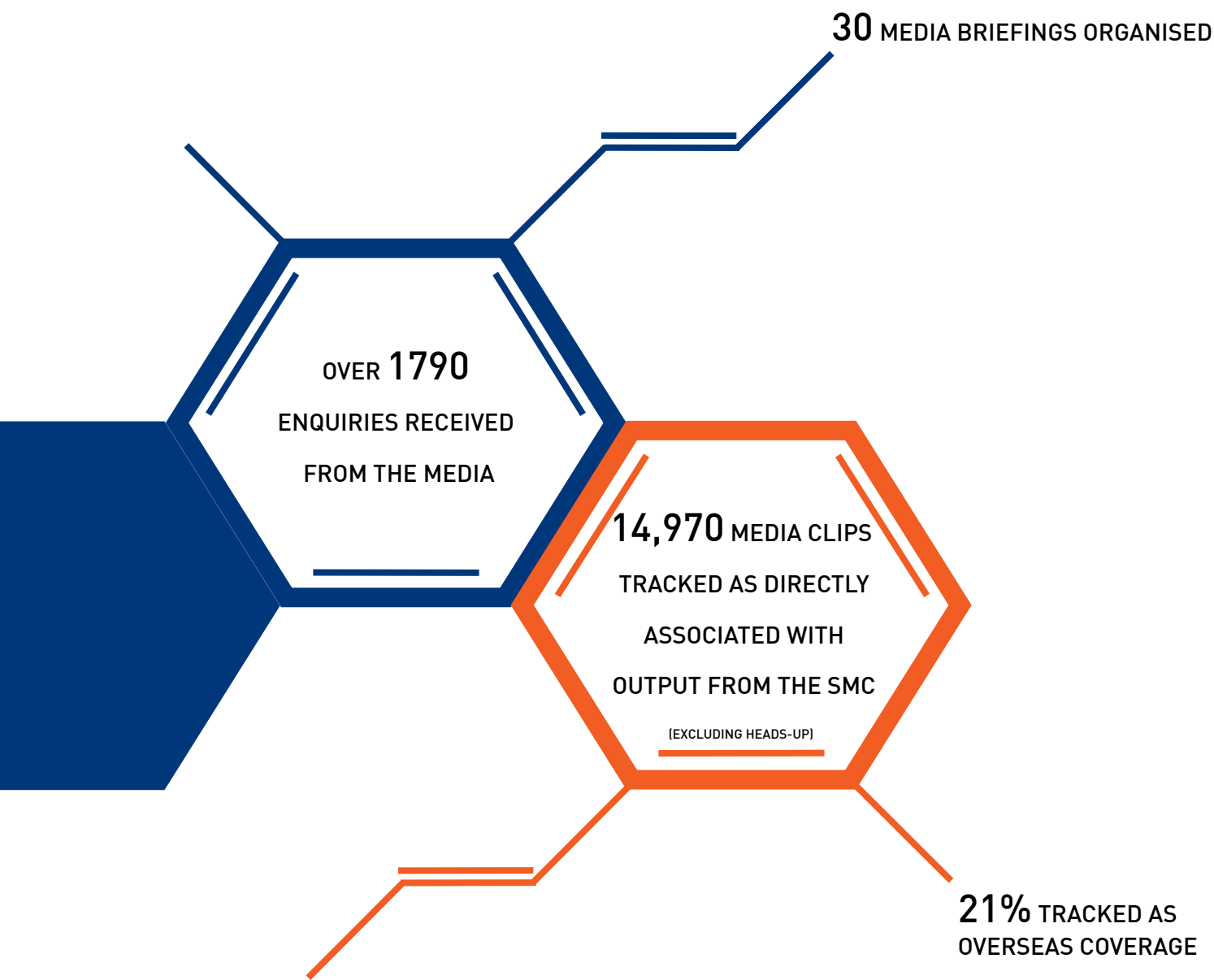
3710 UNIQUE VISITORS
TO SCIENCE MEDIA SAVVY
WEBSITE

1120 JOURNALISTS
REGISTERED WITH THE
SMC

OVER 270 NEW JOURNALIST REGISTRATIONS THIS YEAR

94 SETS OF
EXPERT COMMENTS
GATHERED & DISTRIBUTED
AS *RAPID REACTIONS* OR
ROUND-UPS

150 INDIVIDUAL
JOURNALISTS TUNED
INTO AT LEAST ONE OF
OUR ONLINE BRIEFINGS



1320 NEW SCIENCE STORIES FLOATED TO THE MEDIA VIA HEADS-UP, 3% INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR

 2,110

36,700 UNIQUE VISITORS TO SMC.ORG.AU

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

MEDIA

The AusSMC has continued to adapt its services to help cater for the dramatic changes in the media landscape this year. A large proportion of the journalists who use the AusSMC are now working for new online platforms or a combination of traditional and new media. With the downsizing of news rooms and loss of specialist reporters, journalists now have even less time and resources to cover complex science stories and the AusSMC has been providing extra support.

Our twice-weekly Heads-up bulletin of upcoming research has remained one of our most popular services. We have also begun work on a collaborative project with UQ and Econnect to help general journalists with basic statistics and other aspects of science reporting.

In our *Getting your head around...* series of background briefings, we help journalists understand the fundamental science behind complex issues, including the Higgs boson, Alzheimer's disease, electricity pricing, live animal exports, the Murray-Darling Basin plan and mental health diagnostic guidelines.

SCIENCE MEDIA SAVVY



We launched the CSIRO-sponsored media training website for scientists, ScienceMediaSavvy, in November. Featuring interviews with news journalists and editors, advice from researchers experienced in media and videos highlighting how to improve print and broadcast interview experiences, the online resource provides tips and advice for understanding and working with the news media. Further modules will be released soon for Affiliates of the Science-Media Collaboration. The site can be viewed at www.sciencemediasavvy.org.

SCIENCE-MEDIA COLLABORATION

The Science-Media Collaboration continued to grow this year. This initiative provides resources for the SMC to work more closely with universities and research organisations, helping them engage more proactively with the media while also supporting the essential services provided by the Centre. More than 20 organisations have joined the collaboration in its first year, including all Go8 universities and a number of large government agencies.

The first of a series of online events that provide inside intelligence on the media was held in November 2012 with Paul Colgan, then News Director for News Limited's Network News Desk, presenting his insights on the changing face of newsrooms. In April 2013, Marc Moncrief, Data Editor at The Age, discussed how data journalism is being used in newsrooms and how media teams can make the most of it.

GLOBAL SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE NETWORK



The global science media centre network continued to develop during the past 12 months. An exploratory committee has been formed in the US and several centres are being considered in Europe, India and China while existing SMCs continued to collaborate.

CEO Susannah Elliott presented at the UK Science Media Centre's Tenth Anniversary celebration in London in October, 2012 attended by over 500 people. The event also provided an occasion for science media centres across the globe to gather and discuss their progress and priorities.

Susannah spoke at the World Conference of Science Journalists in Helsinki, Finland, in June. Sessions on how science media centres affect science and journalism provided a valuable opportunity for the global science media centre network to reflect on our role in the science and media landscapes.

SCIENCE NEWS PORTAL FOR JOURNALISTS

This financial year the AusSMC received a substantial grant from the Federal Government's Inspiring Australia initiative to develop an online news portal for Australian journalists.

Featuring research news, embargoed material, story ideas, multimedia, university updates and expert contacts for Australasia, the portal is being created in collaboration with the NZ Science Media Centre with extra support from the Myer Foundation. The project now has been contracted to a web design team and is undergoing scoping and development, with rollout expected in the first half of 2014.

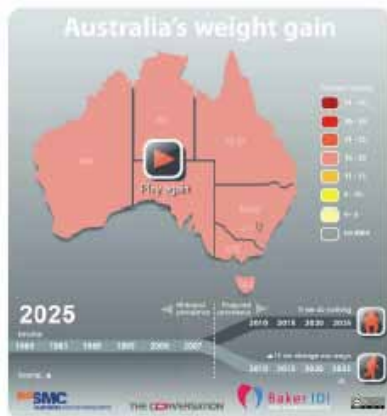
TRAINING FOR JOURNALISTS



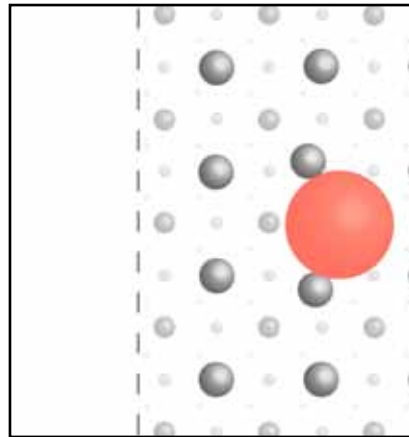
The SMC is helping to develop a series of professional development and training resources for journalists. As part of the Federal Government's Inspiring Australia initiative, we are working with Econnect Communications, The University of Queensland and The University of Western Australia to develop modules that will help in day-to-day reporting and news gathering for all journalists and those working on the science round.

INFOGRAPHICS & ANIMATIONS

Obesity infographic October 2012



Higgs Boson Animation July 2012



To help cater for the media's enthusiasm for visuals and with support from the Myer Foundation, the SMC worked with freelance graphic artists to create infographics and animations on the Higgs boson, and obesity. The simple obesity animation was done in collaboration with The Conversation and Baker IDI and showed how the rate of obesity in each state has changed over the past 30 years with projected changes if the population consumes one less soft drink per day.

SCIENCE-MEDIA INTERNSHIPS

Head injuries predict future problems
Sarah Hellewell – for the Herald Sun

Children who suffer a head injury are much more likely to have long-term psychological and social issues, as well as problems at school, says Professor Vicki Anderson, from the Royal Children's Hospital and Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

According to Professor Anderson, children who have a brain injury often experience difficulties with interpersonal relationships, causing social isolation and decreased self-esteem. This can lead to psychological distress and a reduced quality of life. She says that the long-held belief has been that "children who suffer a significant head injury will often grow out of any initial problems, but our research has shown this is not the case". Children who are hospitalised for even one or two nights are at risk of a range of difficulties in the months and years after their brain injury. Professor Anderson will present her findings at the Australian Psychological Society Clinical Neuropsychology Annual Conference in Launceston this weekend.

Shortcut to produce flu vaccine could cut off global epidemics

By MICHAELA JEMISON

SCIENTISTS have found a way to design and manufacture vaccines in weeks rather than months, potentially curbing the risk of a global influenza epidemic.

Influenza vaccines are now produced by growing the live virus in chicken eggs or cultured cells, a cumbersome and time-consuming process.

But researchers from Germany's Friedrich-Loeffler Institute have found a way to make a vaccine artificially by copying the influenza virus's genetic code into a synthetic genome and building proteins and evolv.

Their findings, outlined in the journal *Nature Biotechnology* this week, mean the time and resources needed to manufacture influenza vaccines are cut dramatically.

It could also allow scientists to respond more rapidly to make next-generation vaccines as the influenza virus evolves and changes.

"We have a significant need for improved influenza vaccines that could be rapidly adapted to match circulating viruses and allow efficient, large-scale production if necessary," said the paper's lead author, Ludger Stitzinger. "In particular, we ultimately need a broadly protective vaccine against influenza."

The new synthetic vaccine was tested in mice, ferrets and pigs. The results showed that the vaccine could not only protect the animals from influenza infection but that it also had the potential to provide protection from new strains as they emerged.

4 This process will be safe in humans. Alan Kuper

While not yet tested in humans, the common response observed in pigs is promising. Unlike humans, the synthetic influenza genome did not cause influenza in the animals.

"There is every reason to believe this process will be safe in humans, but you still have to go through clinical trials to show that," he said. "Demonstrating the development was a step in the right direction."

"The work done on this to date is fairly comprehensive," the Harcourt said. The vaccine may have other benefits beyond its potential to protect humans. It could also help prevent scientists working in the laboratory.

"Unlike current methods, this new technique would mean that you do not have to handle the potentially dangerous live virus at any stage of the production process," it could be applied to humans.

"This allows them to produce it without going into a high security environment."

INFLUENZA BREAKTHROUGH 2 Sequence the Influenza Virus 3 Select a Vaccine 4 This is injected directly into host as a vaccine.

The Age, November 2012

With support from the Victorian Government, the SMC piloted an internship program for bright young scientists in some of Victoria's busiest newsrooms in November. Three scientists were embedded within the scrum of the newsroom to learn and work alongside prominent journalists to produce collaborative content, using their areas of expertise. Interns say they will use their experiences to continue contributing to the media throughout their careers. Next year, with funding from the Federal Government's Inspiring Australia initiative, we will provide greater benefit to media outlets across the country by working with them to develop projects on topics of specific interest and placing experienced scientists in their newsrooms.

INTERNS IN 2012:

- Micaela Jemison, Ecologist/Ecology especially bats/*The Age*/ Arthur Rylah Institute for Environment Research, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment.
- Sarah Hellewell, PhD Candidate/Traumatic brain injury/*Herald Sun*/ National Trauma Research Institute, The Alfred Hospital, Monash University.
- Tim Moss, Senior Research Fellow/Care of newborn babies/*Crikey*/ Monash Institute of Media Research, Monash University.

PURSuing THE BIG ISSUES

The following case studies show how the Australian Science Media Centre has been injecting evidence into some of the big issues facing Australia...

LIFESTYLE: Smoking, eating too much and moving too little all contribute to diseases like **cancer, diabetes and heart disease**. Lifestyle diseases, non-infectious, caused in part by lifestyle choices are fast becoming the biggest causes of poor health in Australia.

Helping to inform journalists on this issue that affects so many Australians, we ran multiple media briefings with nutritionists, clinicians and public health experts to keep journalists up-to-date on the latest research: we helped launch the National Health and Medical Research Council Dietary Guidelines, and invited experts to discuss whether unhealthy industries, such as the processed food and alcohol industries, can self-regulate and play a role in tackling lifestyle diseases.

We also provided journalists with expert comments to help decipher health studies published in scientific journals and presented at conferences.

"The speakers loved the briefing. They thought it was a fantastic way to provide more in depth information and really enjoyed the whole process. It also warmed them up for the later interviews. I think it also resulted in great quality and breadth of coverage. I'd definitely consider doing an SMC briefing as a priority element in any communications strategy with suitable material."

Communications and Marketing Manager, Research Organisation

2

Media Briefings

4

research organisations collaborated on the briefings

14

sets of expert comments provided to journalists



1849

pieces of media coverage

48

experts provided comments

22

journalists attended the briefings in person or online



National Health and Medical Research Council, The University of Melbourne, The University of Sydney, The George Institute for Global Health



Sky News, Seven News, Nine News, ABC News, Radio National PM, AAP, The Age, The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Canberra Times

NATURAL HAZARDS:

We have seen a range of extreme weather events across the globe over the past twelve months, and the Science Media Centre has been gathering comments from meteorologists, climate scientists and natural hazards experts on these issues.

AusSMC activities helped inform coverage of floods in Australia's north, bushfires and heatwaves across the south, the Oklahoma tornado, Solomon Islands earthquake and tsunami, and Superstorm Sandy that caused devastation from Jamaica to the east coast of the US.

We have brought together experts to brief journalists on how human induced global warming played a role in our most recent hot summer and explained the bushfire threat for summer 2012/13. We provided much-needed background information to journalists by gathering scientists and engineers to explain how well the nation is preparing for more frequent flooding and whether disaster warning systems have been improving.

"I'm so grateful for the services of AusSMC. You guys do an amazing job."

Editor, ABC TV

4
Media Briefings

7
research organisations
collaborated on the briefings

1932
pieces of media coverage

34
experts provided
comments



50
journalists attended or
downloaded the briefings

55
teachers, researchers &
community members
downloaded the briefings

8
experts presented
at the briefings



AAP, 2GB radio, Channel 10's The Project, ABC's 7.30, SBS World News
Australia, Reuters, Xinhua News Agency



University of Melbourne, ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Systems
Science, The Australian National University, Macquarie University, University of
Wollongong, Queensland University of Technology and Arup

DISCOVERY: The latter half of 2012 saw a boon for physics worldwide with CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) announcing that the long-sought Higgs boson had been found after experiments yielded results consistent with its existence. In collaboration with Science in Public, we brought together physicists from CERN, Fermilab and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Particle Physics at the Terascale to help journalists get their heads around the search for the so-called 'god particle' and prepare for the announcement. Following CERN's announcement, we released comments from Australian physicists on the significance of the finding together with a simple animation.

October brought with it a time of excitement for astronomers with the opening of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder – a step towards the world's largest radio telescope, which will allow astronomers to investigate fundamental questions on dark matter, the nature of gravity and the origins of the first stars. We brought together the Minister for Science and the Director of the Square Kilometre Array from CSIRO to brief journalists on the progress and how the anticipated data will contribute to current knowledge.

"FYI I just wanted to send a note of appreciation for the work you people do at SMC. Your heads ups are well chosen, concise and sent in advance (i.e. newsworthy). In the time-pressed world of the ever diminishing pool of journalists, this is a Godsend. Other public affairs outfits could learn a hell of a lot from your model."

Journalist, The Australian



5
research organisations
collaborated on the briefings

1982
pieces of media coverage

6
experts provided
comments

2
Media Briefings

1
infographic

50
journalists attended the
briefings in person
or online



CSIRO, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science Research and Tertiary Education, ARC Centre of Excellence for Particle Physics, CERN and Fermilab



The Weekend Australian, NT News, Illawarra Mercury, The Canberra Times, Agence France Presse, Al Jazeera

OVERVIEW OF ISSUES COVERED

Below are highlights of some of the key collaborations, media briefings and expert analysis organised by the Australian Science Media Centre during the past 12 months.

Potential male contraceptive pill - August 2012

The SMC anticipated media attention when scientists reported on a compound that could offer the first effective and side effect-free birth control pill for men. We collected independent comments from two experts in the field from Monash University, Victoria, and put forth a third expert from Family Planning NSW for additional interviews. The Round-up generated a total of 420 media clips. Many of Australia's daily newspapers picked up the comments, and the experts appeared on several news programs, including news on Channel 7, 9 and 10.

Heatwave - January 2013

As temperatures continued to climb across the nation in January, the SMC reacted quickly, collecting expert comments ranging from health, meteorology and climate change. Knowing both Australian and international media outlets were desperate for expert comment on the long stretches of extremely hot weather, the comments generated over 1400 media clips. Coverage included Washington Post, Irish Independent, ABC's AM and PM, Channel Ten News Victoria, ABC1, SBS World News, The Project, Stock Journal, The Canberra Times, news.com.au, The Courier-Mail, The Age, WA Today, Yahoo!7 News and wires AAP, Reuters and Xinhua News Agency.

IPCC climate change report - January 2013

The SMC took the opportunity to provide a platform for leading scientists behind the next major global report by The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to update journalists on its progress. Working with CSIRO and the IPCC, the AusSMC made the Hobart media briefing available online to journalists who couldn't attend in person. Two international scientists co-chairing Working Group One presented at the briefing and four Australian lead authors were available to answer questions and provide an Australian context.

Despite the final report not being released for another nine months, the briefing generated over 460 media clips, including spots on ABC and SBS TV news and in The Age, The Australian and Reuters.

Fertiliser plant explosion - April 2013

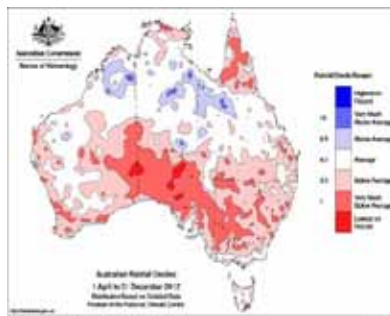
When news broke that a large explosion at a fertiliser plant in the US had injured more than 160 people and killed at least 15 in Texas, the SMC collected expert comments on the nature of the explosion and sent them to journalists.

As the story broke during the night in London, the UK SMC sent our expert comments onto British journalists keen to cover the story as soon as possible.

The Rapid Reaction generated a total of over 60 media clips, including articles in the Daily Telegraph, The Advertiser and interviews on ABC TV News Breakfast, The World Today and Radio National Breakfast.

Of mice and men: male pill gets closer

Julia Maben
SMC's SMC has found a drug that could become the world's first contraceptive pill for men. American scientists have developed a molecule called IPG that reversibly blocks sperm production in mice and rats without changing their sex drive. It works in mice by blocking the release of sperm from the testes, but in rats, it has no effect on sperm production. The researchers, from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, and the University of Oxford in Britain, say that because of reproductive similarities between mice and rats...



MEDIA BRIEFINGS & EXPERT ANALYSIS

The following is a full list of the media briefings (orange), Round-ups and Rapid Reactions of expert comments the Science Media Centre organised over the past year, divided into environment, health and science/energy/technology. The title in brackets shows the scientific journal publishing the study.

JUN 2013

Living in a smart world – people as sensors

Report – Where does Australia stand on STEM education?



Shale gas in Australia: Goldmine or environmental disaster?

The human factor in Australia's angry summer (Geophysical Research Letters)

Obama's climate plan



Antarctic uncertainties: Ozone hole, sea rise and climate change

Coalition's policy released to develop Australia's north – expert responds

State of the World's Birds report – Where does Australia stand? (Run by SMC Canada)

Star based food labelling system approved

US Supreme Court rules human genes cannot be patented

UK Comments: New study on GM pig feed and stomach inflammation (Journal of Organic Systems)



Legionnaires' disease outbreak at Brisbane's Wesley Hospital

Iron implicated in Parkinson's disease (PLOS Medicine)

MAY 2013

Federal Budget 2013



Oklahoma tornado

Global warming slower, but same end result (Nature Geoscience)



How healthy will Australia be this winter? Colds, flu and norovirus for 2013 explained

BPA, brains and behaviour (PNAS)

Kids' CT scans linked to increased cancer risk (BMJ)

SIDS and bed sharing (BMJ Open)

Therapeutic cloning generates human embryonic stem cells (Cell)

DSM 5 – Psychiatric bible or fatally flawed?

Novel coronavirus outbreak

Sunlight good for blood pressure (International Investigative Dermatology conference)

40 per cent of chronic lower back pain cause by bacterial infection, treatable with antibiotics

Playgrounds a source of lead exposure in Port Pirie (Environmental Pollution)

Better than cure – preventing mental illness at different life stages



APR 2013

60 years of DNA on International DNA Day, Thursday April 25

Monitoring of emissions from coal seam gas production



UK Comments: EU vote on pesticides and bees

Reconstruction of 2000 years of global temperatures (Nature Geoscience)

Fertiliser plant explosion in the US



Air pollution and heart disease (PLOS Medicine)

Kids' flu jabs must be rigorously tested (Medical Journal of Australia)

UK Comments: IVF Pioneer Professor Sir Robert Edwards has died

Getting your life in order: How do you want to die?

Heart disease and red meat (Nature Medicine)

Bird flu (H7N9) in China

Growing up too fast: early puberty affects mental health



<p>MAR 2013</p>	<p>Australians suggest sustainable development goals for UN (Nature) Living with floods – how ready is Australia? Anthrax outbreak in NSW Controversial link between carbon dioxide and temperature clarified (Science)</p> <p>New genetic variants for breast, ovarian and prostate cancer identified Tackling superbugs How Tasmanian Devil Facial Tumour Disease evades the immune system (PNAS) Aspirin may lower melanoma risk (CANCER) UK Comments: Insomnia and heart failure (European Heart Journal) BPA consumption and asthma risk (Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology)</p>	<p></p> <p></p>
<p>FEB 2013</p>	<p>Solomon Islands earthquake and tsunami</p> <p>Consumer chemical affects development of isolated neurons (PNAS) Stilnox use by Australian swimmers Launch of New Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines Launch of New Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines Gene patenting decision Tackling lifestyle diseases – the role of unhealthy industries Drugs in sports Dietary fats and heart disease (BMJ) Substance use common among mentally ill teens (BMJ Open) Sun's rays may protect against arthritis (Annals of Rheumatic Disease)</p>	<p></p> <p></p>
<p>JAN 2013</p>	<p>Raise the alarm! Improving disaster warning systems</p> <p>Floods, fires and storms Towards the next landmark IPCC climate change report Heatwave</p> <p>Melamine bowls and hot foods don't mix (JAMA Internal Medicine) Getting stoned may not be making teens stupid (PNAS)</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p>DEC 2012</p>	<p>Australian Science Media Centre's top 10 science stories of 2012 Australian Science Media Centre's top 10 weird and wonderful science stories of 2012</p> <p>Bushfire threat 2012/13 Limiting climate change to 2°C getting harder to achieve (Nature Climate Change)</p> <p>Global disease burden (The Lancet) Epigenetics and homosexuality (Quarterly Review of Biology)</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p>NOV 2012</p>	<p>High levels of methane detected around NSW and QLD coal seam gas</p> <p>WMO Statement on the Status of the Global Climate for 2012 Murray Darling Basin Plan signed into law Ticking time bombs – the disconnect between climate science and fossil fuel investment Getting your head around...the Murray Darling Basin plan Getting your head around...live animal exports</p> <p>Traffic pollution linked to autism (Archives of General Psychiatry) Moderate alcohol consumption during pregnancy (PLOS ONE)</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>



SBS World News - EU vote on pesticides & bees



The Project, Ch 10 - DNA 60 year anniversary



SBS News - Star based food labelling system



NBN Gold Coast - Higgs Boson

Drink bottles linked to reproductive risks

WARNING: Trainers Sarah Elbert uses chemical-free bottles.

KATRINA STONES
A CHEMICAL commonly used in food and drink packaging may cause serious problems with a woman's reproductive system, researchers reveal.

The US study, published today in *PLoS One*, found the chemical, known as BPA, leached from one-use plastic bottles and the development of uterine conditions.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is in the plastic used in some food and drink packaging. It can be

YOUR SAY
Will you stop using plastics containing BPA?
acelaide.com.au

organ and found it did affect the cells that become eggs in the mother's unborn baby, Kansas. The study, however, did not find any link between BPA and reproductive risks, researchers said.

But University of Adelaide senior lecturer Dr **Lee Mangan** said further research was needed beyond the present animal study.

Dr Mangan said she used reusable chemical-free water bottles, those reading about possible dangers.

CLIMATE CHANGE

'Angry' summers to get hotter

■ Melbourne

Man-made climate change is likely to have played a role in the "angry" summer Australians endured this year, researchers say.

Three types of extreme summers will become even more frequent and severe, the study led by the University of Melbourne showed.

It concluded global warming increased the chances of more "angry" Australian summers by more than five times.

Study co-author David Karoly said the chance of Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide occasionally getting 50C days "may quite high" due to ongoing climate change.

The study showed with more than 90 per cent confidence that human influences on the atmosphere dramatically influenced the extreme 2013 summer.

"This extreme summer is not only remarkable for its record-breaking nature but also because it frequently produces cooler winters," Professor Karoly said.

Dubbed "Australia's angry hot summer" by the Climate Commission, parts of Queensland, the Northern Territory and WA had their hottest temperatures on record in 2013.

Much of the country sweltered through temperatures very much above average, Professor Karoly said.

The study showed with more than 90 per cent confidence that human influences on the atmosphere dramatically influenced the extreme 2013 summer.

"These types of extreme summers will become even more frequent and more severe," Dr Lewis said.

It was the hottest summer on record.

The next hottest summer on record was in 1998.

Dr Lewis said for the period 2000 to 2020, modelling showed summers like 2013 would occur every 14 years when only natural climate forces were at play.

However, when human influences such as greenhouse gases were introduced, they happened almost every two years.

Lead study author Sophie Lewis **AFP**

AUSTRALIA'S HOTTEST SUMMERS ON RECORD

■ 2002-2013 average temperature 28.6C	
■ Highest temperature 49.6C at Moomba, South Australia	
■ Seven days in row of national average above 35C in January	

OTHER RECORD-BREAKING SUMMERS

1987-1998	28.43C
1962-1963	28.35C
1972-1973	28.33C
2005-2006	28.25C

SOURCE: BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY

Prolonged cannabis use leads to drop in IQ, study shows

■ Sydney

Long-term cannabis use can lead to a permanent drop in IQ, a study has found.

The research, published in the journal *Current Biology*, found that people who used cannabis regularly for at least a year had a lower IQ than those who did not.

The study involved 11,688 people aged 18 to 30 who took part in a survey in 2002. They were asked about their cannabis use and their IQ was tested in 2007.

Those who used cannabis regularly had a lower IQ than those who did not, even after researchers controlled for factors such as age, education and IQ at the start of the study.

The researchers said the drop in IQ was not due to the fact that people who use cannabis are more likely to have a lower IQ to begin with.

"We see a steady decline in IQ in those who use cannabis regularly, and this is not explained by their IQ at the start of the study," the researchers said.

The researchers also found that people who used cannabis regularly had a higher risk of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety.

The researchers said their findings suggest that prolonged cannabis use can have serious effects on a person's cognitive abilities.

They said their findings are particularly concerning because they show that the drop in IQ is permanent, even after people stop using cannabis.

The researchers said their findings are particularly concerning because they show that the drop in IQ is permanent, even after people stop using cannabis.

OCT 2012

Prime Minister's Science Prizes

Shocking! Getting your head around...electricity pricing

Earthquake scientists guilty of manslaughter in Italy

First commercial shale gas production in Australia

Opening of the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder

Superstorm Sandy

Gillard announces 3,200 gigalitres back to the Murray

Pesticides bad for bees (Nature)

Young Australians consuming too much added sugar

(Australia and New Zealand Obesity Society annual congress)

Release of latest Australian HIV figures

The drugs don't work: Getting Your Head Around...Alzheimer's STI surge in young Australian men

UK Comments: Women more stressed by bad news (PLoS ONE)

World Mental Health Day focuses on depression

Stem cells used to make working eggs (Science Express)



SEP 2012

CSIRO report – Climate change to produce widespread and extreme biodiversity changes

Banning of super-trawler criticised

Safety of CSIRO GM wheat

BPA and reproductive biology in rhesus monkeys (PNAS)

Long term toxicity of GM maize (Food and Chemical Toxicology)

Bisphenol A (BPA) and obesity in children and teens (JAMA)

Results of dengue vaccine trial (The Lancet)

Potentially dangerous swine flu virus found in pigs (PNAS)

Marijuana use may increase risk of testicular cancer (CANCER)

Call to stop the rising liver cancer death toll

NZ Comments: Research confirms plain cigarette packaging reduces appeal of smoking

Link between chemical exposure and heart disease (Archives of Internal Medicine)

Are organic foods safer or healthier than conventional alternatives? (Annals of Internal Medicine)

Combat stress in soldiers changes brain circuitry (PNAS)

AUG 2012

Super-trawler Margiris arrives in Australian waters

UK Comments: Lowest Arctic sea ice on record

New report card for Australia's marine environment

Carbon sinks stronger than ever say researchers (Nature)

The economic benefits of mangroves (PNAS)

UK Comments: Birth outcomes after induced abortion

Regular cannabis users show memory loss and drop in IQ (PNAS)

Potential contraceptive pill for men (Cell)

Dark chocolate and cocoa may reduce blood pressure (The Cochrane Library)

New virus will reveal Hendra's deadly secrets (PLoS Pathogens)

JUL 2012

Higgs boson discovery announced

Higgs boson – what is it and why does it matter?

State of the climate 2011 (American Society of Meteorology)

Getting your head around sea level rise – the latest science

Vaccines combine to produce new virus strains (Science)



AusSMC STAFF - OUT & ABOUT

The SMC extended its staff this year to help cope with increasing demand. In August 2012, the media team was expanded with Dr Joseph Milton joining from the UK SMC as Senior Media Officer and Annika Dean was promoted from Media Assistant to Media Officer.

At June 2013, the AusSMC staff consisted of:

- **Dr Susannah Elliott** – CEO
- **Lyndal Byford** – Media Manager
- **Nigel Kerby** – Project Manager
- **Carol Atkinson** – Business Relations Manager
- **Marilyn Arnold** – Office Manager (part-time)
- **Dr Joseph Milton** – Senior Media Officer
- **Lucy Simmonds** – Media Officer
- **Annika Dean** – Media Officer



MEDIA INTERVIEWS OR ARTICLES

The SMC team was kept busy during the year giving presentations, running workshops and providing commentary on science in the media.

Feb. 2013: ABC Radio National Media Report – ‘The problem with science reporting’ (SE)

Jan. 2013: Radio National – ‘Top 10 science stories of 2012’ (LS)

Dec. 2012: ABC Perth and Canberra – ‘Top 10 weird and wonderful science stories of 2012’ (LS)

Nov. 2012: ABC Environment – ‘Peer pressure, peer review and coal seam gas’ (SE)

Sep. 2012: Crikey – ‘Science reporting banished to the fast-food news ghetto’ (LB)

The Science Show – ‘Embargo system abused by GM researchers’ (LB)

Aug. 2012: Chemistry in Australia editorial – quote and information (LB)

AusSMC STAFF TALK SCIENCE ON RADIO NATIONAL

In February, Susannah and Joe were invited to be guests on ABC RN Drive hosted by Waleed Aly.

Waleed had started a regular segment on Wednesday evenings called Research Filter in which Susannah, Joe and several other science communicators discuss interesting science stories in the media that week.

AusSMC staff are on air about twice a month.

More at <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/drive/>.



TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

Jun. 2013: RiAus Contentious Science workshop – presenter (LB)

RiAus' Science Behind the Headlines – Genetic profiling (LS)

World Conference of Science Journalists, Finland – 'Science Media Centres: Good for science; not so good for journalism?' (SE)

Strategic Science in Antarctica conference, Hobart – 'Working effectively with a changing media' (LB)

World Conference of Science Journalists – moderated 'Breaking through government control of science' (SE)

World Conference of Science Journalists – moderated 'What do you mean climate change?' plenary session (SE)

Mar. 2013: RiAus' Science Behind the Headlines – Drugs in Sport (AD)

Feb. 2013: RiAus Contentious Science workshop – presenter (SE)

Wiley Executive Conference, Melbourne – 'Making Research Relevant' (JM)

Nov. 2012: Science Media Savvy launch, Canberra – presentation (SE)

RiAus' Science Behind the Headlines – Marine parks and no-take zones (JM)

Australian Solar Institute – panel presentation to fellows (SE)

Oct. 2012: UK Science Media Centre Tenth Anniversary celebration, London – speech (SE)

Sep. 2012: Australian Marketing Institute Government Marketing Conference – 'Communicating in a crisis' (SE)

RiAus' Science Behind the Headlines – Is Australia's food safe? (LB)

AMREP ECR Retreat – workshop (LB and JM)

Jul. 2012: Flinders University Health Administration postgraduate students – lecture (SE)

University of Adelaide postgraduate course – 'Communicating Science' (LB)

BOARD MEMBERS

The AusSMC Board, chaired by Peter Yates AM, meets four times a year. Deputy chairs are Robyn Williams from the ABC and Dr Graham Mitchell, Chief Scientist of Victoria. Board members at 30 June 2013 were:

Peter Yates AM (Chair)

Chair, RiAus and Chair, Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Melbourne

Jim Carroll

Executive Producer: World News Australia, SBS

John Croll

CEO, iSentia

Oona Nielssen

General Manager: Communication, CSIRO

Michael Ellies

Media consultant

Fiona Fox

Director, UK Science Media Centre

Phil Gardner

Former Editor in Chief, Herald Sun, News Ltd

Dr Paul Willis

Director, RiAus

Merlin Crossley

Dean of Science, The University of New South Wales



Brad Hatch

Manager of Communications, Fairfax Media

Professor Mary O'Kane

NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer

Melvin Mansell

State Editorial Director, SA, WA & NT, News Ltd

Fiona McLeod

External Affairs Manager, Australia Pacific LNG

Dr Graham Mitchell (Deputy Chair)

Chief Scientist, State Government of Victoria



Professor Rob Morrison

Freelance science communicator

Professor Rob Saint

Dean of the Faculty of Science, The University of Melbourne



The Hon Jay Weatherill

Premier, Government of South Australia



Robyn Williams (Deputy Chair)

Presenter, The Science Show, ABC

PATRONS

Dr Alan Finkel AM

Chancellor of Monash University (Domestic)

Baroness Professor Susan Greenfield CBE

University of Oxford (International)

SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL

SAP members at 30 June 2013 were:

Professor Snow Barlow

University of Melbourne

Professor Alan Finkel AM

President, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering (ATSE)

Professor Lyn Beazley AO

Chief Scientist of Western Australia

Emeritus Professor Max Brennan AO

Former Chief Scientist for South Australia

Professor Adrienne Clarke AC

Chancellor, La Trobe University

Professor Alan Cooper

University of Adelaide



Professor Marcello Costa

Flinders University

Professor Derek Denton AC

University of Melbourne

Professor Peter Doherty AC

University of Melbourne

Professor Tim Flannery

Climate Council

Professor Michael Holland

President, Science and Technology Australia

Professor Bryan Gaensler

University of Sydney

Professor Patricia Vickers-Rich

Monash University



Professor Bob Williamson AO

University of Melbourne

Dr Geoff Garrett AO

Queensland Chief Scientist

Professor Richard Head

Director, Sansom Institute for Health Research

Professor Robert Hill

SA Museum and University of Adelaide

Professor Marcia Langton AM

University of Melbourne

Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO

Griffith University and President, ACF



Professor Caroline McMillen

Vice-Chancellor, University of Newcastle

Emeritus Professor Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE

University of Melbourne

Professor John Simons

President, Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS)

Professor Michelle Simmons

University of New South Wales

Professor Fiona Stanley AC

Patron, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

Professor Malcolm Walter

University of New South Wales



FINANCIALS

INCOME

	2013 (\$)	2012 (\$)
Sponsorship Received	489,775.00	511,536.00
Affiliates Funding	78,500.00	40,000.00
Project Funds	170,807.00	117,941.00
Other Income	<u>10,326.00</u>	<u>12,908.00</u>
	749,408.00	682,385.00

OTHER INCOME

Interest Received	14,715.00	27,985.00
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TOTAL INCOME

764,123.00 **710,370.00**

EXPENDITURE

Salaries and wages	603,871.00	570,128.00
Project expenses	97,179.00	78,409.00
Program expenses	6,386.00	1,591.00
Office expenses	47,723.00	67,018.00
Board meeting expenses	5,999.00	7,409.00
Depreciation	29,831.00	17,537.00
Travel expenses	8,866.00	8,752.00
Marketing and development costs	<u>7,087.00</u>	<u>15,623.00</u>

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

806,942.00 **766,467.00**

(Loss) Profit	(42,819.00)	(56,097.00)
Other comprehensive income	-----	-----
(Loss) Profit for the year	(42,819.00)	(56,097.00)
Retained surplus at the beginning of the financial year	<u>171,076.00</u>	<u>227,173.00</u>
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	128,257.00	171,076.00

SPONSORS & AFFILIATES

The AusSMC is grateful to the following supporters during 2012-2013:

FOUNDATION SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



AFFILIATES



SUPPORTERS



AFFILIATES OF THE SCIENCE-MEDIA COLLABORATION

The Science-Media Collaboration allows the Australian Science Media Centre to foster better relationships with Australian universities and research organisations. Twenty-two organisations were affiliates of the Science-Media Collaboration in 2012/13 and 11 site visits were done.



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ONLINE EVENT
Getting the Data Right: The News on Data Journalism

Due to start at 3pm AEDT



Marc Moncrief
Data Editor
The Age Newspaper (Fairfax Media)

BRIEFINGS FOR AFFILIATES:

Nov. 2012: Online is the new king: Inside information on the changing face of newsrooms with Paul Colgan, News Director, News Limited's Network News Desk

Apr. 2013: Getting the data right: The news on data journalism with Marc Moncrief, Data Editor, The Age



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"There have been a number of stories where the impartial reputation of AusSMC has been important in promoting a public interest view."
IVF Australia

"A vital service for the Australian scientific community, the Australian media, and the Australian public. And amazing how much the AusSMC gets done with a relatively small number of staff. Keep up the great work!"
Journalist

"As one of their providers of expert information on nuclear issues I have found it to be a pleasure working with AusSMC. They are always considerate and appreciative."
Expert Commentator

"Providing a high quality and coordinated link between scientists and the media (and therefore the public/community) is vital, particularly with issues such as climate change."
Senior Lecturer, Dept of Environment and Geography, Macquarie University

"Regular emails about issues and experts available for comment/interview are very useful, particularly for breaking news stories such as major weather events, earthquakes etc."
Executive Producer, World News Australia, SBS TV

