



Annual Report

1 JULY 2024 - 30 JUNE 2025

australian science media centre

ausSMC
20 years

Australian Science Media
Centre Inc.

Annual Review 1 July 2024 to
30 June 2025

Layout and design by: Rachel
McDonald and the Australian
Science Media Centre

Edited by: Rachel McDonald

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The Year in Review



The past year marked a period of major milestones and continued impact for the Australian Science Media Centre as we celebrated our 20th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of Scimex, strengthened international collaborations, and expanded our public-facing services during a time of rapidly evolving political, scientific and media landscapes.

Across 2024–25, the AusSMC helped generate nearly 40,000 news items through our Expert Reactions and media briefings, while distributing more than 3,200 high-quality research stories to over 2,000 journalists via Scimex. These efforts ensured newsrooms had fast, reliable access to independent expertise on some of the year's most significant science stories - from extreme weather and public health threats, to AI disruption, IVF mix-ups, pharmaceutical advances and more.

In March we hosted the largest-ever Global SMC meeting in Adelaide, welcoming 34 representatives from 11 countries, including five nations establishing or exploring an SMC of their own. The meeting coincided with our 20th anniversary celebrations, which brought together

staff, board members, supporters and international delegates to celebrate two decades of impact.

International engagement also expanded significantly through our work in the Pacific. In partnership with the SMC NZ and with funding from the International Science Council, we helped build science reporting capability across 16 Pacific nations, training more than 200 journalists and connecting 35 Pacific reporters and 100 Pacific-focused scientists to Scimex as part of our efforts to strengthen access to quality science information across the Asia-Pacific.

A major organisational milestone was the confirmation of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status at the end of 2024, enabling the AusSMC to receive tax-deductible donations and apply for a wider range of grants. To support this shift, we launched Scimex Insider, a daily public newsletter showcasing the latest research stories. Early donations from the public and philanthropic organisations have been encouraging.

The year also saw a substantial upgrade to Scimex through a redesign funded by the Walkley Foundation's Meta Australian News Fund. The updated platform offers a more

intuitive news feed and story pages, and easier usability for journalists, scientists and the broader community.

Our programs also thrived this year, including the Indigenous Media Mentoring Program delivered with NITV/SBS with support from CSL and CSIRO, which supported 11 Indigenous scientists through online training and a two-day intensive at NITV's Sydney studios. We also held a virtual roundtable on science misinformation chaired by former Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley.

As if the year wasn't busy enough, in March we moved home, leaving the Science Exchange for Adelaide's innovation precinct, Lot Fourteen, with support from the South Australian Government, an excellent move for the AusSMC.

We extend our sincere thanks to staff, Board, partners, affiliates and donors, whose commitment enables the AusSMC to continue promoting accurate science in the media for Australia and the region.

Peter Yates AM
Chair

Dr Susannah Elliott
CEO

By the Numbers

6702

EXPERTS ON THE AUSSMC DATABASE
INCLUDING 424 NEW EXPERTS

39549

MEDIA CLIPS FROM AUSSMC BRIEFINGS AND EXPERT
REACTIONS

1922

ACTIVE JOURNALISTS REGISTERED
WITH THE AUSSMC INCLUDING 329
NEW REGISTRATIONS

3220

STORIES PUBLISHED ON SCIMEX

103

SETS OF EXPERT REACTIONS
AND BRIEFINGS DISTRIBUTED TO
JOURNALISTS - INVOLVING 673
INDIVIDUAL EXPERT COMMENTS

1.18M

SCIMEX PAGE VIEWS (AN 85% INCREASE ON
2023-2024)

Latest Developments

Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the AusSMC and 10 years of Scimex

2025 was a year of celebration, as it marked the AusSMC's 20th anniversary, and the 10th anniversary of the launch of Scimex. To celebrate the occasion, the AusSMC invited

staff, board members, long-time supporters and global SMC delegates to join us for a cocktail event at Ayers House, with just over 100 people coming along to celebrate. With distinguished guests including SA Science Minister Susan Close and former Premier Mike Rann, the event was an opportunity to reminisce on the early years of the AusSMC, and what it has been able to achieve over the last 20 years in the Australian

media landscape and beyond. The anniversary celebrations coincided with the Global SMC meeting in Adelaide, allowing representatives from SMCs all over the world to join in the celebrations. The day concluded with a gala dinner at Koomo, Crowne Plaza with just over 50 staff, board members, distinguished guests and global SMC representatives in attendance.



AusSMC CEO Susannah Elliott, former SA Premier Mike Rann and AusSMC Chair Peter Yates cut the cake

DGR status

After a long wait, the AusSMC officially received Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status at the end of 2024, allowing the organisation to receive tax deductible gifts and donations. This has allowed the AusSMC to seek support from philanthropic foundations and the general public as it continues to transition to a more public-facing organisation, especially through Scimex. Those viewing both Scimex and the AusSMC website are now

encouraged to donate to support its work on the frontline against science misinformation, and a link to donate has been added to our regular emails to stakeholders. The AusSMC has already received generous donations both big and small, and the new status has opened up potential new avenues for grant funding.

Scimex Insider

In January, the AusSMC launched Scimex Insider, a rebranded version of our daily news email for the

general public. Scimex Insider is a non-embargoed version of our daily email alerts, allowing members of the public to get the latest Scimex stories in their inbox on the day they are released, tailored to their interests. As at June 2025, almost 200 people were receiving these daily alerts. Scimex Insider creates an engaged audience who may become potential donors, as well as allowing non-traditional journalists who may not be eligible for embargoed access to be alerted to breaking news via Scimex.

Global SMC meeting

In March, the AusSMC hosted three days of meetings with the Global Science Media Centre network at the Science Exchange. This was the largest and most diverse meeting of the SMCs to date, with 34 representatives from 11 different countries – including five countries currently in the process of establishing an SMC or considering one for their country. The meeting involved presentations from each established SMC about their work, as

well as discussions around the rise of AI and social media influencers, and how SMCs should respond to the changes in how many people across the world are receiving science information. The SMCs discussed the barriers experts face in each country when working with the media, including the risk of harassment. Emerging SMC representatives gave presentations about their work and were given an opportunity to put questions to established SMCs to get advice on where to start. The event was a rare opportunity for

the different organisations to give face-to-face support, and for newer staff members to put faces to names, especially those from SMC NZ who the media team work with on a weekly basis. Feedback from meeting attendees was positive, with many of the representatives of newer SMCs expressing the value of advice from more experienced SMCs, as well as established SMC representatives finding renewed inspiration from newer SMCs fighting to make change in their countries.



March 2025: Global SMC meeting participants at the Science Exchange

Visiting SMC Taiwan

In August 2024 the AusSMC's Lyndal Byford and Joe Milton visited the Taiwan Science Media Centre to improve collaboration between the centres and present at the Taiwan SMC's annual science communication symposia, The Scientists Assembly. The AusSMC team visited several of

Taiwan's leading research institutions including Taiwan Biobank, Academia Sinica, Future Earth Taiwan, and the Center for Sustainability Science (CSS) and shared Australia's proven science communication model. Collaborating with the Taiwan SMC helps us to address shared challenges - such as climate change, pandemics, and emerging technologies - by facilitating cross-

border knowledge exchange and improving public access to timely, accurate, and contextualised scientific information. The collaboration also broadens the capacity of Australian journalists to access trusted insights from a wider regional expert network, strengthening Australia's position as a science communication leader in the Asia-Pacific.



August 2024: Lyndal and Joe with SMC staff in Taiwan

April 2025: Indigenous Media Mentoring Program in Sydney



Indigenous Media Mentoring Program

The Indigenous Media Mentoring Program returned for another year, with the AusSMC continuing to work with SBS and NITV to encourage and support young Indigenous scientists to interact with media. CSL and CSIRO have continued their generous support of the program. In February, 11 Indigenous scientists from across the country participated in an online workshop, before coming together in April for a two-day in-person program at the NITV/SBS studios in Sydney. Indigenous Affairs reporter and host of The Point, John Paul Janke, was the main trainer for the program this year, with Professor James Ward from the University of Queensland as mentor.

Upgrading Scimex

Mid-2025 saw the finalisation of most elements of the upgrade of Scimex, made possible by a grant from the Walkley Foundation's Meta Australian News Fund to promote digital innovation. Web developers FrontStage Digital have redesigned the website frontend, modernising the look and feel of the website, improving accessibility and adding elements to better promote the additional features available to registered journalists and encourage members of the public to stay longer when they visit the site. They have also redesigned various editing pages, improving the ability for external users, especially experts, to keep their profiles up to date with less assistance from the AusSMC team. The major upgrades coincide with the 10th anniversary of the original launch of Scimex.

Supporting journalists and scientists in the Pacific

Thanks to support from the International Science Council's Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific, the AusSMC has been collaborating with the NZ SMC to build science communication capability across 16 Pacific

nations, creating a network of informed journalists and accessible scientists who can respond rapidly when crises emerge. As part of this project, the AusSMC's Lyndal Byford joined the SMC NZ's Dacia Herbulock in visits to Fiji and Samoa in July and October in line with the 2024 Pacific Media Conference and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Over 12 months, this initiative has upskilled 226 Pacific media professionals in science reporting and 35 Pacific

based journalists have registered for ongoing connections to science news and expert networks through the Scimex platform. 100 Scientists with pacific expertise are now accessible through the Scimex platform to respond rapidly to media demands. This program also included the development of Pacific editions of the SMC's *Desk guide for scientists working with media* and *Desk guide for media covering science*, currently available via the SMC NZ website.

Lyndal and Dacia in Fiji, July 2024, and Samoa, October 2024



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 103 expert reactions and media briefings during the year contributing to nearly 40,000 news items in Australia and overseas. Below is a sample of the topics we helped inform.

► **51,000-year-old Indonesian cave painting world's oldest known picture story**

- July 2024

A team of Australian and Indonesian researchers studying cave art on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi discovered what may be the oldest known evidence of storytelling in art. The researchers dated tiny layers of calcium carbonate on a painting of three human-like figures and a wild pig, and found those layers were at least 51,200 years old. Four of the researchers joined the AusSMC for an online briefing ahead of the research publication, where they told journalists that the human-like figures depicted in the painting appeared to be some sort of mythical creature, meaning the art is likely very early evidence of creativity and fiction. "Storytelling is a hugely

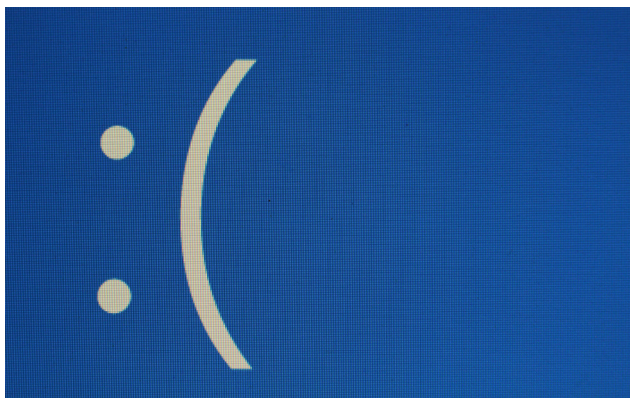


important part of human evolution and possibly even helps to explain our success as a species, but finding evidence for it in art, especially in very early cave art, is exceptionally rare," said study co-author Professor Adam Brumm. The authors were subsequently quoted in the media 1628 times.

► **Mass IT outages across Australia**

- July 2024

On a Friday afternoon in July, Australia was plunged into technological chaos after a major global IT outage. Airports, banks and media outlets were among the companies affected, with their computer screens hitting the "blue screen of death" and becoming unusable. It was later confirmed the outages were caused by a faulty update from US cybersecurity company CrowdStrike, which caused Microsoft Windows to crash. The AusSMC collected expert comments as the outage was occurring – in some cases taking dictated comments through the phone from cybersecurity experts who had lost access to their own email accounts. The comments helped dispel concerns of a major security breach, and many of the experts pointed to the situation as a reminder of the importance of being prepared for such wide-ranging technological failures in a society that is now heavily reliant on large global technology



companies. The experts involved in the reaction were quoted 1701 times in the media in the following days.

► **Highest ocean temperatures for 400 years put the Great Barrier Reef in danger**
- August 2024

Australian researchers studying the Coral Sea surrounding the Great Barrier Reef published research suggesting recent summer temperatures had been the warmest the region had experienced in 400 years. Reconstructing likely ocean temperatures in the area from 1618 to 1995 using the chemistry of the corals in the Coral Sea, the researchers compared these temperatures with instrument measurements taken from 1900-2024 which left them with a more precise estimate of the past 400 years. They found that recent sea surface heat, including during the especially hot summers of 2017, 2020 and 2024 was unprecedented, influenced by manmade climate change, and threatening the Great Barrier Reef which experienced mass coral bleaching over those



summers. The researchers presented their findings at an online AusSMC briefing, a week after UNESCO's World Heritage Committee declined to list the Reef as 'in danger'. The researchers were quoted in the media 2808 times in the following days.

► **Australian government announces social media ban for kids and ban passes Senate**
- September, November 2024

Australia made global news in September when the government committed to imposing an age limit on social media before the next federal election. The initial announcement came with little detail but a suggestion that the ban would impact children up to age 14-16. The AusSMC compiled expert comments following this announcement, with experts discussing the challenges social media poses for young people, but also the complexities around implementing a ban in a way that would be effective and would not infringe on the privacy of all social media users. In November 2024, the world-first social media ban for under-16s passed the Senate, with platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok likely to be impacted. The AusSMC again reached out to



experts for their views, with multiple experts describing the bill as a "blunt instrument". Following the two expert reactions, the experts featured were quoted 2754 times in total.

► **NHMRC releases new draft guidelines on PFAS in drinking water for public consultation**
- October 2024

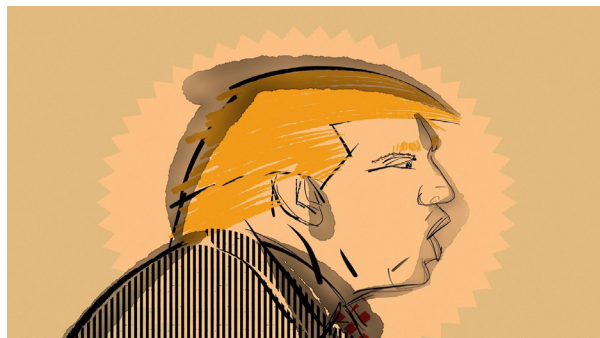
The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in October released draft guidelines on PFAS in drinking water for public consultation. The new guidelines included regulations for four main PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), intended to inform state and territory strategies for maintaining water supply safety. Ahead of the release for public consultation, the NHMRC worked with the AusSMC to host a briefing for media to explain the regulations and take questions. Professor Steven Wesselingh, the NHMRC's Chief Executive Officer, told the briefing that the guideline levels were intended to minimise potential accumulated health risks from a lifetime of drinking



Australia's water. The AusSMC also reached out to experts on its database for independent comment on the guidelines. Briefing participants and independent experts who commented were quoted by the media 2346 times after the guidelines were released.

► **How will Trump's decisions affect the world?** - January 2025

US President Donald Trump immediately became a major science news story when he returned to office in early 2025, signing a number of executive orders in his first days with far-reaching impacts. President Trump said he was withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accord, proposed large funding for artificial intelligence projects and banned "gender ideology guidance". To help journalists tackle the various impacts these decisions had on science, the AusSMC reached out to experts from a range of different areas to ask them for their views on how these decisions would impact the world. 44 experts put their hand up to provide a comment on the subject, making this by far the largest expert reaction for the year. Experts raised concern about the push toward AI technologies while simultaneously moving away from AI safety



legislation, while others noted the major environmental impacts of the US walking away from efforts to tackle climate change. The impact on refugees, transgender people, online discourse and national security were among the topics discussed, with 371 media items featuring the participating experts in the following days reaching an estimated Australian audience of 14 million.

► **Beyond BMI - how should we be diagnosing obesity?** - January 2025

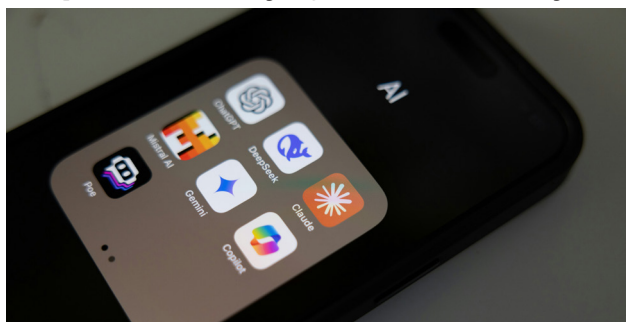
The Lancet Global Commission on Clinical Obesity published research in January proposing a rethink of the way obesity is diagnosed, suggesting current approaches are too reliant on BMI and focusing on other measures of body fat could help avoid misclassifications. Australian researchers were heavily involved in the research, and The Lancet approached both the UK and Australian SMCs ahead of its publication offering assistance in preparing briefings for media across the two different time-zones. Following a UK SMC briefing on the research, the AusSMC hosted a briefing in a more Australia-friendly timeslot with the UK-based Commission Chair and two Australian authors to give local media the opportunity to ask questions of the researchers live. The AusSMC also provided journalists with a

quote from an independent Australian expert. Researchers involved the AusSMC briefing and expert reaction were quoted in the media in Australia and overseas 1876 times when the research was published.



► **New AI Chatbot DeepSeek shakes up AI industry, gets banned by Australian government** - January, February 2025

Chinese company Deepseek gained global attention with its AI chatbot in early 2025. Technology stocks plummeted in late January as a result of Deepseek offering a competitor with comparable performance to the world's top chatbots but at a lower price. On January 28, the AusSMC collected comments from AI experts on what made Deepseek so disruptive to the generative AI industry. The next week, it was announced that the Australian federal government had banned Deepseek on government-issued



devices, citing advice from intelligence agencies. The AusSMC again reached out to experts for comments, with many explaining the potential privacy risks of giving too much data to Deepseek or any other technology company. Across the two expert reactions, participating experts were quoted 2346 times in the media.

► **Tropical Cyclone Alfred headed for Queensland coast** - March 2025

In early March, Tropical Cyclone Alfred was headed directly toward the coast of Southeast Queensland, projected to make landfall as a category two system. This prompted a week of flood warnings, school closures, evacuations and major sporting events. Alfred was eventually downgraded to a tropical low before it hit the coast on Saturday morning, but it brought with it power outages, heavy flooding and major coastal erosion. The AusSMC sent out four alerts as Alfred approached and after it made landfall, with experts providing commentary on the science behind cyclones and forecasting as well as a variety of messages around the potential risks the weather posed and how to keep safe. With the system making landfall over the weekend, the AusSMC also compiled a list of contact details



for experts who were available for interview on the weekend to assist journalists in covering the event as it was unfolding. Experts who provided comments to the AusSMC that week were quoted 1938 times in the media.

► **How severe is this flu season shaping up to be?** - May 2025

2025 was a big year for the flu, with over 63,000 cases reported by early May putting Australia above its five-year average. As the weather cooled, the AusSMC put together an expert panel for an online media briefing on what to expect for the rest of the flu season. The experts discussed the statistics so far from the year, vaccination trends, the influence of other viruses including COVID-19, RSV and norovirus, and gave an update on the H5N1 bird flu risk following outbreaks overseas and local outbreaks of other strains in late 2024. The experts said there was a clear trend of low vaccination, citing misconceptions around vaccine safety and a lack of concern over the dangers of the flu as likely reasons. "Our influenza vaccination rates in Australia are dire, and they're



not improving," said Professor Julie Leask from the University of Sydney. Following the briefing, the speakers were quoted 499 times in the media.

► **Monash IVF announces two mix-ups in the space of three months** - April, June 2025

An embryo mix-up at a fertility clinic in Brisbane made international headlines in April when it was discovered a woman impregnated through IVF had given birth to a genetically unrelated baby using an embryo from another client. The company, Monash IVF, said the mix-up was a result of "human error". The AusSMC sent out expert comments discussing how mistakes like this are usually handled and the potential psychological and legal consequences of this revelation. In June, it was revealed another mix-up had occurred at a Monash IVF clinic, with a patient implanted with their own embryo rather than an embryo from their partner as per their treatment plan. The AusSMC again sent out comments, with experts discussing the ramifications for the IVF sector, and what



safeguards could be added to the industry to prevent this occurring again. Participating experts were quoted 1512 times in the media following the two incidents.

AusSMC Staff

The AusSMC's 10 staff members have all remained at the organisation for another year, with the move to a new office space at Lot Fourteen allowing the media team to spend more time in the office.

The team's hours also remained consistent this year, with 8.8 full-time equivalents during 2024-2025.

Staff at the Centre during the year were:

Dr Susannah Elliott, CEO

Lyndal Byford, Director of News & Partnerships

Dr Joseph Milton, Senior Training and News Lead

Nigel Kerby, Operations Manager

Marilyn Arnold, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

Deb Shaw, Project Manager

Ben Kaldi, News and Social Media Lead

Olivia Henry, News Lead

Steven Mew, News Lead

Rachel McDonald, News Lead



Dr Susannah Elliott
Chief Executive
Officer



Lyndal Byford
Director of News &
Partnerships



Dr Joseph Milton
Senior Training and
News Lead



Marilyn Arnold
Chief Financial and
Operating Officer



Nigel Kerby
Operations Manager



Deb Shaw
Project Manager



Ben Kaldi
News and Social
Media Lead



Olivia Henry
News Lead



Steven Mew
News Lead



Rachel McDonald
News Lead

AusSMC Staff Activity

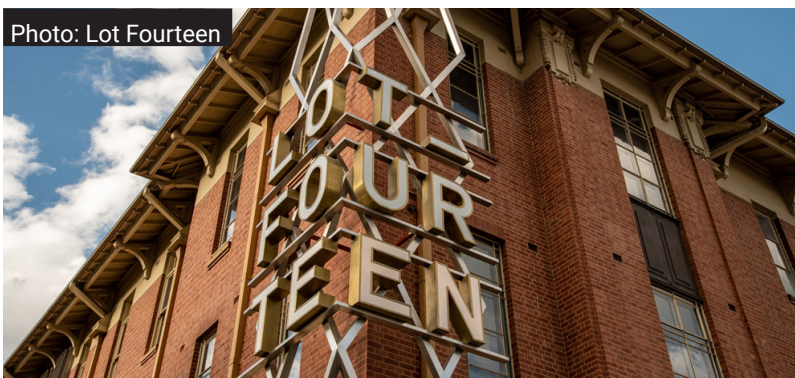
Staff took the AusSMC's journalist and scientist training programs overseas

The AusSMC had a change of scenery at the beginning of 2025, farewelling the Science Exchange and moving to a new office space in the TechCentral building at Lot Fourteen, a business and technology precinct in Adelaide's CBD. With support from the South Australian government, the team is now working from two adjoining rooms in the building, and enjoying the facilities Lot Fourteen provides including various meeting rooms, a space to hold board meetings and even a lecture theatre.

AusSMC staff continued to host training sessions for both scientists and journalists across Australia and beyond. The AusSMC held a total of eight training sessions for journalists, including several for Pacific media in Fiji run by Lyndal Byford in collaboration with Dacia Herbulock from the NZ Science Media Centre. Journalist training sessions provide an intro to science journalism for general reporters, covering how to tell newsworthy science from hype and how to read research papers. A total of 43 training sessions for scientists

were held over the year, including three sessions in Taiwan as part of a visit to the Taiwan SMC to strengthen collaboration between the centres.

Photo: Lot Fourteen



Predominantly hosted by the AusSMC's Dr Joe Milton, these sessions are often an introduction to the mainstream media, interview bootcamps, social media or video trainings and have become a major value-add for the AusSMC's affiliates.

CEO Susannah Elliott has spent much of the year considering and speaking about the growing impact of science misinformation, and what science and

media organisations can do to fight it. Over the year Susannah has given talks on this subject for the Council of Australasian Museum Directors in

Canberra, the CSIRO Trust in Science Summit in Brisbane and the 'Designing Future Society for Our Lives' World Expo in Osaka, Japan via video. The AusSMC also collaborated with the Office of the Chief Scientist on an online roundtable held in November involving around 20 people from the research sector, government, media and tech companies, including several AusSMC Board members.

SMC training sessions in Fiji, July 2024 and Taiwan, August 2024



AusSMC mentions in the Media

The Centre's name appeared in the media over 2,000 times reaching an audience of over 23 million

The collage displays four media mentions of the Australian Science Media Centre (AusSMC). The top-left screenshot is from Medical Republic, featuring a headline about vaccination coverage and a photo of a dog. The top-right screenshot is from the Herald Sun, discussing the Covid-19 Inquiry report. The bottom-left screenshot is from Mercury, showing a video of Professor Patrick Reading discussing flu cases. The bottom-right screenshot is from ABC Listen, showing a podcast episode titled 'The Year in Science: Top 10 Stories That Shaped 2024'.

The AusSMC media team continues to field direct media enquiries from journalists struggling to find the right expert on a story, assisting with over 300 media enquiries throughout the year.

Where necessary, the AusSMC also provides direct commentary on science communication issues. In October, Lyndal and Susannah provided media comment on an inquiry into Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which

highlighted the importance of open communication in a crisis.

Several members of the team are also participating in regular radio slots across the country, chatting about the biggest and quirkiest stories to be featured on Scimex each week.

Joe and Lyndal have remained regular guests on ABC NSW/ACT Evenings, and continue to participate in ABC Nightlife's 40 minute science program.

Olivia and Steven have kept their regular segment with Jordan Curtis on 5AU/5CS, a radio station broadcasting across much of regional South Australia.

The AusSMC's Top Tens continued this year, with Joe putting together our annual Top Ten Science Stories, and Top Ten Weird Science Stories. These lists are a light-hearted way to recap the year in science, and help generate coverage over the holiday period.

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

Professor Merlin Crossley (Deputy Chair) Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, University of New South Wales

Robyn Williams (Deputy Chair) ABC Science Show Presenter

Anna-Maria Arabia Chief Executive, Australian Academy of Science

Tanya Bowes Executive General Manager Corporate Affairs, Tourism Australia

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

Nick Campbell Vice President, Academic Affairs, Nature Portfolio & Springer Nature

Jim Carroll Consultant and Director, CPC

Professor Raymond Chan Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research, Flinders University

Dr Michael Ellies Non-Executive Director

Distinguished Professor Melinda Fitzgerald Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Curtin University

Melvin Mansell Chairman, The Advertiser Foundation, News Corp Australia

Professor Andrew Lowe Director, Environment Institute, The University of Adelaide

Crystal Ladiges Chief of Staff, CSIRO

The Hon Peter Malinauskas Premier of South Australia

Julia Naughton Head of Life, Sydney Morning Herald, Nine Entertainment

Professor Moira O'Bryan Dean, Faculty of Science, The University of Melbourne

RaeJean Pearce Head of Customer Relationships ANZ, Squiz Australia

Darren Saunders Deputy Chief Scientist and Engineer, Executive Director, Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer, NSW Government

Professor James Wallman Dean of Science, University of Technology Sydney

The AusSMC's March 2025 board meeting in Adelaide (left) and June 2025 meeting at Curtin University (right).



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 nearly 40,000 media hits in Australia and overseas.

2024

► July 2024

- Semaglutide linked to higher risk of eye condition
- [51,000-year-old Indonesian cave painting world's oldest known picture story](#)
- NZ academic harassed during the pandemic wins in court
- Waterways contaminated by chemical runoff from Melbourne factory fire
- [Bird flu in Australia - your questions answered](#)
- Mass IT outages across Australia
- [Considerations for a nuclear-powered Australia](#)
- Is pesticide exposure as risky as smoking for some cancers?
- Climate change is driving more variation in our rainfall

► August 2024

- Victorian woman dies from Legionnaires' disease outbreak
- [Highest ocean temperatures for 400 years put the Great Barrier Reef in danger](#)
- Government releases National Science Statement
- WHO declares mpox outbreak an international emergency
- [Stonehenge's Altar Stone came all the way from Scotland](#)
- Call for investigation into potential Ozempic mental health risks
- [Australia's problem with intimate partner violence](#)
- [Lab-made stem cells could transform bone marrow transplants, mouse study suggests](#)
- Specific diabetes drugs may reduce dementia risk

► September 2024

- [Australian HIV diagnoses trending down despite 2023 increase](#)
- Avian flu's spread to remote Antarctic islands
- [WHO review confirms mobile phones not linked to brain cancer](#)
- Government proposes mandatory rules for high risk AI
- [New report calls for a public health approach to suicide prevention](#)
- Government to impose social media ban for kids
- Surrogates may face higher risks of complications in pregnancy and after birth
- IVF babies may have a 36% higher chance of major heart defects
- New schizophrenia drug Cobenfy approved by FDA

► October 2024

- [Large skin-health study halves skin infections rates in remote Aboriginal kids](#)
- Hurricane Milton to hit the US
- [NHMRC releases new draft guidelines on PFAS in drinking water for public consultation](#)
- [State of the Climate report](#)
- COVID-19 inquiry report

► November 2024

- 22 pesticides consistently linked with the incidence of prostate cancer in the US
- [What can we expect at the COP 29 Climate Conference?](#)
- [Fossil fuel emissions continue to increase - Global Carbon Budget 2024](#)
- Australia's 2019-20 black summer megafires affected rainforests and mammals the most
- 'Phantom chemical' in drinking water revealed decades after its discovery
- Challenges as COP29 wraps up
- Australia's social media ban passes the Senate

► December 2024

- Aus wildlife among the most vulnerable to climate-driven extinction
- GenCost energy costs report from CSIRO
- New food standards proposed for lab-grown meat
- Coalition releases nuclear energy cost modelling
- Government's response to the National ADHD Inquiry
- Large earthquake strikes Vanuatu
- ADHD meds work short-term, major study finds
- IPBES (the 'IPCC for Biodiversity') warns of 5 connected global crises - Nexus Report
- IPBES (the 'IPCC for Biodiversity') says fundamental change is needed to stop biodiversity loss

2025

► January 2025

- Should we be worried about HMPV?
- What can Australia learn from the LA wild fires?
- Switching up building materials could store more than 16 billion tonnes of CO2 annually
- WMO confirms 2024 as warmest year on record at about 1.55°C above pre-industrial level
- [Beyond BMI - how should we be diagnosing obesity?](#)
- Trust in scientists comparatively high in Aotearoa and Australia
- What are the benefits and risks of semaglutide and its sister drugs?
- How will Trump's decisions affect the world?
- New AI Chatbot DeepSeek shakes up the artificial intelligence industry
- Global defence plan triggered as asteroid has small chance of hitting Earth in 2032

► February 2025

- Australian federal government bans Chinese AI DeepSeek on devices
- 2024 was the first year above 1.5C warming, so what does that mean for the Paris Agreement target?
- Report on Australia's relationship with the Antarctic Treaty System
- Mass stranding of over 150 false killer whales in Tasmania
- Common artificial sweetener can damage the hearts of mice
- Aussie breast cancer rates among the highest in the world
- Melioidosis outbreak in North Queensland

► March 2025

- [Slowing of the world's strongest ocean current could dramatically change Australia's Southern Ocean](#)
- Tropical Cyclone Alfred headed for Queensland coast
- Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred downgraded but risks ongoing
- 'Woolly mouse' developed on the path to 'de-extinction' of the mammoth
- How does alcohol affect your cholesterol levels?
- WMO's State of the Global Climate shows 2024 went over 1.5 degrees

► April 2025

- Almost 1 in 2 Aussie teens report a chronic disease or developmental condition
- Shingles vaccine reduces dementia risk by a fifth over seven years
- Australian superannuation funds hit by cyber attack
- Mixtures of common food additives could be linked to type 2 diabetes
- Brisbane woman gives birth to genetically unrelated baby after IVF mix-up
- CT scans could soon be responsible for 5% of new cancer diagnoses every year
- Over 80% of the world's coral reefs impacted by bleaching-level heat since 2023
- Australians exposed to multiple climate disasters face worse mental health outcomes

► May 2025

- [Retraining the brain for chronic pain](#)
- [How severe is this flu season shaping up to be?](#)
- Report on sexual violence against children finds Australian rates among the highest
- Polio outbreak in Papua New Guinea
- Cold sores may be implicated in the development of Alzheimer's disease
- [The health of teens and young people could be going backwards](#)
- Flooding in NSW
- Three types of PFAS detected in over 85% of the Australian population
- Dust storms across Australia

► June 2025

- [The crushing burden of Tourette syndrome and related disorders revealed](#)
- [Record temps and ocean heatwaves across our region - WMO The State of the Climate Report - SW Pacific](#)
- Motor neurone disease linked to use of common psychiatric medications
- Second IVF mix-up at Monash IVF
- Specific contraceptive pill linked to small increase in brain tumour risk
- Plane crash in Ahmedabad
- Australia to lift plasma and blood donation restrictions for gay and bisexual men
- New bat viruses in China, have scientists raising 'urgent concerns'
- Agriculture byproduct linked to preterm births and low birthweight babies
- NHMRC releases updated guidelines for PFAS in drinking water

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 2024-25:

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OTHER SUPPORTERS AND PROJECT SPONSORS



Financials

Income	2025(\$)	2024 (\$)
Sponsorships	913,072	788,482
Scimex	27,830	27,830
Scimex Phase 3	-	225,000
Indigenous Media Mentoring	30,430	30,000
Affiliation	166,482	170,370
Cost recovery	131,365	75,527
Subscriptions and uploads	15,044	21,262
Other income	37,384	3,649
Interest received	44,513	27,368

Total Income	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
	1,366,120	1,369,488

Expenditure	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Salaries and wages	1,005,421	943,659
Indigenous Media Mentoring	10,190	11,920
Collaborative Journalism Project	-	49,251
Scimex	72,068	54,208
Media team/briefings	9,000	12,750
Office expenses	138,795	91,261
Depreciation	5,849	4,911
Travel expenses	41,735	31,082
Board costs	9,011	6,057
Other expenses	65,137	14,284
Scimex Phase 3	178,398	41,384

Total Expenditure	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
	1,535,604	1,260,767

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Surplus	(169,484)	108,721
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive surplus for the year	(169,484)	108,721
Retained surplus at the end of the financial year	995,385	1,164,869



australian science media centre

Australian Science Media Centre Inc.

C/- TechCentral
Lot Fourteen
Frome Road
Adelaide SA 5000
Australia

+61 8 7120 8665

info@smc.org.au

PO Box 237
Rundle Mall SA 5000

smc.org.au