

AusSMC e-news

Hello again, welcome to the latest AusSMC news. For those who haven't contacted us yet, we offer a free, fast, expert service for the media. If you would like to talk to a scientist quickly or you need background info on an issue related to science let us help. We're on 08 8207 7415 or 0424 676 136 or info@ausmc.org.

Hit parade

The AusSMC has been open for over six months now. Happily we can report that calls from journalists are increasing and hits to our website have passed the quarter of a million mark as media outlets discover what a valuable resource we offer.

Brain fest

Some of Australia's best known scientists including Sir Gus Nossal, Tim Flannery and Nancy Millis joined prominent media and business leaders recently at an AusSMC forum. They discussed issues such as 'making science sell', 'the future of the media' and how to promote a greater understanding between the two.

Full Report <http://www.ausmc.org/SAPandBoard.php>



Find out who's who at http://www.ausmc.org/who_is_who.pdf

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Contact AusSMC

(08) 8207 7415
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www.ausmc.org

AusSMC and 'Nature'

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The prestigious journal *Nature* has agreed to give us advanced warning of the publication of scientific papers with Australian authors. This means we will be able to hold national briefings when major stories arise providing better access and more context for the Australian media. The first cab off the rank was Macquarie University research into the Pilbara stromatolites, (above) further evidence of the earliest life on earth.

See the report http://www.aus-smc.org/Protect_Pilbara_fossils.php,

Who's reporting science?

Many scientists say they don't know who's reporting science in Australia. So we're profiling science journalists in our email bulletin and on our website. Here's the first:



Deb Smith,
Sydney Morning Herald
debsmith@smh.com.au

Use the link below to find out how Deb got into science journalism, the obstacles she faced, her most memorable experience and her suggestions for people wanting to get into science reporting.
<http://www.aus-smc.org/DebSmith.php>

Science journo for Adelaide



We think the more science reporters there are in the Australian media the better for science. So congratulations to **Deb Tideman** who was recently appointed Higher Education and Science Writer with Advertiser Newspapers.

An Adelaide University graduate, Deborah worked at The Advertiser and The Australian for many years and has a wide experience in Education and Medical specialist reporting. She returned to The Advertiser in June. Contact her on tidemand@adv.newsltd.com.au

Scientists speak out

The AusSMC is constantly looking for ways to give scientists more of a voice during debates on significant issues. Journalists have told us that our Rapid Roundups, where we collect comment on breaking news are useful in a number of ways. They identify possible interviewees and give an indication of where particular experts stand on an issue. Recent Roundups have included:

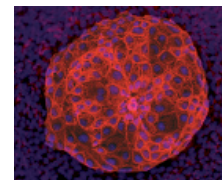
- Science of Soccer
- New climate report
- Whaling issue
- Federal Budget
- Nuclear debate
- Indonesian earthquake

Background briefings

These national briefings give reporters an opportunity to meet scientists as well as to learn more about an important issue in the news and come away with a story. It's good for scientists too. They get time to talk about their work and answer questions in a semi-formal environment.

Recent briefings have included:

- **Stem cell research** in Australia - languish or flourish?
Held at Bio 21, part of the University of Melbourne.
- **Drugs in sport** - Can science keep up with the cheats?
Held in Melbourne to coincide with the Commonwealth Games.
- **Moving mountains:** Australia's mental health care crisis
Complimented a mental health symposium in Canberra.
- **Kicking the carbon habit:** The climate-carbon nexus
In Sydney with internationally recognised climate change expert Stephen Schneider.



© Aust. Stem Cell Centre

Who is calling the AusSMC and why?

A range of media people have discovered us recently including radio producers, newspaper and magazine journalists, TV current affairs producers, freelancers and more. While most requests have been for experts in a particular field, other queries have ranged from the way medicine is reported in the media to the numbers of human embryonic stem cell lines available in Australia.

Our expanding service

Podcasting. The pattern of most national issues is that media and community interest in them tends to ebb and flow. Take the nuclear debate and stem cell legislation as an example. This is why we're looking to new media opportunities to extend the life of our briefings. When we have the technology in place reporters will be able to download scientist's presentations from these events and listen to them whenever they like.

Our **Science in a Nutshell** series <http://www.ausmc.org/media.php> is growing with the recent addition of information on bird flu and stem cells. These are succinct backgrounders for journalists who may not have reported on the issue before. We collaborate with scientists to make sure the information is accurate, relevant and up-to-date.

Database. We are also able to respond rapidly to calls for experts or information with the help of our database which is growing daily. It now holds more than 500 scientists, many of whom have also given us their after hours numbers.

Science communicators

Another reason we have been able to respond to emerging issues and requests from reporters so successfully is due to help from our colleagues in universities and science institutions. Science communicators can be crucial to locating the right expert within a critical time frame. Many thanks to those who have helped find soccer scientists, researchers in mind control and hypnotism, and experts on the Mozart Effect. Whenever we use comment or send out contact details to journalists we let the media officer from the relevant organisation know.

AusSMC staff changes

- AusSMC pioneer Geoff Robertson moved back to the SA Department of Premier and Cabinet and then decided to seek new adventures outside the public service. We thank him for his enormous commitment and we'll miss his sense of humour.
- Marilyn Arnold joins us as our full time Office Manager in August. Marilyn has a BA in psychology and sociology, a Diploma in Business and Marketing and around 12 years of experience in office admin and finance, especially in the food, wine and irrigation industries.



AusSMC Board moves

- Chairman of Shell Australia Ltd, Russell Caplan has replaced Tim Warren who retired.
- Professor John Yovich, Vice Chancellor and President of Murdoch University will represent the Innovative Research Universities of Australia (IRUA) on the Board.
- Andrew Grant, Vice President of Global Product Marketing at ResMed, is to replace Kieren Gallahue.
- Warwick Syphers, Prime TV's Company Secretary will be the proxy for Chairman Paul Ramsay.

Board members new roles

- Tim Flannery is moving from the SA Museum to Macquarie University to focus on his climate change research.
- Donna Staunton from the CSIRO has announced she's leaving the organisation to start her own business.
- Garry Linnell, The Bulletin Editor-in-Chief has moved to Channel Nine as head of News and Current Affairs.
- Mark Scott, the Board's Fairfax representative has been given the top job as Managing Director at the ABC.

Engaging with the AusSMC

If you haven't already done so please let us know if you'd like to receive our email-outs. The address is: info@ausmc.org We try to tailor them to your interests but you have to tell us what they are. Also if you are receiving information from us you don't need, let us know.

Finally we'd like to thank you for your support and interest in the AusSMC. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve our service please tell us. In the meantime we look forward to some fruitful collaboration during this new (financial) year.

The AusSMC team: Susannah, Peta, Nigel and Brad.