



program details

Tuesday 17 April 2007

Sponsored breakfast briefing

TIME: 7.45am to 8.45am
LOCATION: Lumina

Welcome breakfast for developing country journalists

International Development Research Centre Canada (IDRC), cooked breakfast

Developing and emerging country journalists are invited to this networking breakfast.

Meet your peers from around the world and discuss how you can make the best use of the conference.

You will also have the opportunity to hear briefly from IDRC's 2006 scholars.

Limited seats available.

Sign up at the registration desk or contact:
Jennifer Pepall, International Development Research Centre, +1 (613) 796-8752,
jpepall@idrc.ca

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Sponsored breakfast briefing

TIME: 7.45am to 8.45am
LOCATION: Savoy 2

The big Australian breakfast High in salt, low in water, but lots of fibre

Presented by the Australian Centre of Plant Functional Genomics, cooked breakfast

Thirty minutes, three scientists and our research recipe.

Start with high temperatures and low water and add a big pinch of salt and you have Australia's agricultural environment – not really ideal conditions for growing breakfast cereal crops like wheat and barley.

To combat this, our scientists are unzipping the genes of wheat and barley and looking for new solutions.

Can we produce varieties of wheat that yield 20% more under drought? Or could we develop plants with inbuilt salt pumps? Will crops with higher fibre be on the menu soon?

Dr Rachel Burton, Darren Plett and James Edwards will address these questions at the ACPFG biotech breakfast and take you on a culinary, intellectual and entertaining journey of science using new breeding technologies including genetic engineering and functional genomics.

Limited seats available.

Sign up at the registration desk or contact:
Amanda Hudswell,
amanda.hudswell@acpfg.com.au

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Sponsored breakfast briefing

TIME: 7.45am to 8.45am
LOCATION: Savoy 3

The cancer challenge

Presented by the Ludwig Centre for Cancer Research, cooked breakfast

Cancer now kills over seven million people each year worldwide.

Over the last 25 years scientists and clinicians have discovered why many cancer cells mutate abnormally. Consequently, new drugs which reverse the effects of these mutations are now possible.

The Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research is a global organisation at the forefront of translating laboratory discoveries into clinically useful anti-cancer agents.

Recently, the Institute's worldwide network has created opportunities for industry to collaborate on the testing of new antibodies and anti-cancer vaccines which target cancer receptors and growth factors.

This session will provide specific examples to demonstrate how the latest innovations in cancer research progress from the laboratory to patient trials.

Limited seats available.

Sign up at the registration desk or contact:
Caroline Cody, (0430) 134 743,
caroline.cody@ludwig.edu.au

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Please note: These details are subject to change. There will be additional speakers in some sessions, for instance. Any alterations will be made available at registration. If a country is not listed the speaker is from Australia.

Tuesday session

TIME: 9.00am to 10.15am
LOCATION: Savoy 1

Biasing scientific information

PRODUCERS: Tim Thwaites, freelance science writer
Melissa Trudinger, freelance science writer
CHAIR: Robyn Williams, The Science Show, ABC Radio
INTRODUCTION: John Brumby, Minister for Innovation, Victoria
SPEAKERS: Chris Mooney, Seed Magazine (US)
Jia Hepeng, SciDev.Net (China)

Climate change denied or soft-pedalled, emerging diseases unreported, information on clinical trials selectively released, industrial accidents or pollution downgraded—there are increasing reports of corporations and governments of all persuasions interfering in the free flow of scientific information. But how should science and government and business interact? What rights and responsibilities do researchers, journalists, administrators and politicians have in reporting science?

Author and journalist Chris Mooney will detail the problem in the US, and suggest some solutions, while journalist Jia Hepeng will discuss the issues for China.

Chris Mooney's bestselling book *The Republican War on Science* was dubbed "a landmark in contemporary political reporting" by Salon.com and a "well-researched, closely argued and amply referenced indictment of the right wing's assault on science and scientists" by Scientific American. His next book, entitled *Storm World: Hurricanes, Politics, and the Battle Over Global Warming*, will be published in June.

While working as a reporter with China Daily in Beijing, Jia Hepeng traced coverage of the Severe Acquired Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and bird flu outbreaks. He now suggests that a series of institutional factors, including propaganda-oriented journalism, political censorship, corporate bias and a closed management system have limited effective science communication in his country.

Tuesday session

TIME: 11.00am to 12.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 1

Investigating scientific fraud

PRODUCER: Elizabeth Finkel
CHAIR: Norman Swan, The Health Report, ABC Radio
PANEL: Kim Hee Won, Hankook Daily (South Korea)
Jia Hepeng, SciDev.Net (China)
Warwick Anderson, CEO, National Health and Medical Research Council
Phil Campbell, editor in chief, Nature (UK)
Phil Vardy, former researcher

It is a year since the exposure of Korea's 'Cloning King' Hwang Woo Suk riveted the world's attention on scientific fraud. Once rare, it seems like reports of scientific fraud now appear almost weekly. No country or field of research appears to be spared. In these dramas, investigative journalists end up being key actors as they chase down what may be the story of their career.

But what can a journalist expect to achieve in following up a fraud lead? It may depend on the country you live in. In Korea, the journalists' efforts ultimately forced the hand of justice. But Australia's record of dealing with scientific fraud is chequered. Prize-winning investigative journalist Norman Swan recently vowed he would never follow up another case of scientific fraud. Without robust mechanisms for dealing with fraud allegations, those who suffer most are often the "whistleblowers".

In this session we will hear the first hand experiences of journalists in fraud cases. The panel members—including an editor, a whistleblower and a science administrator—will also address the issues of which countries handle fraud best, the role of scientific journals, and the experience of whistleblowers.

Tuesday session

TIME: 11.00am to 12.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 2

Reporting nuclear power

PRODUCERS: Jesse Shore, Powerhouse Museum
Tim Thwaites, freelance science writer
CHAIR: Jonathan Holmes, ABC TV Four Corners
SPEAKER: Ziggy Switkowski, chairman, Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation
PANEL: Harriet Öster, freelance journalist (Finland)
Peter Calamai, Toronto Star (Canada)
Jim Falk, University of Melbourne
Hujun Li, Southern Weekly (China)
Hanns Neubert, freelance journalist (Germany)

In the past year, there has been a resurgence of interest in nuclear power in Australia and many other parts of the world, mainly as a response to climate change. This session explores how the media from different countries with diverse governments, climates, economies and power industries approach the topic of nuclear power. What drives individual nations to embrace nuclear power or reject it?

While some countries are still discussing whether they will ever need nuclear power, others are planning their first plant, and still others are shutting down existing plants. Then there are questions of getting involved in or opting out of uranium enrichment and/or nuclear fuel reprocessing. And everyone is still grappling with how to deal with high-level nuclear waste.

Traditionally, the debate over nuclear power in Australia has revolved around issues of safety i.e. potential contamination and waste disposal. Following the release of a recent government inquiry, those issues have been joined by argument over the speed and cost of development of a nuclear energy industry, and whether pursuing the nuclear option would preclude alternative sources of power.

But the issues and concerns are different in other parts of the world, particularly where nuclear power has become part of the fabric of society. This session brings the chair of a recent Australian inquiry (and now of the Australia's nuclear research organisation) together with a long-term critic of nuclear power and a panel of non-Australian journalists to discuss how nuclear issues are viewed and reported around the world.

program details continued

Tuesday 17 April 2007

Tuesday session

TIME: 11.00am to 12.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 3

Uncovering the hobbit, *Homo floresiensis*

PRODUCER/CHAIR: Paul Willis,
ABC Science
SPEAKERS: Deborah Smith,
Sydney Morning Herald
Chris Turney,
University of Wollongong
Bert Roberts,
University of Wollongong

In 2004 the world's media was bombarded with news of a new species of human found on the remote Indonesian island of Flores. Standing barely a metre tall, the primitive-looking human became known as The Hobbit and promised to radically change our understanding of human evolution.

But, almost before the fossils were out of the ground, a controversy erupted within scientific circles. Were these really modern survivors of an ancient lineage or perhaps modern humans with an unusual deformity? And, just as soon as the scientific debate began, a rancorous battle of personalities, politics and prestige erupted between the two emerging camps which included accusations of improper conduct, the theft of specimens and irreparable damage to the fragile fossils.

This battle became the story, and the media followed every twist and turn. There was little serious analysis of the competing claims of the two camps and the science was lost in an orgy of sensationalism. At least, that is the way some commentators have seen it!

So what exactly happened, and how appropriate was the coverage of the Hobbit saga? We've brought together a journalist central to the development of the story, as well as scientists who were personally involved in the excavations and research, for a panel discussion to explore what went right and what went wrong in the presentation of an ancient relative to the modern world.

Tuesday session

TIME: 11.00am to 12.30pm
LOCATION: Kensington

New media: podcasting, Second Life and the future of the web

PRODUCER: Abbie Thomas,
ABC Science
CHAIR: Bernie Hobbs,
ABC Science
SPEAKERS: Ian Allan,
ABC Science Online
Abigail E. Thomas,
new media, ABC
Chris Smith,
the Naked Scientist,
Cambridge University (UK)
James Massola,
Eureka Street

The days when we passively sat and read or listened to science are over. Today on the internet, we can download podcasts, watch video and even participate in whole virtual worlds. What do these trends offer the science journalist, and how can they be used to communicate science?

Chris Smith is an experienced radio broadcaster and regularly produces podcasts of his own radio program, the Naked Scientist.

Abigail Thomas is manager of new media project development at the ABC. She has a particular interest in Second Life (secondlife.com), a web-based virtual world where you can build your own three dimensional self, walk around, visit bars, parties, concerts and lectures, and interact with others. Science-based organisations, such as NASA, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have started to set up a presence on Second Life.

Ian Allan is executive producer of ABC Science Online (abc.net.au/science), which has won numerous awards for its innovative approach to science communication, audience forums and online competitions.

James Massola is assistant editor Eureka Street, a magazine of ideas which recently made the switch from print to totally online.

Sponsored lunch

TIME: 12.30pm to 1.30pm
LOCATION: Lumina

Securing our water future

A two course sit-down lunch presented by CSIRO

Water is a critical resource challenge facing many countries around the world.

Climate change and increasing demand make it essential that we develop strategies to reduce consumption, increase efficiency and maintain reliable water quality and quantity.

The key to managing scarce water resources knowing how much water we have now and can expect to have in the future, who is entitled to use it, and under what conditions.

Find out how scientists are working across disciplines to develop the technologies and information systems needed to dramatically improve Australia's ability to measure, monitor and manage our water resources.

Presenter, Dr Tom Hatton, is the Director of the Water for a Healthy Country Flagship – one of six Flagships established by CSIRO to tackle Australia's major national challenges. He leads a team of more than 400 researchers with skills in hydrology, ecophysiology, sociology, information and communication technology, atmospheric research, environmental management, economics and biology.

The session will be introduced by CSIRO Chief Executive, Dr Geoff Garrett.

Limited seats available.

Sign up at the registration desk or contact:
Patricia Chronis, (0407) 759 958,
patricia.chronis@csiro.au

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Sponsored lunch briefing

TIME: 12.45pm to 1.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 3

Technology and its role in the future of the mining industry

SPEAKER: Megan Clark,
Vice President Technology
BHP Billiton

Presented by BHP Billiton: pick up your lunch and join us in Savoy 3

Dr Clark manages BHP Billiton's Global Technology Group developing technologies that provide competitive advantage and growth options for BHP Billiton's global businesses. She was previously a Director with NM Rothschild and Sons (Australia) investing in private technology companies and worked with WMC Resources in mining, exploration and research.

Dr Clark is on the Advisory Board of the Ian Walk Research Institute. She has been a member of the Australian Research Council Collaborative Grants Committee in the areas of engineering and geoscience and is currently on the Working Group on Asia for the Prime Minister's Science Engineering and Innovation Council examining the opportunities and threats presented by the growth of India and China.

Sign up at the registration desk or contact:
Carolyn Steere, (0414) 474 051,
Carolyn.Steere@BHPBilliton.com

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Networking lunch

TIME: 12.45pm to 2.00pm
LOCATION: Connaught

Medical writers' networking lunch

The Australasian Medical Writers' Association www.medicalwriters.org invites delegates involved in medical writing, publishing or research to get together over lunch. Please collect your conference lunch and take it to the Connaught room.

A great networking opportunity!

Hosted by



Tuesday session

TIME: 2.00pm to 3.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 1

A code of ethics for science journalists

PRODUCER: Joanne Finlay,
NSW Department of
Primary Industry
CHAIR: Véronique Morin,
World Federation of
Science Journalists (Canada)
SPEAKERS: Chris Warren,
Media, Entertainment &
Arts Alliance
Rob Morrison,
Flinders University
Bob Williamson,
University of Melbourne
Wolfgang Goede,
P.M. Magazine (Germany)

Is a separate code of ethics needed for science journalists? If so, what elements should be included? And how should it differ from the ethics codes that journalists currently operate under? Discussion on these issues will be led by our expert panel.

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Tuesday 17 April 2007

Tuesday session

TIME: 2.00pm to 3.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 2

A peer review of peer review

PRODUCER: Julie Egan,
medical editor
CHAIR: TBA
SPEAKERS: Phil Campbell,
editor in chief, Nature (UK)
Warwick Anderson,
CEO, National Health &
Medical Research Council
John Rennie,
editor in chief,
Scientific American (US)
PANELLIST: Carol Nader,
The Age

A paper in a peer-reviewed journal is regarded as the 'gold standard' of scientific publication. But does the peer review process always guarantee scientific merit?

Opening the first congress on peer review in 1986, Drummond Rennie from the Journal of the American Medical Association said, "There seems to be no study too fragmented, no hypothesis too trivial, no literature too biased or too egotistical, no design too warped, no methodology too bungled, no presentation of results too inaccurate, too obscure, and too contradictory, no analysis too self-serving, no argument too circular, no conclusions too trifling or too unjustified, and no grammar and syntax too offensive for a paper to end up in print."

This session focuses on how journals can avoid giving the seal of approval, 'peer-reviewed', to work that is 'wrong'. How do journals manage the peer review process and ensure that reviewers are competent and unbiased? Do reviewers get enough guidance from journals on what to look for in a scientific paper? Why do reviewers disagree when confronted with the same set of results?

The current system of peer review relies on members of the scientific community providing free and anonymous advice to journal editors. Does this system need an overhaul? Is any other process likely to yield more reliable results? Hear the results of Nature's 2006 trial on open parallel review.

Join the panel of journal editors, researchers and journalists as they discuss how the process of peer review is coping with today's world of research bias, fraud and commercial gain.

Tuesday session

TIME: 2.00pm to 3.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 3

Wise up – the truth about TV science

PRODUCER: Sonya Pemberton,
independent documentary
producer, formerly head of
specialist factual ABC TV
CHAIR: Graham Phillips,
ABC TV Science
SPEAKERS: Peter Rees,
National Geographic TV (US)
Catherine Marciniak,
Life at 1, freelance
documentary creator
& director
Nalaka Gunawardene,
TVE Asia Pacific (Sri Lanka)
Sonya Pemberton,
CRUDE, executive producer,
ABC TV

Exploding breast implants, molecules as lead characters, science as soap opera... TV science is gaining bigger audiences than ever, but is it science? How reliable is the information? How much genuine consultation and research is undertaken? What happens to the unpalatable bits?

Could it be that, as TV science becomes increasingly interactive via websites, polls, forums, debates, games, it is actually doing science a favour? We ask the Australian creator of the world's most popular science television series, *Mythbusters*, and a team of distinguished television producers working in science programming.

Tuesday session

TIME: 2.00pm to 3.30pm
LOCATION: Kensington

Good for you: public health and public interest

PRODUCER/CHAIR: Gael Jennings,
ABC TV
SPEAKERS: Simon Chapman,
University of Sydney
Catriona Bonfiglioli,
University of Sydney
Sophie Scott,
ABC TV
Christina Scott,
science journalist
(South Africa)

This interactive session will allow you to join some of the world's top public health and media analysts in working through hypothetical scenarios about obesity, passive smoking, cancer, suicide, HRT and more.

You will learn to distinguish evidence from advocacy, science from spin, and deliver stories that neither promote nor muzzle public health, but simply present the facts.

Tuesday session

TIME: 2.00pm to 3.30pm
LOCATION: Connaught

Developing communication strategies

A workshop offered by the ASC

PRESENTERS: Marina Hurley,
Writing Clear Science
Cathy Sage,
Sagewords
Anne Leitch,
CSIRO Sustainable
Ecosystems

PANEL: Roger Edwards,
Victoria University
Tony St Clair,
former Chief Executive
Federated Farmers of
New Zealand

This interactive workshop explores the key elements needed to develop a robust and effective science communication strategy.

Communication strategists will draw from case studies to outline what has worked for them and what has not. Then a panel of experts will develop a workable strategy using the hypothetical, "Introducing meat from cloned animals onto supermarket shelves". Finally, delegates will get the opportunity to work on a hypothetical of their own to hone their own strategic skills.

Tuesday session

TIME: 4.00pm to 5.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 1

The role of scientific journals in breaking news

PRODUCERS: Véronique Morin,
science journalist (Canada)
Alana Mitchell,
medical writer

CHAIR: Kathryn O'Hara,
Carleton University (Canada)

SPEAKERS: Pallab Ghosh,
BBC (UK)
Phil Campbell,
editor in chief, Nature (UK)
Geoff McFadden,
University of Melbourne
Leigh Dayton,
The Australian

A form of co-dependency exists between science journals and the journalists who cover science. Journals are often the starting point for a breaking science news story. This can be a good thing, because it ensures that a research paper has been reviewed by peers, and that it has academic credibility.

But the relationship between journals and news is not without its problems. For one thing, it may require that journalists wait on the sidelines for embargos to be lifted, often at a time when vital information could be relayed to the public. Second, the decisions made by journal editors may exert undue influence on the type of news and topics that are put at the forefront and become 'newsworthy' as a result.

So, does this close relationship between the journals and the journalists make for the best coverage of science? While journals tend to be a reliable source of leads for journalists, do they also raise the potential for manipulation of both the messenger and the message? On the other side of the coin: How reliable are journalists when reporting the research findings sourced from journals?

Finally, should journalists have free access to the content of journals, given that in the majority of cases the research behind the papers was funded from the public purse?

Tuesday session

TIME: 4.00pm to 5.30pm
LOCATION: Savoy 2

Purifying a poisoned planet

PRODUCER: Julian Cribb,
Julian Cribb & Associates

CHAIR: Brad Collis,
Coretext Communications

SPEAKERS: Jack Ng,
University of Queensland
Ravi Naidu,
CRC (Cooperative Research
Centre for) Contamination
Assessment and
Remediation of the
Environment
Stevan Green,
CRC Sustainable Resource
Processing

As we go about our daily lives, each of us carries a personal burden of toxic contamination – volatile chemicals, heavy metals and substances which are the legacy of 150 years of industrial development. Many scientists are concerned this cocktail of pollutants may be playing its part in the contemporary pandemic of cancers and chronic disease.

Some of these substances—such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs)—have spread from the equator to the poles and are found in people and wildlife far from industrial centres. They are all around us, in our soil, water and air. There may be as many as 10 million contaminated sites worldwide—a third of them in Asia and 100,000 of them in Australia.

Until recently, if a site of serious contamination were found, there were usually only three courses of action from which to choose: fence it off, seal it in or dig it up and move it somewhere else. Now, Australian researchers are helping to pioneer a new approach, risk-based management. This involves identifying the exact nature of the pollutants, how dangerous they are and the pathways by which they can reach us. This not only helps to target the really dangerous sites, but also to show that many sites thought dangerous are actually safe. The technique is opening up new ways to eliminate toxic waste and clean up industry and cities.

In this session, some of the researchers charting this new course will give their views about the threat of contamination, what can be done about it and society's road to 'zero waste'.

program details continued

Tuesday 17 April 2007

Tuesday session

TIME: 4.00pm to 5.30pm
LOCATION: Kensington

You are not your brain scan: critical reporting on the mind sciences

PRODUCER/CHAIR: Natasha Mitchell, ABC Radio
SPEAKERS: Deborah Blum, University of Wisconsin (US)
Jonica Newby, writer and broadcaster
Fred Mendelsohn, Howard Florey Institute

The Brain. It's been called the final frontier of science. Colourful fMRI scans light up our TV screens, magazines and newspapers promising to reveal the secrets of the psyche.

From the search for the brain's God Spot, to the rapid rise of neuroeconomics, neuromarketing and neuroethics, the mind sciences make for sexy headlines.

But has the brain become the new 'gene' of science reporting?

Are journalists blinded by the lights and allure of the brain scan? Multi-award winning science journalists—Deborah Blum (print), Natasha Mitchell (radio) and Jonica Newby (TV) debate the challenges of covering mind/brain research critically.

Tuesday session

TIME: 4.00pm to 5.30pm
LOCATION: Connaught

Creating clear science messages

A workshop offered by the ASC

PRESENTER: Michelle Riedlinger, Econnect
SPEAKERS: Simon Torok, CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research
Anne Leitch, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems
Maria Taylor, Centre for the Public Awareness of Science
Thomas Lowe, RMIT University

This practical workshop will look at common issues in conveying clear scientific messages to the media.

Using the example of climate change/climate variability we will explore how the media can misinterpret scientific information and what can be done to avoid such inaccuracies.

We will present a simple method for designing messages and give participants an opportunity to apply this method.

Social function

TIME: 6.00pm to 7.00pm
LOCATION: BMW Edge Theatre
Federation Square
Corner Swanson Street
and Flinders Street

Public forum: Our future health

Advances in health and medical research have dramatically extended our lifespan. Vaccines protect us from childhood diseases, we are much more likely to survive cancer and heart disease, and we can repair or replace damaged limbs and organs.

Will we master the diseases of ageing – Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and senility? Will the obesity epidemic mean that our children will live shorter lives blighted by diabetes and heart disease? Will our personal DNA profiles reveal our inner health secrets? What are the new treatments, not dreamed of until now, that will improve our lives?

Join: Phil Campbell – editor in chief, Nature – the international journal of science; and Warwick Anderson – CEO of Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council for a lively discussion chaired by Bernie Hobbs from ABC Science and Triple J.

This free public forum is open to all delegates and the general public. It is location 8 on the map on page 55.

Presented by Melbourne Conversations and the Australian Science Communicators.



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Social function

TIME: 6.30pm to 8.30pm
LOCATION: Melbourne Aquarium
Corner Flinders Street
and King Street

Evening reception

Immerse yourself in good food, fine company and the wonders of the deep at the Melbourne Aquarium.

Sponsored by the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, this reception will celebrate International Polar Year.

Brave the aquarium's virtual simulator ride; marvel at the myriad fish, octopi and sea jellies, stars and snakes; surround yourself with grey nurse sharks, eagle rays and marine turtles; and take in the view over the Yarra River at night.

This reception is included as a part of full registration.

Please refer to map on page 55 for Aquarium location (location 9 on Melbourne map).

The Aquarium is a six block walk from the conference venue or catch a tram along Flinders Street.

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