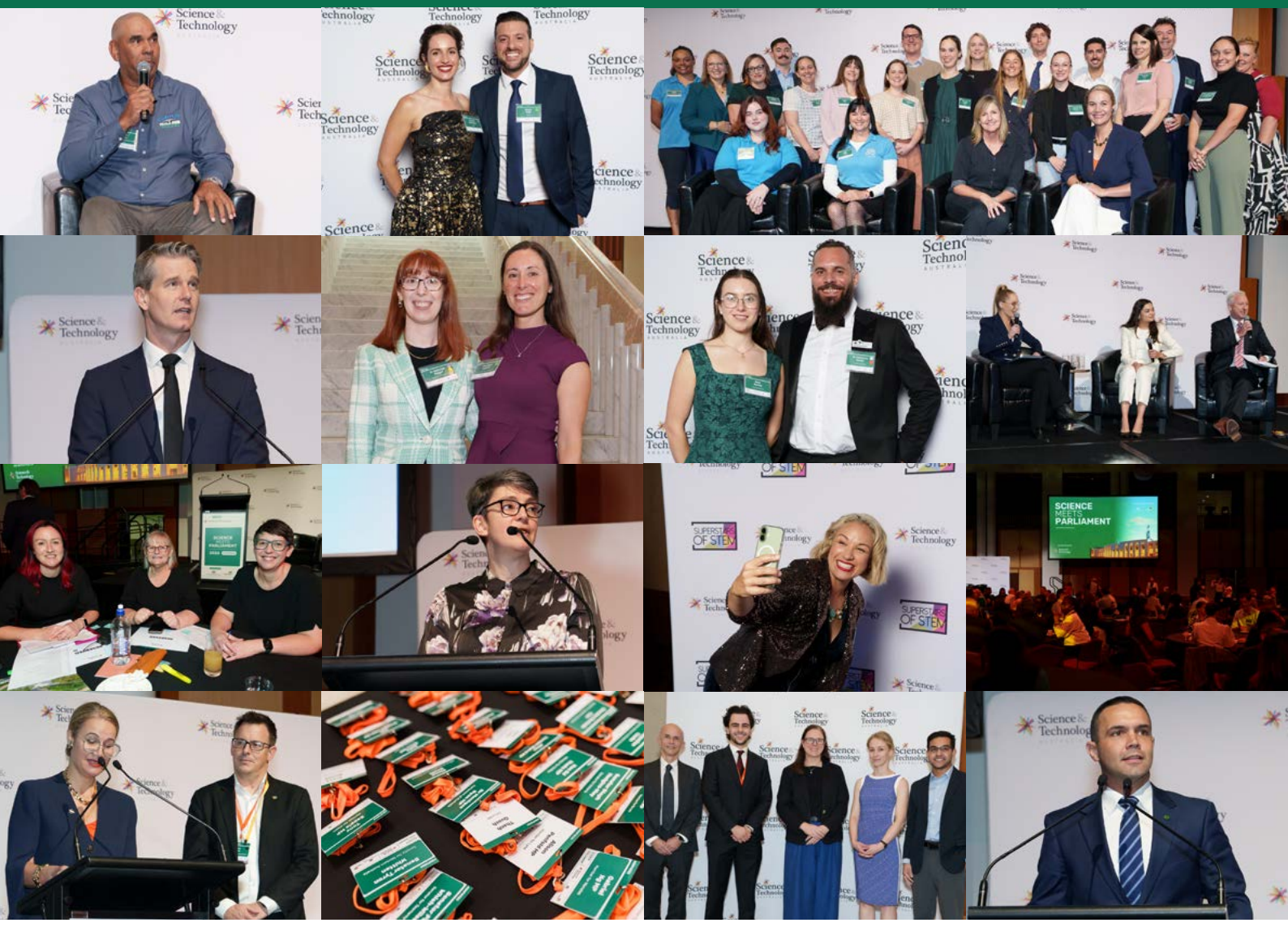
SCIENCE MEETS **PARLIAMENT**

2026 IMPACT REPORT



An initiative of

Science & Technology AUSTRALIA

Foundation Partner

An Australian Government Initiative

Inspiring AUSTRALIA

AT A GLANCE

Science Meets Parliament 2026 was the largest SMP in its 26 year history. Over two days in the Great Hall of Australia Parliament House, over 400 STEM professionals participated in a program of professional development and networking.

Number of SMP2026 Delegates:

424

OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF DELEGATES:

9/10

20.5% Attended SMP before

79.5% First timers

Delegate Overview

AREA OF STEM

- **14.9%** BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
- **14.0%** MEDICAL & HEALTH SCIENCES
- **9.0%** TECHNOLOGY
- **7.9%** ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
- **7.6%** STEM EDUCATION
- **6.7%** POLICY
- **5.5%** PHYSICAL SCIENCES
- **5.5%** OTHER
- **5.2%** ENGINEERING
- **4.1%:** CHEMICAL SCIENCES
- **4.1%:** INFORMATION & COMPUTING SCIENCES
- **3.5%:** EARTH SCIENCES
- **3.2%:** GOVERNMENT
- **2.9% :** PSYCHOLOGY& COGNITIVE SCIENCES
- **2.9%:** AGRICULTURAL & VETERINARY SCIENCES
- **2.0%:** MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES
- **1.0%:** DEFENCE

SECTOR REPRESENTATION

INDUSTRY

- HIGHER EDUCATION/ ACADEMIA **63.0%**
- GOVERNMENT **15.9%**
- NFP ASSOCIATION/SOCIETY **8.9%**
- OTHER **7.2%**
- CONSULTANT (PRIVATE) **3.1%**
- LARGE ENTERPRISE **1.9%**

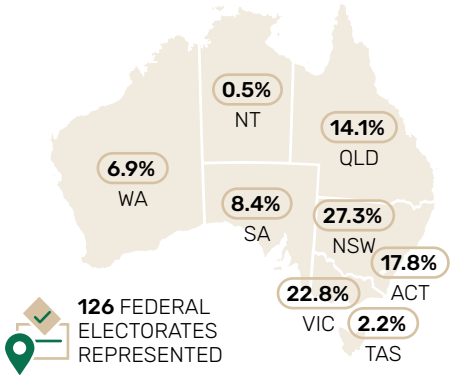
CAREER LEVEL

- PROFESSIONAL/STAFF **51.8%**
- SENIOR MANAGEMENT **34.4%**
- GRADUATE/ENTRY **7%**
- OTHER **6.8%**

ECR YEARS POST-PhD

- 0–3 YEARS **38%**
- 3–6 YEARS **31.4%**
- 6–9 YEARS **30.6%**

GEOGRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN



126 FEDERAL ELECTORATES REPRESENTED

GENDER

- **63.71%** WOMAN
- **34.90%** MAN
- **1.11%** PREFER NOT TO SAY
- **0.28%** NON-BINARY

FIRST NATIONS

4% IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

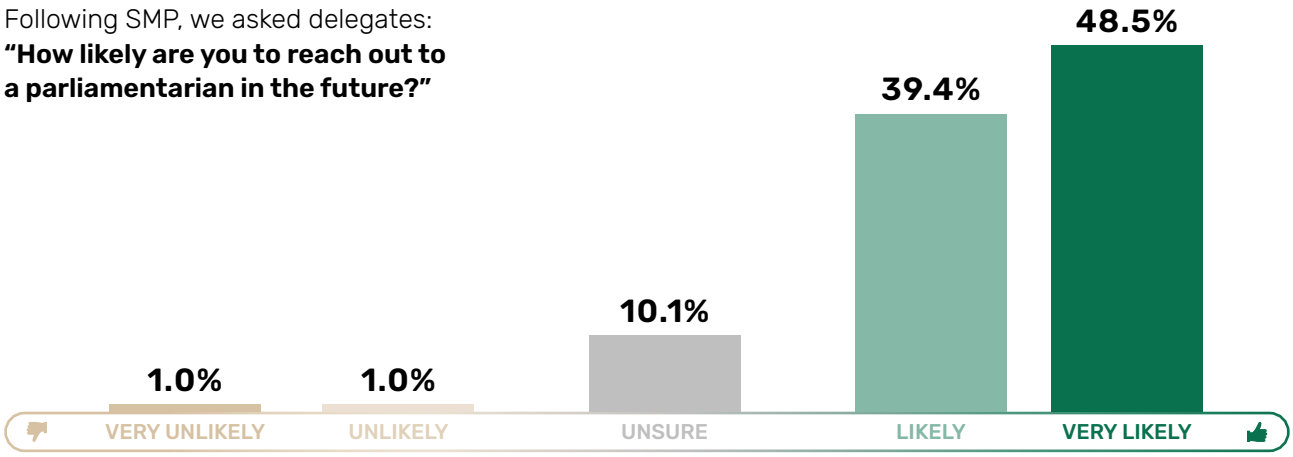
PARLIAMENTARIAN MEETINGS

Delegates affiliated with an STA member organisation are eligible to meet with a parliamentarian as part of their SMP experience. In the lead-up to the event, STA coordinates with both parliamentarians and delegates to match areas of interest with relevant expertise, ensuring productive meetings for both parties.

These meetings give delegates the chance to put their new communication skills into practice, delivering sharp pitches and placing their work in policy context. For parliamentarians, they offer a unique window into the breadth of STEM expertise across Australia, including work directly relevant to their portfolios or electorates.

FEEDBACK

Following SMP, we asked delegates:
"How likely are you to reach out to a parliamentarian in the future?"



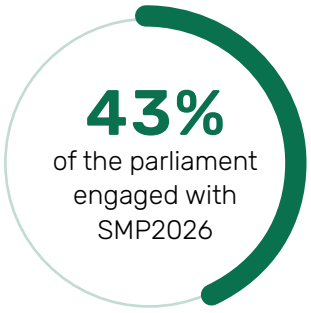
PARTY BREAKDOWN OF MEETING REQUESTS

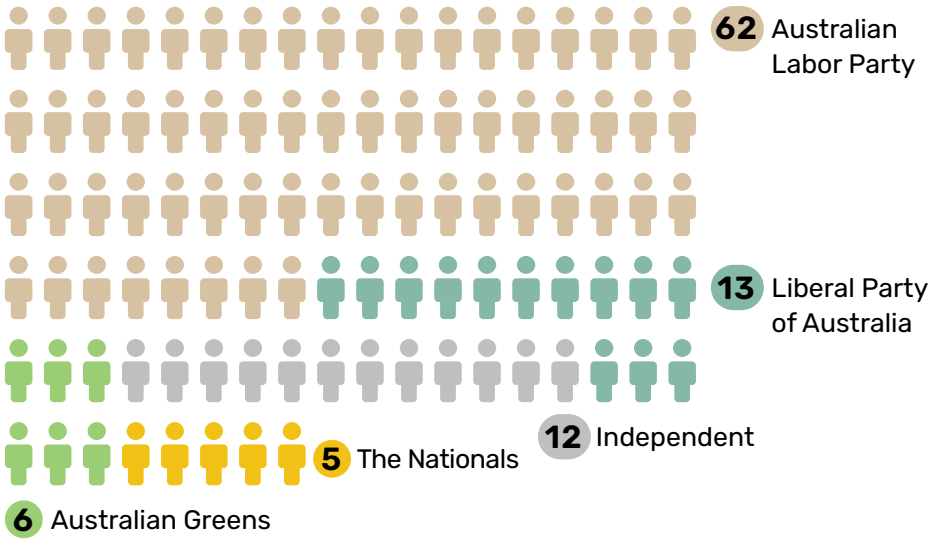
STA facilitated

98

MEETINGS

which equates to





THE PROGRAM

SMP2026 spotlighted 53 speakers who each brought distinct perspectives to the program. Science & Technology Australia is proud to highlight the diversity of representation ensuring a broad range of voices are included at the table.

60.38% Women

39.62% Men

5.66%
Identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander

Supporting Women in STEMM

In lieu of speaker fees, STA has made a donation to Women in STEMM Australia. Founded in 2014, Women in STEMM Australia is a non-profit organisation that has grown into a nationally recognised association for women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).

Their purpose is to connect, empower and advocate for STEMM women and girls to have equality in the Australian workplace. Women in STEMM Australia are a valued member organisation of STA and the donation will be used to support the delivery of 2026 events, including STEMM Strolls, regional gatherings for women and girls to form networks, as well as professional development webinars.

SMP2026 Program

Wednesday 25 March 2026

8:00am	Arrival and registration
8:30am	**Acknowledgement of Country** – Ryan Winn, STA CEO **Welcome to SMP2026** – Jas Chambers, STA President Hon Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy Mr Aaron Violi MP, Shadow Minister for Science
9:10am	**Partner Address** – Dr Doug Hilton AO, CSIRO **Science Meets the Economy** – Bench to Boardroom (supported by CSIRO) Jas Chambers (Chair), Denise Goldsworthy AO FTSE, Dr Steve Hatfield-Dodds
9:50am	Morning tea break
10:15am	**Civics101: Understanding Australia's democratic system** Dr Sarah Tynan
10:45am	**Partner Address** – Karyn McIntosh, AusBiotech **A Day in the Life of a Policy Advisor** Professor Virginia Kilborn (Chair), Amanda Bachmann, Fiona Scott, Richard Temperly
12:30pm	**National Press Club address** (supported by Standards Australia) Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation, Minister for Science
2:10pm	**Fronting an Inquiry** Catriona Jackson (Chair), Professor Kylie Walker AM, Professor Lee Baumgartner
2:50pm	Afternoon tea break
3:00pm	**Partner Address** - Professor Tanya Monro AC, Defence Science and Technology Group **Truth Telling and Cultural Capability** Jas Chambers (Chair), Dr Robert Cooley, Professor Adriana Vérges
4:00pm	**Partner Address** - Associate Professor Marijke Bassani, Deakin University
	Day 1 Program Concludes

Gala Dinner

6:30pm	**Welcome Reception**
7:10pm	Mains served
7:15pm	Ryan Winn, STA CEO
7:20pm	**Welcome to Country** – Uncle Warren Daley, Ngunnawal Elder
7:30pm	Jas Chambers, STA President
7:35pm	**Video message** – Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
7:40pm	**Partner Address** – Dr Rachel Williamson, ANSTO
7:45pm	**In Conversation** Jas Chambers (Chair) Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry & Innovation, Minister for Science Denise Goldsworthy AO FTSE, Non-Executive Director Professor Nicola Phillips, Vice-Chancellor Adelaide University
8:10pm	Networking
8:30pm	Desserts served
8:40pm	Professor Tony Haymet FTSE, Australia's Chief Scientist
8:45pm	Mr Aaron Violi MP, Shadow Minister for Science
8:50pm	Closing Remarks
9:00pm	Networking
10:30pm	Gala Dinner Concludes

Thursday 26 March 2026

7:30am	Arrival tea and coffee
8:00am	**Parliamentary Forum** (supported by The University of Sydney) Professor Renae Ryan AM FRSN (Chair) Zaneta Mascarenhas MP Senator David Pocock Dr Anne Webster MP Senator Mehreen Faruqi Senator Maria Kovacic
9:00am	**Partner Address** - Dr Aaron Eger, UNSW **Science in the Media** Dr Lila Landowski (Chair), Maddie Massy, Greg Jennett
9:30am	Morning tea break
10:00am	**Partner Address** – Dr Victoria Coleman, Australian Technical Infrastructure Alliance **How Government Departments Operate** (supported by Australian Technical Infrastructure Alliance) Professor Stephen Rodda (Chair), Professor Elanor Huntington, Secretary Meghan Quinn PSM, Deputy Secretary Jasmina Joldić PSM
10:50am	**Partner Address** – Tom Goerke, Engineers Australia **Putting SMP Skills into Action** Dr Kathy Nicholson (Chair), Associate Professor Jeremy Brownlie, Professor Mark Hutchinson, Professor Sharath Sriram
11:35am	**Partner Address** - Dr Jodie Pestana, on behalf of Google **Applying STEM skills to a new career** Professor Sharath Sriram (Chair), Professor Anne Kelso AO FAA FAHMS, Dr Monique Ryan, Dr Sophie Lewis
12:10pm	Lunch First Nations Delegate Gathering
1:10pm	**Collaborating with Community** Mark Stickells AM (Chair), Professor Joanne Jamie, Associate Professor Azure Hermes
2:00pm	Question Time and Tours of Australia Parliament House
3:00pm	Afternoon tea break
3:20pm	**Closing Session – From Ambition to Action: A Conversation with Professor The Hon Bill Shorten** Anna-Maria Arabia (Chair), Professor The Hon Bill Shorten
3:50pm	Jas Chambers, STA President

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

At the National Press Club on 25 March 2026, Minister for Science and Minister for Industry and Innovation, Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, delivered a forward-looking address reaffirming that Australian science is central to the Government's agenda.

Drawing on the *Ambitious Australia* report, he outlined a commitment to a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to strengthening the sector. STA welcomes this ambition and looks forward to partnering with the Minister to drive meaningful reform.

> Ambitious Australia's message is clear: fragmentation is holding us back. The task now is alignment - getting the most out of our investment by joining up our science and research capability with industry, to drive real impact.
>
> **- Senator the Hon Tim Ayres**

GALA DINNER

The Science Meets Parliament 2026 Gala Dinner opened with a Welcome to Country by Ngunnawal Elder Uncle Warren Daley, followed by a video message from Governor-General Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC. Dr Rachel Williamson represented Gala Dinner Partner ANSTO with an insightful address.

The centrepiece of the evening was an in-conversation discussion chaired by STA President Jas Chambers, bringing together Senator the Hon Tim Ayres (Minister for Science and Minister for Industry and Innovation), Denise Goldsworthy AO FTSE (Non-Executive Director), and Professor Nicola Phillips (Vice-Chancellor, Adelaide University). Spanning policy, industry strategy, research translation, and global economics, the discussion moved beyond advocacy to a considered exploration of how STEM capability shapes Australia's economic structure, strategic autonomy, and global standing.

Professor Tony Haymet FTSE, Australia's Chief Scientist, reflected on the successes and challenges of Australia's innovation ecosystem. Shadow Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Aaron Violi MP closed with a personal tribute to his grandmother, the first woman to graduate from Swinburne University of Technology as a chemical engineer, a reminder of why perseverance, opportunity, and support for innovation matter.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

> The most valuable aspect of Science Meets Parliament was the opportunity to directly engage with policymakers and contribute to meaningful conversations at the science–policy interface. Building relationships with parliamentarians and fellow scientists, while gaining insight into how evidence informs decision-making, was both empowering and inspiring.
>
> **Nathalie Simmonds, ANCORS UOW/ Abyss Project**

> [The APH Beekeeping Tour] at Parliament House provide a powerful, tangible way for policymakers and the public to understand the impacts of climate change and the critical importance of protecting our surrounding ecosystems.

> The magic created by putting together such a considered Agenda and the spectacularly successful engagement with policy makers. It was awesomely inspiring. The energy in that room started high and stayed there for the duration of the event.
>
> **Linda Cassimatis, The University of Sydney**

> Learning about (and thinking about) how our science fits into the greater good of policy and the community. Getting insights into the life of politicians. Networking. It was all great!
>
> **Justine Barrett, CSIRO & UTAS**

> It was practical. I feel like I can draw on the experience and what I learnt in policy translation work moving forward.

> The quality and diversity of the panel participants was outstanding.
>
> **Associate Professor Phillipa McCormack, Adelaide University**

> [The best part was] meeting other scientists, while in close second place was meeting my allocated Senator (Dorinda Cox) and finding her very engaged, sharp; making genuine and hopefully ongoing connections with her and the others in that meeting. And yes, seeing how much effort is at the interface of pure research and policy making has given me a non-negligible amount of hope that science can stop it's precipitous plummet to the bottom of Australia's priorities.
>
> **Associate Professor Nadia Zatsepin, Swinburne University of Technology**

> The opportunity to talk to parliamentarians specifically about our science. This isn't something we normally get to do, when they door knock or you meet them in the electorate they mostly want to know about local issues, this is a unique opportunity to share the importance of our work.

> I loved meeting all of the scientists most, but also learning about how things work and how to engage with policy and politicians.
>
> **Dr James Dorey, University of Wollongong and Australasian Council of Environmental Deans and Directors**

> The quality of the speakers, the framing of the event, the passion from everyone.

> The program was really well designed to address questions that every scientist may have in their mind and doesn't know where to go to have the answers!
>
> **Dr Kimberley Coulson, Australian-French Association for Research and Innovation**

> For me the best aspect of Science Meets Parliament 2026 was the opportunity to engage with policymakers and gain insight into how science is viewed within a policy and political context. Hearing perspectives from speakers and delegates across a wide range of science-related fields was particularly valuable, as it highlighted different approaches to communication and advocacy. It reinforced the importance of clear, well-timed messaging and the need to connect fundamental research to real-world outcomes in order to effectively influence policy.
>
> **Dr Amit Seta, Australian National University and Astronomical Society of Australia**

> Meeting an MP was the highlight, Zali Steggall is a great example of an engaged and dynamic leader, and it was great to see that in action. She gave us a considerate amount of time and really valued what we had to say.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS

ANSTO
35,664 followers
4w

ANSTO was proud to support and attend the 2026 Science Meets Parliament Gala Dinner at Parliament House, with CEO Shaun Jenkinson and Board Chair Mike Quigley among the delegation.

The event brought together leaders from science, technology and government to highlight the role of STEM and national research infrastructure in shaping policy.

The evening featured an address from Rachel Williamson of the Australian Synchrotron, on the impact of research infrastructure and how ANSTO's science supports real-world applications for Australia.

ANSTO representatives Negin Foroughimehr and Anton Peristyy also took part in the broader Science Meets Parliament program, strengthening connections between scientists and policymakers and reinforcing the importance of clear science communication.

#SMP2026 #ScienceMeetsParliament #STEM #SciencePolicy Science & Technology Australia

Johannes Wolfram Debler · 3rd+
Molecular Biologist | DNA reader and assembler | FameLab ...
1mo

Earlier this week I travelled to Canberra for Science Meets Parliament, an event that brings together scientists from across Australia to engage directly with politicians and policymakers.

It was an incredibly insightful experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity to attend thanks to a scholarship from CropLife Australia and Science & Technology Australia.

I met a wide range of inspiring people, reconnected with my fellow FameLab International alumni Dr Kira Hughes, and had the opportunity to speak with Senator Peter Whish-Wilson about our work on black spot disease in lentil and chickpea.

Events like this are a great reminder that strong connections between science and policy don't happen by accident, they require communication, engagement, and a willingness to step outside the lab.

If you are interested in seeing how your research can help shape real-world decisions, I highly recommend attending and applying for this scholarship next year.

#SMP2026
Centre for Crop and Disease Management

UNSW
565,491 followers
1mo

This week, 22 UNSW scientists travelled to Parliament House for Science Meets Parliament 2026, sitting down with MPs and senators to share how their research can help shape smarter policy and stronger national outcomes.

The event was a powerful reminder that when universities and government work together, we can make better decisions for the future, backed by strong evidence and research with real-world impact.

Department of Industry, Science and Resources
63,688 followers
4w

Last week Science & Technology Australia's held its annual Science Meets Parliament event on Wednesday the 25th and 26th of March.

Science Meets Parliament is a national gathering of policy makers and STEM experts. It helps ensure science remains at the heart of decision making.

We're proud to support this event as a Foundation Partner through the Inspiring Australia program.

Across the 2 days, delegates took part in a range of sessions. Main highlights included:
- Expert insights on how science informs policymaking, featuring Secretary Meghan Quinn.
- Minister for Industry and Science Senator Tim Ayres, gave a televised National Press Club address.

Thank you to all participants who contributed to these important discussions.

Read more about the event here: http://spklr.io/6045EylWz

Steven Lloyd Photography.
#ScienceMeetsParliament #SMP2026

Shazia Naqvi · 2nd
Communication and Outreach
1mo

Science Meets Parliament 2026 was a powerful reminder of why we do what we do.

Yesterday at Australian Parliament House, I had the privilege of seeing the worlds of research, policy, and national priorities converge in a way that felt both timely and impactful.

After more than 15 years in government, it was meaningful to return to this space, this time focusing on how science and evidence-informed decision-making can support Australia's national outcomes. The collaborative spirit between parliamentarians, industry, and the research sector is certainly the energy we need to shape the future.

However, the absolute highlight for me was "Women Power" captured in a single frame. Standing alongside my former boss, Ute Roessner AM FAA, my current leader Hanah Rodríguez, and my team member Priya Rao, was a reminder of the strength, leadership, and growing influence of women in STEM. Wuhoooo!

Representation isn't just a metric; it's an inspiration in action.

Looking forward to building on these conversations and connections in the months ahead!
#SMP2026 #WomenInSTEM #SciencePolicy #Leadership #CBR #NationalPriorities

Negin Foroughimehr · 3rd+
Beamline Scientist on SXR & MEX beamlines, Australian ...
4w

A few more highlights from an inspiring evening at SMP Gala Dinner ✨ Grateful for the conversations, connections, and incredible people I had the chance to meet.

Thank you to Bonnie Quigley, Rosemary Young, Rachel Williamson, Anton Peristyy, and the ANSTO team for making the night so memorable. Looking forward to continuing these inspiring discussions!

#smp2026

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS

Deakin Institute for Health Transformation
5,320 followers
1w ·

Turning evidence into influence. Science Meets Parliament 2026 wasn't just about policy briefings and presentations — it was about people. Researchers stepping into Parliament, learning how decisions are made, building confidence to tell their stories, and having direct, often candid conversations with policymakers about what the evidence really means in practice.

For many, the experience was eye-opening: understanding the pace and pressures of government, refining how to communicate research clearly and succinctly, and realising the value of relationships in turning evidence into influence.

Our representatives – Ramas McRae (Deakin Advancing Health and Social Justice), Dr Stephanie Cowdery (Cancer Care Centre Research Fellow) (Deakin Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research), Dr Grace Arnot (Deakin Advancing Health and Social Justice), and Dr Edith Holloway (The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes) – returned with renewed confidence and practical insights into building meaningful relationships between research, policy and community impact.

Read more about their experience and the research discussed:
https://lnkd.in/gvxA-AWA

#ScienceMeetsParliament #smp2026

Deakin Health

Yuwan Malakar · 3rd+
Research Scientist at Australia's national science agency | ...
4w ·

Last week, I attended this year's Science Meets Parliament.
Alongside valuable discussions with policymakers, including a meeting with Senator Corinne Mulholland, it was great to connect with early-career researchers within CSIRO (Kathy Willis, Mitchell Scovell, Francisca Powell-Romero, and Simon Christopher Dowd) and across the broader research community, as well as to meet Doug Hilton AO and Elanor Huntington. A timely reminder of how critical strong science-policy engagement is for addressing Australia's greatest challenges.
#SMP2026

Assoc Prof Jodie Avery · 2nd
RRI Research Co Lead Chronic Reproductive Conditions / I...
1mo · Edited ·

At the National Press Club, the Hon Tim Ayers, as part of Science Meets Parliament 2026 #SMP2026 in Canberra Mark Hutchinson Lila Landowski Adelaide University Robinson Research Institute Imagendo_Aus

Tim Bradley · 2nd
Research & Impact Director, Rozetta Institute | Economist &...
1mo ·

Is standing room only at #SMP2026 a good thing or a bad thing?

"We're not in the executive discussions and boardrooms where decisions are being made" - Jas Chambers

SMP is a mix of frustration and sleeve rolling persistence. Congrats Science & Technology Australia on the release of Science Meets the Economy - an absolute bullseye.

https://lnkd.in/gK5MwC4P

Mark Osborn · 2nd
Dean of the School of Science and Professor at RMIT Unive...
1mo ·

Very much enjoying the first day at Science meets Parliament #SMP2026.

These are important times for #science, and our #universities and the wider #research & #innovation sector across Australia.

This month we have seen the publication of the 'Ambitious Australia' report on Research and Development followed by yesterday's encouraging news of progress towards treaty negotiations enabling Australian participation in the Horizon Europe program. Together with the important work in progression of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission Bill which will shape the university ecosystem having the opportunity to visit parliament and meet with parliamentarians and policy makers is a wonderful and very timely opportunity.

Very privileged and proud to be representing our wonderful team in the School of Science in the RMIT STEM College at RMIT University and to have the chance to bring learnings back that will benefit our students and our researchers and in turn our society.

Nicola Lo · 2nd
Manager, Survey at Colliers Pty Ltd | Superstars of STEM 2...
1mo ·

I've just spent two days learning about science, engineering and policy at Science Meets Parliament with the fabulous Superstars of STEM cohort.
We heard from MPs and their advisors, learnt about parliamentary inquiries and listened to the National Press Club address.

It was a pleasure meeting Member for Holt, Ms Cassandra Fernando and being able to highlight some of the issues engineering and surveying consultants face in the land development approvals process and having qualified engineers in the pipeline.

And to top it all off, a tour of the beekeeping facilities at Parliament House!
Thank you Science & Technology Australia for hosting such a great event!

#SMP2026 #superstarsofSTEM #engineering

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Elisha Deegan

Disability

Dr Shannon Muir

Early Career Researcher

Professor Simon Conn

First Nations

Landon Brady

First Nations

Carolyn Heward

LGBTQIA+

Nathalie Simmonds

Neurodivergent

Dr Johannes Debler

Regional & Remote

Dr Scarlett Raine

Technology

Scholarship Partners

The University Of Queensland AUSTRALIA

ATSE Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering

Flinders University | Poche SA+NT

Forrest Research Foundation

Australian Academy of Science

CropLife Australia

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Google

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AusBiotech Where life science leaders thrive

Engineers Australia

UNSW Sydney

National Press Club Address

STANDARDS Australia

Gold

QUT

Gala Dinner

Australian Government | ANSTO Science. Ingenuity. Sustainability.

Leadership session

CSIRO

Parliamentary Forum

The University of Sydney

Named Session

Australian Technical Infrastructure Alliance

Scholarships

The University Of Queensland Australia

ATSE Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering

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CropLife Australia

MAWA Medical Advances Without Animals

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