Science & Technology AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

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President’s Message



Australia's future prosperity depends on the choices we make about science today.

The release of the *Ambitious Australia* report marked an important moment. The Strategic Examination of Research and Development set out a vision for a more connected and ambitious research and innovation system, recognising the contribution science makes to our economy, our rich and diverse society, and our wellbeing.

Many of its recommendations reflect priorities long championed by Science & Technology Australia and our over 140 member organisations, representing 235,000 people across Australia's STEM workforce: sustained investment in discovery research, world-class research infrastructure, and secure, rewarding careers for the people whose expertise drives discovery and innovation.

Our challenge now is implementation. Australia needs coherent, long-term reform, backed by sustained investment and shaped with the people who will deliver it. We must also be realistic about the political and economic environment in which decisions are made. Ultimately, our research and innovation system must contribute to prosperity that reaches Australians in our cities, regions and rural communities, through good jobs, stronger industries, healthier communities and a more cohesive society.

This year, STA took an important step towards that ambition with the launch of Science Meets the Economy at our annual Science Meets Parliament in March. Developed over several years with members and partners the program welcomed its inaugural cohort in November, with two further cohorts planned for 2027.

Science Meets the Economy is about building understanding and influence in both directions. It equips STEM leaders with a deeper appreciation of the economy, business and investment decisions, while demonstrating the value of scientific and technical expertise in boardrooms and executive teams. Our ambition is to see more Australian ideas translated into investment, stronger businesses, new industries and opportunities for our nation.

We must also recognise that our research and innovation system is deeply interconnected as evidenced at our Parliamentary Friends of Science events focused on critical minerals in August and artificial intelligence in November. Tomorrow's industries depend on today's discoveries. Researchers need specialist facilities, skilled technical staff and long-term institutional capability. Businesses need access to expertise, talent and the confidence to invest. Decisions affecting one part of this system have consequences across the whole.

President’s Message

The pressures on CSIRO and the wider STEM workforce this year have reinforced the importance of valuing and protecting capabilities and partnerships that take decades to develop, while creating opportunities for the next generation.

Those opportunities begin in our classrooms. A strong education system, grounded in mathematics and the sciences, is fundamental to Australia's future.

This year, we have worked with STA's maths-focussed member organisations to champion practical solutions to the challenges facing mathematics education, including strengthening the expertise of teachers working outside their field of qualification. Investing in teachers is investing in the opportunities of young Australians and the future capability of our economy.

Equally fundamental is our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We continue to champion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, knowledge systems and opportunities for students and researchers. Through Superstars of STEM, we are strengthening the visibility and influence of women and non-binary STEM professionals, helping more Australians see themselves in science and technology. A stronger STEM industry is one that draws on the full breadth of Australia's talent and knowledge.

Understanding our STEM system through different jurisdictions was a further new endeavour for STA, delivering our first state-based Science Meets Parliament in Western Australia.

In my first year as President of Science & Technology Australia, I have been struck by the extraordinary depth of expertise across our industry, and the determination of our members to put that expertise to work for the nation. Just as importantly, I have seen a genuine willingness to collaborate, to learn from others and to engage beyond the boundaries of our own disciplines and institutions.

For me, this has defined 2026: building the connections, confidence and pathways that ensure Australia's scientists and STEM professionals have voice and influence where decisions are made – in education, government, business, boardrooms and international dialogue.

My sincere thanks to our members, partners, committees and fellow Board Directors for your generosity, leadership and commitment throughout the year. Together, we extend our gratitude to our CEO, Ryan Winn, and the dedicated STA team for their outstanding work and leadership.

Australia has extraordinary scientific and technical capability. We should have equally high expectations of what we can achieve with it.

I look forward to working with you in 2027 and wish you all a safe and peaceful summer.



Jas Chambers
President,
Science & Technology Australia

CEO’s Message

Australia needs the expertise of its science and technology community more than ever. As the Western Australia Premier, Roger Cook, said at Science Meets Parliament WA earlier this year, “science helps us see through the chaos”. Throughout 2026, STA has worked to ensure that expertise reaches the people making decisions about our nation's future.



Our members have faced a challenging year. Research costs continue to rise, job insecurity is putting pressure on talented people, and cuts to funding is making long-term planning difficult. STA has carried these concerns into parliamentary inquiries, government consultations, media appearances and public debate, alongside practical proposals to strengthen Australia's research and development system.

The release of *Ambitious Australia* gave that work a clear focal point. We brought members together to examine its recommendations and help shape discussion on its next steps, while continuing to press for a coordinated and timely reform agenda backed by sustained investment. Our advocacy has connected decisions about research funding with their consequences for careers, national capability and the communities that benefit from science.

Through interviews, opinion articles and media commentary, we brought those issues to national, regional and specialist audiences. We spoke up for researchers facing uncertainty and explained why investing in science matters for Australia's productivity, resilience and wellbeing.

We have also created new opportunities for our members to build their influence.

Science Meets Parliament welcomed 424 STEM professionals to Canberra in March, its largest gathering to date. We facilitated 98 meetings with parliamentarians, giving researchers the opportunity to explain their work, build relationships and contribute evidence to national decision-making.

In October, we took the program to Western Australia for the first time. Science Meets Parliament WA brought together 122 participants from 20 STEM disciplines, extending an approach that has helped generations of scientists engage with policymakers.

We launched Science Meets the Economy to strengthen another essential connection: between STEM expertise and business decision-making. It is a game-changing program designed to help STEM leaders understand commercial priorities and communicate how their expertise can contribute to strategy, investment and growth. Now more than ever we need STEM professionals in the room with business leaders, not consultants who seek to synthesise our views and insights.

Our partnership with ASN Media brought Australian research to wider audiences through Ideas to Impact. The series shows the people and capabilities behind discoveries, and the benefits that flow from sustained investment in science.

We also worked with MetaMelb at the University of Melbourne on Australia's National AI in Research Survey. Its timely findings brought researchers’ unique experiences into the national conversation about AI, highlighting both its potential and the training, guidance and infrastructure needed to use it responsibly for the benefit of Australia research and researchers.

Across these activities, our strength comes from our community. Members have shared their expertise, informed our submissions and helped us understand the pressures and opportunities across the sector. Our Board and committees have provided thoughtful guidance, and our staff have brought skill and dedication to a demanding year.

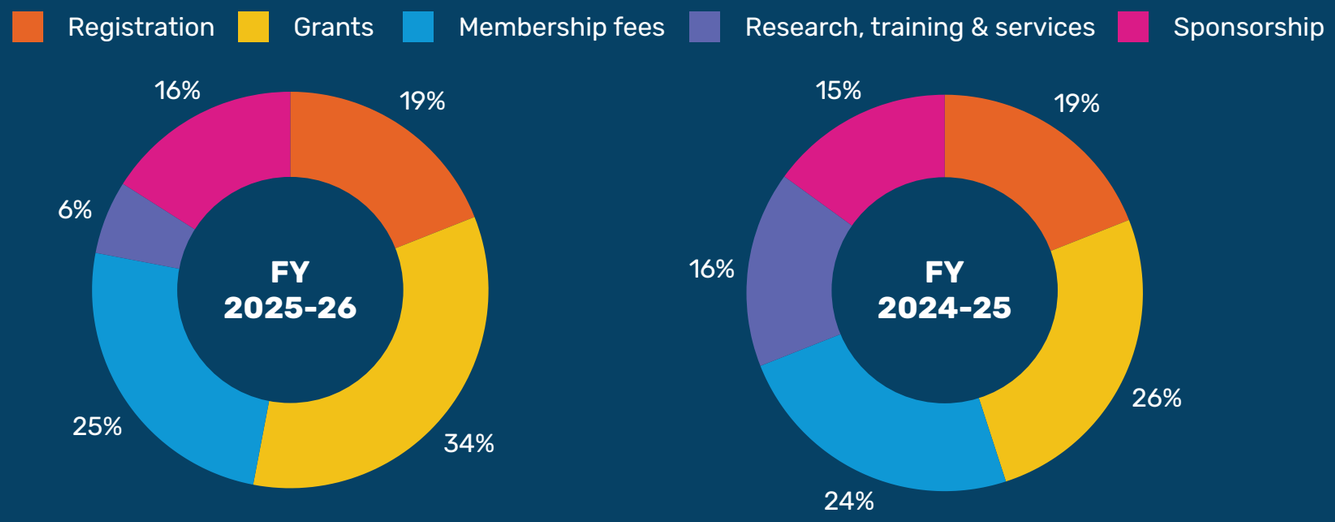
Thank you to everyone who has contributed. The task ahead is to turn the ambition for Australian science into lasting support for the people and capabilities that make it possible.



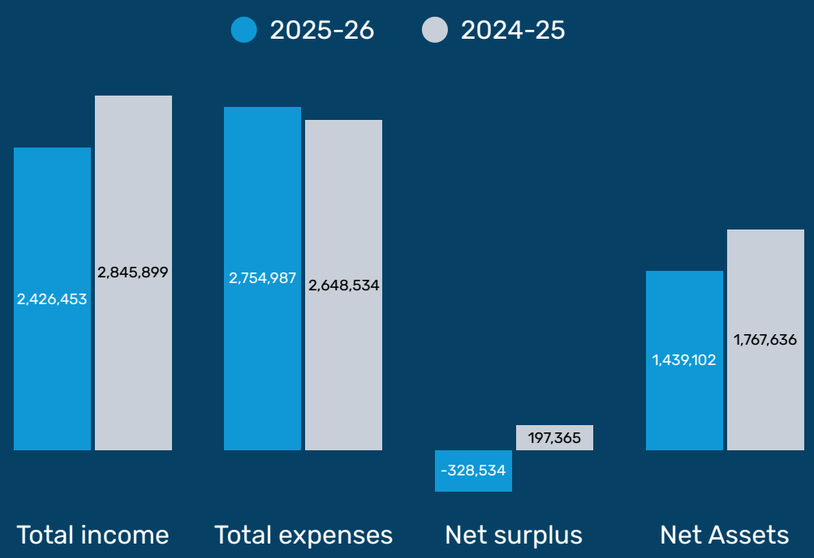
Ryan Winn
CEO,
Science & Technology Australia

Finances

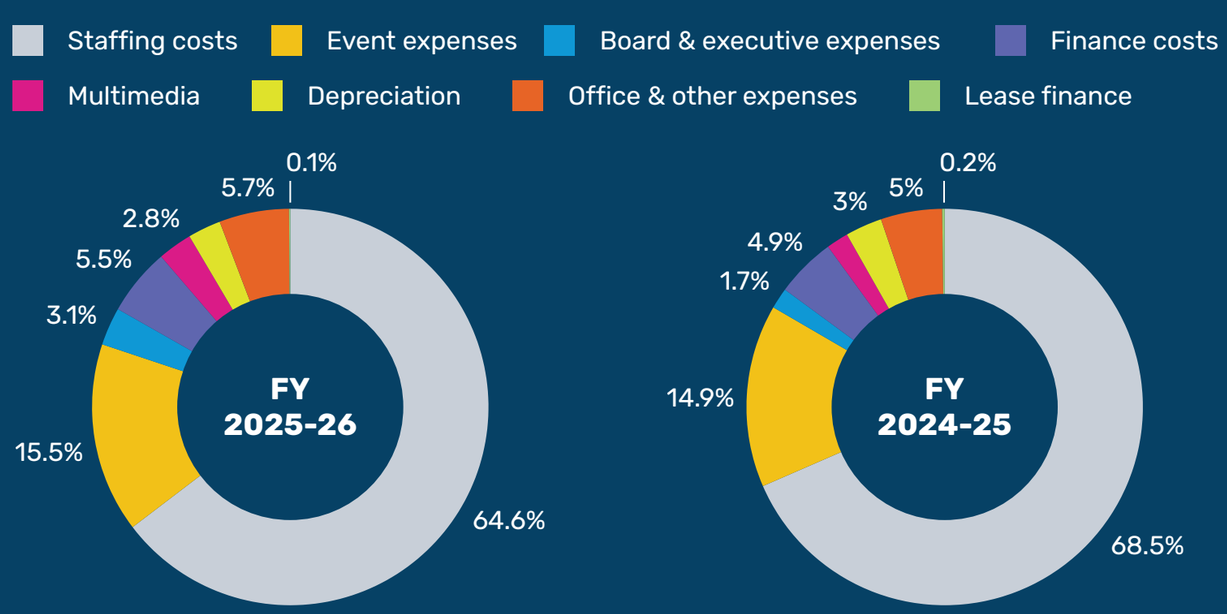
Income



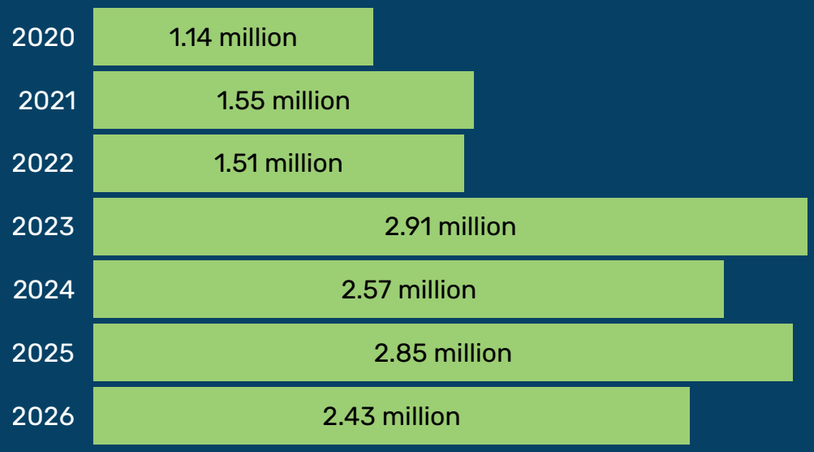
Profit & loss



Expenses



Revenue growth



Snapshot 2025-26

235,000
Scientists and Technologists represented

142
STA Member Organisations

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

19 high-quality policy submissions

3 Parliamentary Committee hearings

POLICY LEADERSHIP

STEM Workforce
Survey and analysis

AI in Research
National survey and summary report

MEDIA AND ENGAGEMENT

43 national media releases

1,840 media mentions

3,300+ Instagram followers

25,400 Linkedin followers

PROGRAMS

SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT 2026

424 delegates in attendance

98 meetings with MPs and Senators

SCIENCE MEETS THE ECONOMY

Inaugural program launch

SUPERSTARS OF STEM

700+ mentions of Superstars in media

270 trained since 2017

SCIENCE POLICY FELLOWS ALUMNI

88 alumni

4 Leadership Group meetings

SUPER STEM WORKSHOPS

12 workshops delivered

POLICY & ADVOCACY

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

19 high-quality policy submissions

3 Parliamentary Committee hearings

10 Policy Committee meetings

POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

STEM Workforce
Survey and analysis

AI in Research
National survey and summary report

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF SCIENCE

Established with new Co-Chairs
Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Richard Marles MP
Shadow Minister for Science, Aaron Violi MP

High-quality briefing
for MPs and Senators on 11 August 2026:
Digging into Australia's Critical Minerals Future

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF ENGINEERING

High-quality briefing
for MPs and Senators on 31 March 2026:
Maths in Schools

MEDIA AND ENGAGEMENT

43 national media releases,
generating 1,840 media mentions

3,300+ Instagram followers
An increase of 600

25,400+ Linkedin followers
An increase of 4,000

Policy and Advocacy

With Australia's investment in R&D at alarmingly low levels by international standards, particularly business expenditure on R&D, and efforts to improve national productivity becoming increasingly urgent, 2026 was never going to be a quiet year for STA's policy and advocacy work.

Our core message remains clear: a strong R&D system enables Australia to navigate climate, economic and societal challenges while creating well-paid, meaningful jobs across the economy. Achieving this requires strategic and sustainable R&D investment, supported by coherent policy and regulation.

The release of *Ambitious Australia* in March, the report for the Strategic Examination of R&D process led by Robyn Denholm, set out a clear blueprint for the nation's future research and innovation system. It gave the sector a shared agenda to rally behind.

Turning that ambition into action, however, has been slow. STA President Jas Chambers was invited to an early workshop led by Minister Ayres to test initial reactions to the report and identify potential first steps towards implementation, and STA has been involved in various subsequent government discussions.

We welcomed the first implementation steps in the Federal Budget, namely the annoucement to establish the National Resilience and Science Council, but await patiently for its membership and terms of reference to be finalised and published.

Throughout the year, STA's advocacy remained focused on securing the Government's commitment to implementing the *Ambitious Australia* recommendations. The current environment is one of extreme fiscal constraints, amid competing political priorities, cost-of-living pressures, major conflicts on two continents, and continuing geopolitical, economic and technological uncertainty. In this context, carefully calibrating our engagement and messaging has been critical to sustaining influence and advancing STA's priorities.

2026 Federal Budget

Our 2026–27 Pre-Budget Submission made the case for sustained and sustainable investment in R&D. We also partnered with AMSI on a joint pre-budget proposal to address out-of-field maths teaching. While the Federal Budget brought some important support for CSIRO, first small steps for *Ambitious Australia* and, finally, an uplift and disbursements from the Medical Research Future Fund, it offset this with a range of significant setbacks, most notably the axing of Australia's Economic Accelerator.
This was a devastating decision that ran directly counter to the aspirations of *Ambitious Australia*, and STA continues to make the case for programs that help translate Australian research into economic impact.



Policy and Advocacy



Parliamentary and government engagement

STA made numerous submissions and gave evidence to several parliamentary committees. At the Senate inquiry into funding and resourcing for the CSIRO, we spoke about how Government funding has not kept pace with the rising cost of doing research, with CSIRO "being the canary in the coalmine". To the inquiry into the value of skilled migration, we highlighted how much Australia's STEM capability depends on attracting and retaining global talent. To the Joint Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, we presented early results from our sector-wide AI in Research survey. These are the first findings of their kind on how Australian researchers are using AI and what support they need.

STA has also been closely involved in sector advocacy and advice to government on two notable, major reforms. On the proposed changes to the R&D Tax Incentive, we made a submission on the Treasury Laws Amendment Bill and worked with partners to ensure these reforms strengthen rather than weaken business investment in R&D. Advocacy to date has achieved significant concessions from the Government – an extension of the 10-year age limit for RDTI refundability (albeit only for medical therapeutic companies at this stage) and the acknowledgement that the R&D definition for RDTI eligibility must include all activities 'integral to R&D'.

On AI infrastructure, we contributed to the Government's moves to turn its data centre expectations into legislated, enforceable standards. Our submission to the *Getting it right: Building AI infrastructure that works for Australia* consultation proposed tangible activities that the new standards could enable to support investments in commercial data centres and broader AI capability as well as Australian science and innovation.

Policy and Advocacy

The looming NCRIS funding cliff, visible for the first time in the recent Budget papers, and work on the 2026 National Research Infrastructure (NRI) Roadmap brought new urgency to STA's engagement on NRI. STA engaged with members and worked closely with the Department of Education to develop advice and case studies illustrating both the risks posed by this funding uncertainty and the value of the infrastructure and research it supports. This evidence underpinned STA's in-depth engagement with the Department and the NRI Advisory Group. This engagement complemented our submission on the 2026 NRI Roadmap Exposure Draft and regular engagement with decision makers, especially on high-performance compute (HPC) where delays in investments are exposing significant risks for Australian R&D.

STA also made submissions across the breadth of the research and education system. On higher education, we responded to the Universities Accord (ATEC) Bill and to the ATEC threshold standards consultations on research specialisation and research security.

On medical research, we contributed to the MRFF Research Mission Program review and the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy. We also responded to the Senate inquiry into productivity, the House of Representatives inquiry into educational attainment, and the consultation on First Nations education policy. We engaged in discussions around ARC funding and research assessment.

Shaping the discussion

STA also led substantial policy work driven by important sector priorities. Our STEM Workforce Analysis provides an evidence base on the size, shape and future needs of Australia's STEM workforce. Initial analysis from our AI in Research survey has given policymakers timely insight into a fast-changing area of research practice. We supported the sector to develop engagement and leadership around out-of-field maths teaching, a critical underpinning for STEM career pathways.

Across all of this work, STA has remained a strong and trusted voice for the sector. We will continue to push for the investment and policy settings Australia needs to realise the vision of *Ambitious Australia*.

STA's reports and submissions can be found on the STA website



Parliamentary Friends of Science

The Parliamentary Friends of Science was established in 2012 and is now supported by STA, the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. It continues to bring Australia's science and technology sector into direct dialogue with MPs and Senators. These briefings highlight the vital importance of parliamentary engagement with STEM and showcase how science and technology can shape Australia's future prosperity.





On 11 August 2026, STA delivered *Digging into Australia's Critical Minerals Future* at Parliament House. The briefing was co-chaired by the Hon Richard Marles MP and Mr Aaron Violi MP, with STA President Jas Chambers as MC.

The briefing addressed a pressing challenge: Australia's critical minerals ambitions rely on a bedrock of scientific knowledge, yet the geoscientists needed to deliver them are disappearing. Geoscience occupations face a national shortage and 31 per cent of Australia's geoscience professionals are projected to retire by 2031. That puts at risk the delivery of the Government's $3.4 billion, 35-year Resourcing Australia's Prosperity initiative, which is mapping the nation's critical minerals potential.

Australia's former Chief Scientist and ATSE President, Dr Cathy Foley, opened with a scene-setting overview. A moderated discussion followed, in which leading geoscientists and technology experts briefed parliamentarians across the full critical minerals pipeline. Topics included the geology workforce, R&D for exploration and processing, environmental impact and social licence, and international collaboration, including insights from the Australia–US Critical Minerals agreement.

Parliamentary Friends of Engineering

The Parliamentary Friends of Engineering brings parliamentarians together with engineers, researchers and educators to strengthen the contribution of engineering to Australia's prosperity, sustainability and national capability. STA supports the group alongside Engineers Australia, the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, Consult Australia and the Australian Council of Engineering Deans.

Following the group's successful establishment in late 2025, a breakfast roundtable on *Maths in Schools* was held at Parliament House on 31 March 2026. Co-chaired by Hon Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie and Mr Garth Hamilton MP, the event examined how declining mathematics participation threatens Australia's future engineering and STEM workforce.

Emeritus Professor Merrilyn Goos from the University of Queensland delivered a comprehensive overview of the current state of maths education in Australia and encouraged parliamentarians to invest in a program to upskill out-of-field maths teachers. The discussion brought together classroom experience, mathematics education research and industry perspectives to explore practical responses to the challenge.

Profile and Engagement

Science & Technology Australia brought the sector's expertise and priorities into national debate throughout 2026, connecting public policy decisions with their consequences for Australian research, jobs and capability.

Our communications supported a sustained call for the implementation of *Ambitious Australia*. Through media statements, interviews, opinion articles and digital content, STA explained why a stronger research and development system matters for productivity, economic resilience, the climate challenge and public wellbeing.

We spoke out on job cuts at CSIRO, pressures on the STEM workforce and the need for research funding to keep pace with costs. We also highlighted opportunities to strengthen Australia's capability through research infrastructure, international collaboration and investment in STEM education.

Between 13 November 2025 and 2 November 2026, STA's media monitoring (enabled through Streem) recorded 1,840 mentions across online, radio, television, print and magazine sources, with cumulative potential audience reach of 52.8 million.

STA's spokespeople contributed to coverage across national, regional and specialist media. Jas Chambers discussed Australia's R&D system on ABC Radio National, Ryan Winn discussed the SERD review on InnovationAus' podcast, while Times Higher Education and InnovationAus covered the launch of Science Meets the Economy.

STA-led surveys and analysis helped give our advocacy a strong evidence base. STA promoted its STEM workforce analysis and Australia's National AI in Research survey, bringing researchers' experiences into public debate alongside evidence to parliamentary inquiries. The AI survey informed reporting in Times Higher Education on growing demand for research computing, highlighting the infrastructure and support researchers need to realise AI's benefits while protecting research integrity.

Our digital channels also helped members engage with STA's programs and policy work. Science Meets Parliament coverage shared insights from the events in Canberra and Perth, while promotion of Science Meets the Economy introduced a new opportunity for STEM leaders. Ideas to Impact extended this work through video storytelling about Australian research and its benefits.

STA's LinkedIn audience has reached 25,400 followers. Our fortnightly Member Update newsletter, published by email and with 14,226 LinkedIn subscribers, continues to connect members and the wider STEM community with policy developments, STA's advocacy and participation opportunities.









Ideas to impact

In 2026, Science & Technology Australia launched Ideas to Impact, a new video series produced in partnership with ASN Media to showcase how Australian research contributes to people's lives and the nation's future.

The series brings audiences closer to the people, technologies and research infrastructure behind Australian innovation. It follows the connections between scientific discovery and practical application, making the value of research and development visible through the work of researchers and organisations across the sector.

Ideas to Impact was launched at Parliament House on 19 August during National Science Week by Assistant Minister for International Education, the Hon Julian Hill MP. The launch brought together participating organisations, STA members and parliamentary representatives to share stories of Australian capability.

The series explores emerging technologies, research and development, investment and the future STEM workforce. Featured stories include AuScope's role in supporting critical minerals research, RMIT's Discovery to Device facility and the Australian Access Federation's work enabling secure access to research resources. Other participants include Microscopy Australia, Phenomics Australia, the National Imaging Facility and Eppendorf South Pacific.

These stories give audiences a closer look at the infrastructure and specialist expertise that support research across institutions and disciplines. They help explain why sustaining those capabilities matters for the discoveries and applications that follow.

STA published the films on a dedicated online hub and promoted them across LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. At the campaign's midpoint, the nine STA editorial films and seven participant films had generated three million impressions and more than one million video views.

The project created a new way for STA to communicate the public value of Australian science and technology. Alongside policy submissions and media advocacy, it gave researchers and organisations a platform to explain their work through accessible, engaging stories.

As Australia considers the implementation of *Ambitious Australia*, Ideas to Impact provides practical examples of the connections a stronger research and innovation system can support, and the benefits of investing in the people and capabilities behind it.





Watch now

PROGRAMS

SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT 2026

424 delegates in attendance

4% of delegates were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin

64% of delegates identified as women or non-binary

126 federal electorates represented

53 diverse and stellar speakers

43% of the Parliament engaged with SMP2026

98 meetings with MPs and Senators

96% of delegates would recommend SMP to their colleagues

80% of delegates acquired career-accelerating skills

88% of delegates improved their understanding of the Parliamentary process

9 / 10 average satisfaction score

SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT WA 2026

122 delegates in attendance

4.2% of delegates were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin

56% of delegates identified as women or non-binary

103 delegates met with 23 Parliamentarians

SCIENCE MEETS THE ECONOMY

Inaugural program launch and inaugural cohort trained

SUPERSTARS OF STEM

700+ mentions of Superstars in media

270 trained since 2017

103,000+ school students reached at 890 schools

Science Meets Parliament 2026

OUR BIGGEST YET

On 25 and 26 March 2026, 424 STEM professionals gathered at Parliament House in Canberra for Science Meets Parliament (SMP), the largest in the program's 26-year history.

Delegates came from every state and territory and represented 126 federal electorates. Of those, 79.5 per cent were first-timers, 63.7 per cent were women and 4 per cent identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Two days of professional development covered how Australia's democratic system works, what policy advisers and government departments do, how to front an inquiry, and how to engage the media and communities. A Parliamentary Forum brought together MPs and senators from across parties.

Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science, used his National Press Club address to argue that fragmentation is holding Australian science back and that the task now is alignment with industry.

The Gala Dinner was opened with a Welcome to Country from Ngunnawal Elder Uncle Warren Daley and a video message from the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon Ms Sam Mostyn AC. A feature of the evening was a conversation chaired by STA President Jas Chambers, on how STEM capability shapes Australia's economic structure, strategic autonomy and global standing.

STA facilitated delegates to put their new skills to work in 98 meetings with parliamentarians, engaging 43 per cent of the Parliament across the Labor Party, Liberal Party, Nationals, Greens and independents. Afterwards, 87.9 per cent said they were likely or very likely to reach out to a parliamentarian again, and delegates rated their overall experience 9 out of 10.

SMP2026 also featured 53 speakers, 60.4 per cent of them women. In lieu of speaker fees, STA donated to Women in STEMM Australia. Eight scholarships supported delegates from under-represented groups.

We thank Foundation Partner Inspiring Australia, an Australian Government initiative, and all our sponsors and scholarship partners.









Science Meets Parliament takes root in Western Australia

On 21 and 22 October 2026, Science & Technology Australia brought Science Meets Parliament to Perth, connecting 122 researchers, educators and STEM professionals with Western Australian parliamentarians.

The event was presented by the Western Australian Chief Scientist and the WA Parliamentary Friends of Science, Medical Advancement, Research, Technology & Talent and delivered by STA on their behalf.

Delegates represented 38 electorates, from Albany and Geraldton to metropolitan Perth and the agricultural electorate of Roe. Women made up 55.8 per cent of delegates, and 4.2 per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Fields of expertise ranged from biology and health to agriculture, computing, defence and STEM education.

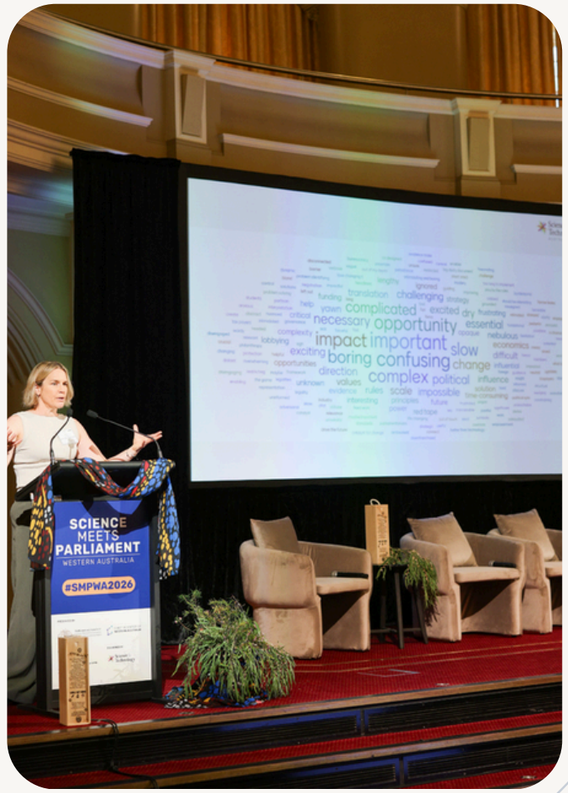
The research in the room spoke directly to the state's priorities. Delegates spoke about patching children's eardrums with silkworm-derived materials, improving water security in remote Australia, developing programmable plants to protect crops, cutting reliance on synthetic pesticides and turning waste into low-carbon fuels.

A total of 103 delegates took part in meetings with 23 parliamentarians (more than 25% of the WA Parliament). The connections made form a strong foundation to support more scientific evidence contributing to public policymaking in WA.

The program's reach extended into the chamber itself. Hon Dr Parwinder Kaur MLC FTSE – a STA Superstar of STEM and now member of parliament – spoke to the Legislative Council recognising the event, highlighting delegates' work and the value of bringing evidence and public decisions closer together. She encouraged colleagues to invite researchers into their electorates, visit their facilities and draw on their expertise in committee work and public debate.







Science Meets the Economy

From the bench to the boardroom, and back again







Science & Technology Australia delivered its inaugural Science Meets the Economy program in November 2026, creating a new pathway for STEM leaders to connect scientific expertise with business strategy, investment and economic opportunity.

Developed in response to needs identified by STA members and reinforced by *Ambitious Australia*, the program addresses a critical challenge: ensuring Australia's scientific strengths translate into greater prosperity. It equips STEM professionals to understand the pressures shaping business decisions and contribute their expertise at executive and board level.

Held in Sydney from 10-12 November, following a welcome dinner on 9 November, the intensive combined expert presentations, practical exercises and discussions with leaders across science, business and government. Participants explored economics, strategy, intellectual property, government policy, governance and risk, applying their learning through case studies and a simulated board exercise.

A central focus was helping participants articulate the value of scientific expertise in terms meaningful to business: identifying the problem being solved, understanding an organisation's priorities and explaining why investment matters.

The Leaders' Dinner featured an address by the Hon Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy. Senior business leaders shared insights into investment, governance, collaboration and the perseverance needed to turn research into impact.

STA would like to thank the partners who supported the program: Google (Foundation Partner), The University of Western Australia (Knowledge Partner), Chambers Russell Lawyers (Venue Partner) and The University of Sydney (Learning Partner).

Science Meets the Economy represents a significant expansion of STA's leadership development work. By building understanding between science and business, it aims to strengthen partnerships and increase the contribution of STEM expertise to decisions shaping Australia's future.

Superstars of STEM

Science & Technology Australia's Superstars of STEM is a trailblazing Australian program driving gender equity in STEM by breaking down stereotypes. It tackles the significant underrepresentation of women and non-binary people in STEM fields by cultivating a diverse group of high-profile media role models, showing young Australians from all walks of life that STEM is a field for everyone.

This world-leading initiative recruits diverse STEM professionals from a range of disciplines and across the country, enhancing their media skills, confidence, and visibility, and elevating them as influential leaders who give back to their communities. These Superstars become prominent role models, inspiring the next generation to pursue STEM by addressing the critical issue of visibility: 'you can't be what you can't see'.

STA has completed training of its fifth cohort of Superstars of STEM. In 2025-26 they completed their media training and attended the first in-person Cultural Capability training in Brisbane. Across the year they also received training in social media, video editing, website creation, and engaging writing.

STA is now in the process of recruiting the sixth cohort of Superstars. This will bring the total number of Superstars of STEM to 330.

In the first half of 2026 alone, our Superstars have reached media audiences of more than 25 million people, with more than 700 mentions of a Superstar of STEM in the media. Since the Superstars program began in 2017, they have completed 890 school visits and talks, reaching an impressive 103,000 school students.



Superstars of STEM







Newsroom

In November 2026 the 2025-26 cohort of Superstars of STEM visited newsrooms in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth where they were trained by some of the nation's leading news broadcasters, journalists and science communicators.

Tours of Nine News, Seven News and SBS News studios gave the Superstars insight into how a newsroom works, and what they can and should provide as experts. The afternoon was spent in intensive interview practice with top journalists across all types of media, where the Superstars learnt to hone their pitch and become more confident media experts.





Cultural capability

In 2026 the Superstars of STEM program held its inaugural Cultural Capability training. As role models in Australia, STA believes it is important that Superstars have an understanding of the context within which they are doing science. This includes understanding Indigenous Knowledges systems and recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first scientists on the lands we live.

At Nudgee Waterholes Reserve in Brisbane, the Superstars of STEM learned from Indigenous STEM experts, gaining understanding about the deep, long held, STEM related knowledge of Indigenous communities and new perspectives on their own areas of STEM expertise.

Super STEM Workshops

STA delivered 20 Super STEM Workshops in 2026, helping STEM professionals strengthen their communication, build confidence and engage more effectively with decision-makers.

Drawing on training developed through Superstars of STEM, the workshops make practical professional development available to teams across universities, research institutes, businesses and other organisations. Sessions are tailored to participants' needs, with tools they can apply directly to their work.

Government Relations Bootcamp, delivered by STA Director of Policy and Government Relations Dr Sarah Tynan, helps participants understand government priorities, build relationships with policymakers and identify opportunities to contribute their expertise. Marie Kondo your writing, delivered by STA Director of Media and Communications Paul Richards, focuses on decluttering language and strengthening clarity, persuasion and impact.

Other offerings cover media engagement, public speaking, communicating with influence, developing an online presence and overcoming imposter syndrome. Together, these workshops support STEM professionals to share their knowledge with wider audiences and strengthen their leadership presence.

STA also brought its expertise to industry conferences, including Accreditation Matters 2026. CEO Ryan Winn highlighted the strategic role of standards and accreditation in Australia's innovation ambitions, making the case that standards are a form of global diplomacy.

His presentation connected the reforms outlined in *Ambitious Australia* with the measurement, testing, validation and certification needed to build trust in new technologies. It emphasised the importance of Australian involvement in setting global standards and considering accreditation early in the innovation process.

These activities extend STA's contribution to building the skills and connections that help scientific expertise shape policy, industry and Australia's future prosperity.





COMMUNITY

MEMBERSHIP

235,000 scientists and technologists represented

142 STA member organisations

13 new members in 2026

109 attendees at Monthly Member Meets

62 meetings with members

10 member webinars attended by 753 members

9 STA presentations at member events

EVENTS

960 people attended STA events

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

4 EDI meetings

1 new EDI committee member appointed

Membership





In 2026, STA asked its member organisations how well we are serving them and what they see ahead for Australian science. Fifty-one organisations responded.

The message on value was clear. Asked how likely they were to recommend STA membership to peers, members gave an average score of 85 out of 100, with a median of 90.5. Members also told us why membership matters to them, and those reasons will guide how we shape our services.

The survey also showed where members see opportunity and where they feel pressure. They pointed to artificial intelligence and quantum technologies as the most exciting developments in their fields. Funding instability was the challenge raised most often, and members asked us to keep advocating for block funding.

Members were measured about the reform agenda. The *Ambitious Australia* report was released in February, and the Government announced in the 2026–27 Budget that it would establish the National Resilience and Science Council. We asked how confident members are that the Government will keep implementing the report's recommendations, with the average response 45 out of 100. We also asked about the wider set of reforms, including the National Health and Medical Research Strategy, the ARC's new National Competitive Grants Program, the 2026 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap and Budget measures such as the scaling-back of Australia's Economic Accelerator and the Industry Growth Program. Confidence that the Government will deliver whole-of-system reform averaged 42. These results give STA a clear mandate to keep pressing for follow-through.

Members were also generous with their time and resources. Twenty-eight suggested topics for Parliamentary Friends of Science and Parliamentary Friends of Engineering briefings. Twenty-two offered facilities where MPs and Senators could see science in action. Eighteen put forward business contacts for case studies in Science Meets the Economy.

These responses will shape our advocacy, events and programs. We thank every member who took the time to contribute.

Committees

Policy

Dr Kathy Nicholson (Co-Chair)
Australian Institute for Machine Learning

Dr Melissa Humphries (Co-Chair)
Statistical Society of Australia

Jas Chambers
Science & Technology Australia President; Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society

Ryan Winn
Science & Technology Australia CEO

Professor Melissa Brown
Australian Council of Deans of Science

Professor Richard de Grijs
International Astronomical Union

Dr Thom Dixon
ARC Centre of Excellence for Synthetic Biology

Dr Deanna D'Alessandro
University of Sydney Net Zero Institute

Associate Professor Kalinda Griffiths
Australasian Epidemiological Association

Dr Richard Harvey
ARC Centre of Excellence in Plants for Space

Dr Melissa Humphries
Australian Psychological Society

Dr Anna Lintern
NTEU

Tamanna Monem
QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

A/Prof Vanessa Wong
Royal Society of Victoria

Kate McGeoch
UNSW

Friend of the Chair: Dr Hannah Jarman
Deakin University

Friend of the Chair: Dr Lane Meredith
Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Dr Lila Landowski (Co-Chair)
Australian Neuroscience Society

Dr Morley Muse (Co-Chair)
Women in STEMM Australia; Australian Microscopy and Microanalysis Society

Jas Chambers
Science & Technology Australia President; Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society

Ryan Winn
Science & Technology Australia CEO

Dr Ayan Dasvarma
Monash University

Kim Dyball
CSIRO

Dr Tim Harte
Deakin University

Adrienne Gooden
Australian Society for Fish Biology

Dr Anna Shillabeer
Australasian Council of Deans of ICT

Dr Lakshmi Wijeyewickrema
La Trobe University

Dr Ayomide (Mide) Ogundipe
Curtin University Faculty of Health Sciences

Gavin Stanbrook
Australian Research Data Commons

Kate Callaghan
Astronomical Society of Australia

Finance, Audit & Risk

Maria Di Gregorio (Chair)
Independent Board Director

Dr Kathy Nicholson
Australian Institute for Machine Learning

Jas Chambers
Science & Technology Australia President; Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society

Dominic Canestrari-Soh
Senior Manager, Enterprise Risk, EY

Yogita Nath
Sanofi

Ryan Winn
Science & Technology Australia CEO

Science Meets the Economy

Jas Chambers (Co-Chair)
Science & Technology Australia President; Australian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society

Professor Mark Hutchinson (Co-Chair)
The Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists (ASCEPT); Australasian Neuroscience Society

Professor Stephen Rodda
UNSW

Professor Veena Sahajwalla
UNSW

Dr Matt Wenham
The Royal Society of Victoria

Ingrid Marsh
Cicada Innovations

Jonathan Lacey
Cruxes Innovation

Our Team

Staff 25-26

Chief Executive Officer
Ryan Winn

Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Dr Sandra Gardam

Director of Membership and Engagement
Lucy Guest

Director of Media and Communications
Paul Richards

Director of Policy and Government Relations
Dr Sarah Tynan

Programs Officer
Louise Fleck

Program Officer, Superstars of STEM
Tallis Everard (from 13 July 2026)

Executive Officer
Cath Cotter (to 17 April 2026)
Mandy Hudson (from 25 May 2026)

Communications Officer
Natasha Tareen (to March 2026)

Program Manager
Evelyn Fetterplace

Events & Program Manager
Michaela Catelin

Membership Engagement Manager
Tristan Scotcher

Policy Officer
Hari Konchada (to 8 May 2026)

Membership Operations Manager
Shannon Wong

Finance Services Provided by Always Bookkeeping
Penny and Andy Thomson



Board November 26

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Jasmine Chambers

Vice-President
Mark Stickells AM

Finance, Audit and Risk Chair
Maria Di Gregorio

Policy Chair
Dr Kathy Nicholson

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Chair
Dr Lila Landowski

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