



SMC Prospectus 2013

“There is no challenge that we will face over coming decades that does not depend on science. It will be critical to our economic, environmental, social and cultural development. Science has a critical role to play in the public dialogue as we develop a national consensus on how best to manage essential trade-offs. All of this must require a much more scientifically aware, literate and engaged population.”

- Professor Sir Peter Gluckman,
Chief Science Advisor
Transit of Venus Forum 2012

Effective reporting on science and technology in the mainstream media is an essential element for public understanding of - and support for - the research and evidence-based knowledge that underpins our society.

Yet media coverage of these critical areas is increasingly under-resourced and under threat.

Mainstream media organisations face fundamental change in their business models, which has resulted in less resourcing of specialist areas such as science and health coverage.

The internet's 24-7 news cycle has put pressure on media outlets to deliver accurate and in-depth news coverage with ever-tighter turn-around times.

Upheaval in the media has led to an exodus of talent and experience leaving younger, less experienced and non-specialist reporters to deal with complex science-related issues.

In a media world where opinion is becoming increasingly dominant in the news stream, the facts on important issues that are underpinned by science can easily get lost.

What is the Science Media Centre?

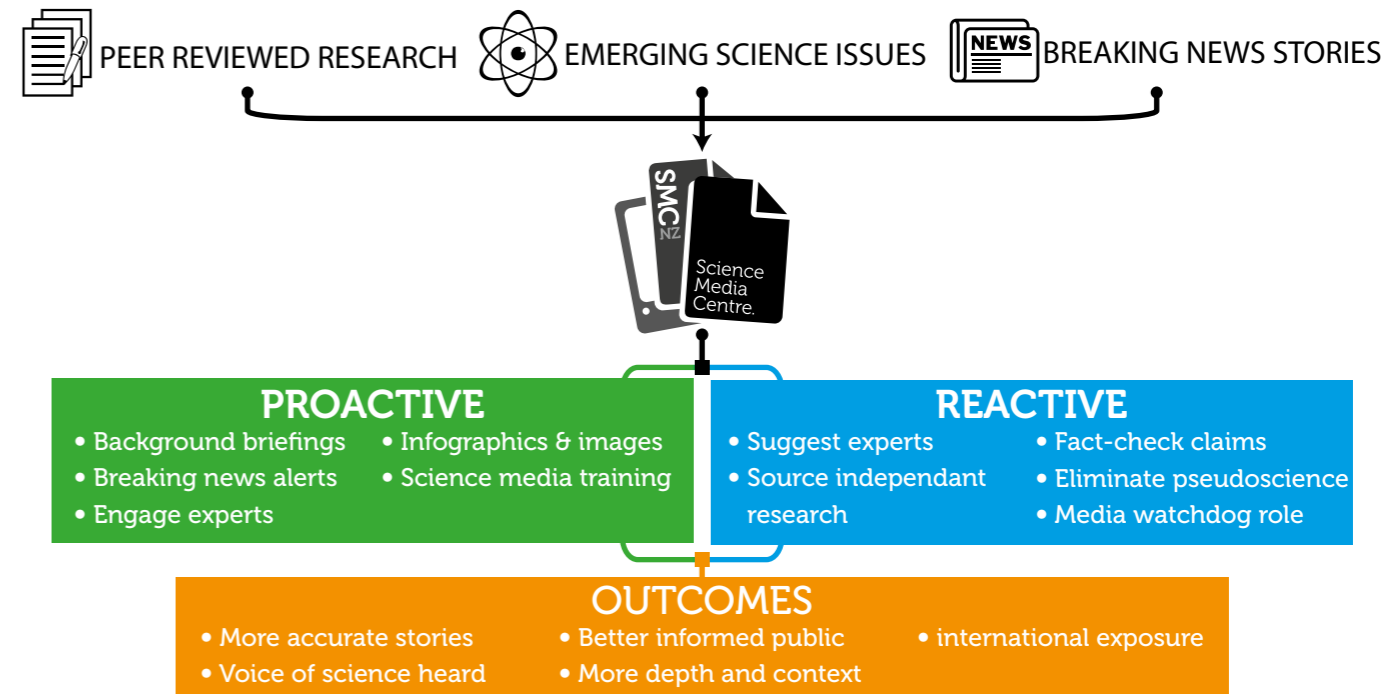
The Science Media Centre is an independent, not-for-profit resource for the media that promotes evidence-based science and up-to-date research to inform public debate on the major issues of the day.

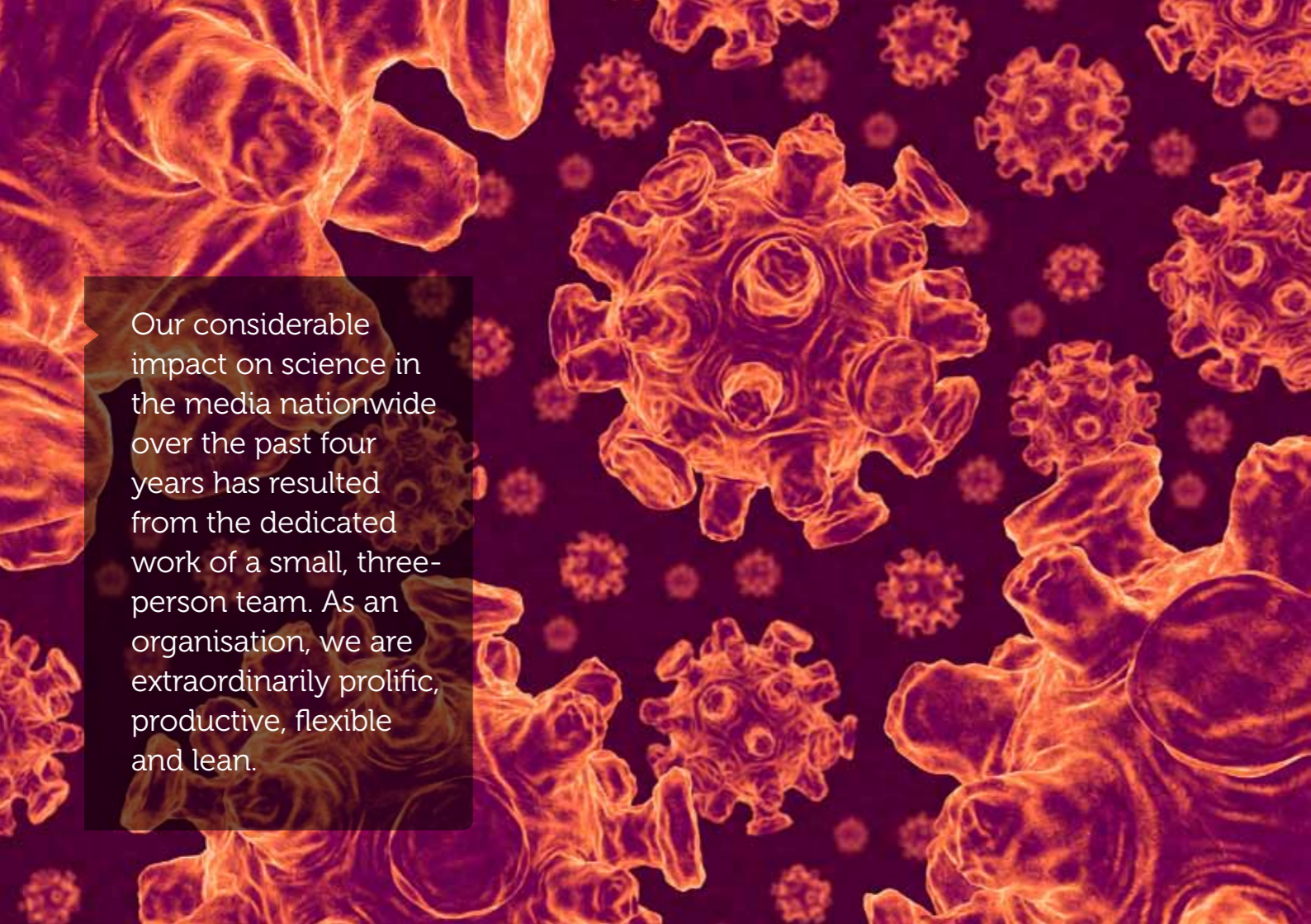
The SMC works proactively with journalists to help them cover science as well as identify the science angles in everyday news stories and works with the scientific community to help them interact more effectively with the media and ensure that their voices are heard on issues of national importance.

The SMC has made an impressive impact since opening in 2008, having injected evidence-based comment into more than 5400 news reports and informed more than 250 mainstream issues such as:

- natural disasters
- food safety
- climate change
- stem cell research
- nanotechnology
- food safety
- immunisation
- earthquake risk
- water quality
- mobile phones and cancer
- obesity and diabetes
- fisheries sustainability

How we Work





Our considerable impact on science in the media nationwide over the past four years has resulted from the dedicated work of a small, three-person team. As an organisation, we are extraordinarily prolific, productive, flexible and lean.

Value and impact

Ongoing feedback from media and scientists, and an independent evaluation of the centre completed in 2009, indicates widespread support and endorsement of the SMC, its role and the services it provides.

Our proactive and reactive services are both highly valued. These serve to inform the media of new and emerging scientific issues, and have frequently led to stories being covered that would otherwise have been missed. We are regularly

complimented on the timeliness of our services, as well as the quality and relevance of the experts we refer.

We excel in the use of new and social media and have helped hundreds of scientists improve their science communication skills. The Sciblogs network which we oversee has produced nearly 6,000 articles in its three year history and currently boasts a stable of 35 scientists and science writers and is the 7th most popular blog in New Zealand.

Science Media Centre impact 2008 - 2012:

3863 media enquiries

5462 media items

360 reg. journalists

Trusted, credible, peer-reviewed


We consistently strive to promote the most credible experts and reflect a broad spectrum of informed scientific opinion.

As the media's business models come under increasing pressure, and journalists have fewer resources to draw on, their ability to fact-check and provide independent analysis on complex issues is threatened. Straightforward, accurate information on science-related issues can be difficult to access on deadline.

The Science Media Centre is a trusted source of independent experts, research

and science information. In our day-to-day operations, we draw on a Science Advisory Panel that includes top scientists in a comprehensive range of fields.

The SMC is operated by the Royal Society of New Zealand with an independent governance board. The SMC does not represent any particular agenda within science, and has a strong track record of independence.



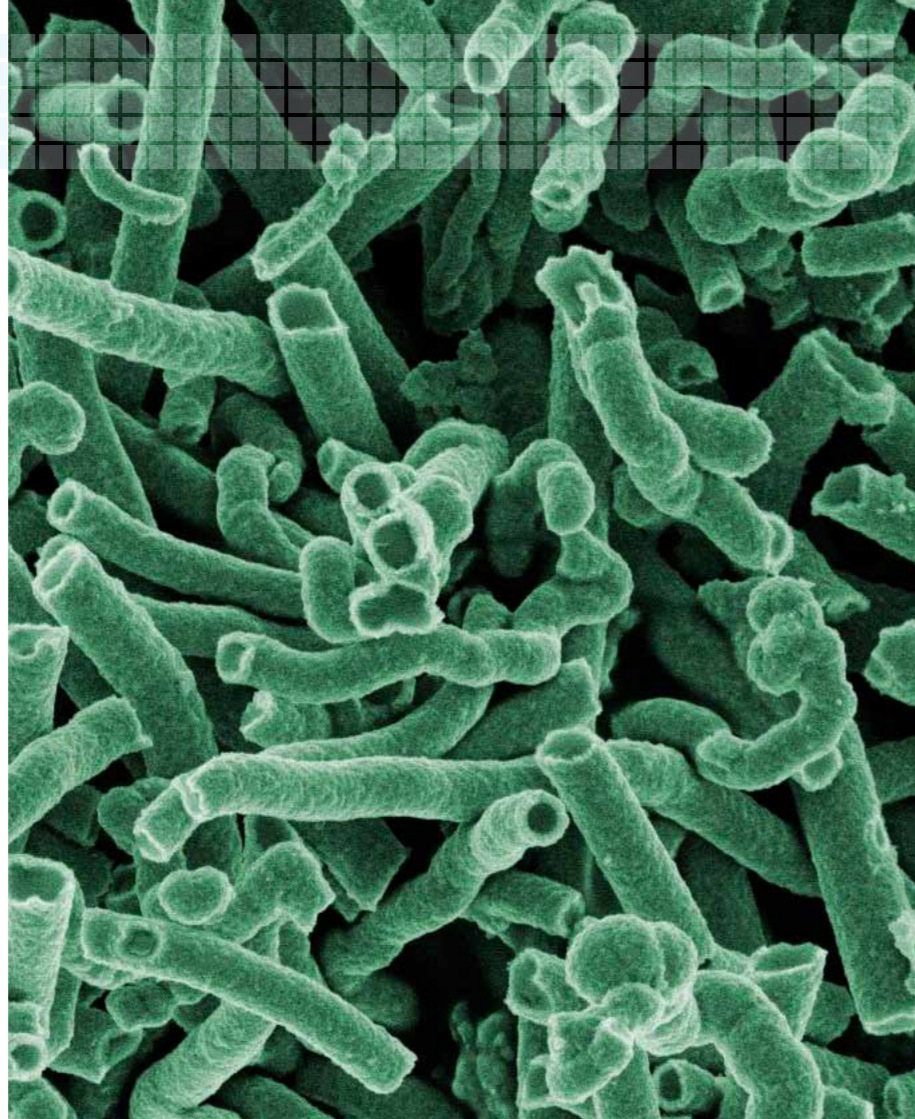
Through linkages with Science Media Centres in the UK, Australia, Japan, China, Canada, Denmark and the United States, we connect international media with information and expertise from New Zealand.

Science citizenship

Scientific institutions, corporations and industry groups are increasingly recognising the need for an informed society and one that values science.

From immunisation and climate change to “fracking” and 1080 pesticide, numerous science-related issues divide the public, which makes the availability of unbiased, accurate information a priority, particularly for organisations that carry out research or undertake commercial activity in science-related areas.

Supporting the SMC is a strong endorsement of the need for an informed society and allows us to assist the media tackle a wider range of issues from an evidence-based standpoint.



We need your support

In order to extend the SMC's reach and ensure our continued operations, we are actively seeking financial support from a range of organisations, including research institutions, government agencies and companies whose business relies on and benefits from improved public understanding of science.

As a sponsor of the SMC, you will benefit from opportunities to become more actively involved in how science is reported in the media. Your organisation's experts will have a stronger voice on the issues of the day, and help to shift the balance of coverage when scientific evidence is being overlooked.

The SMC's activities also highlight New Zealand expertise in a wide range of fields and increase the visibility and perceived relevance of scientists' contributions to society.

We provide a public good service benefiting journalists, researchers and the public. By supporting us, your organisation will receive tangible benefits, while also making it possible for this essential service to continue.

SMC Foundation sponsor
Foundation-level sponsorship

SMC Gold sponsor
Gold-level sponsorship

SMC Supporter
Supporter-level sponsorship

For complete details about sponsorship opportunities, including specific benefit packages, contact the Science Media Centre on 04 499 5476 or smc@sciencemediacentre.co.nz

What we offer

Independent, neutral platform for experts and ideas

The SMC is a trusted source of information for media, which means we are uniquely placed to provide sponsors with an independent platform for:

- promoting evidence-based coverage of contentious issues,
- responding to confusion and pre-empting the spread of misinformation in media reporting of complex topics,
- launching major research results and reports from cross-sector collaborations

Regular updates on research news

Special working arrangements with publishers of major scientific and medical journals give us insight into upcoming, newsworthy publications. As part of our service to journalists, we highlight research from New Zealand scientists,

and provide local expert commentary to media on international research. Sponsors will receive weekly research news updates and the chance to partner on media outreach for significant publications.

Opportunities to partner for online briefings

Our regular media briefings offer background on major science-related issues or often act as a launch event for newly-published research. The SMC will work closely with sponsors to identify potential topics of interest and expert panelists where appropriate.

Email alerts: comments from experts on breaking news

Our SMC email alerts, in which we round up comment from scientists on breaking news stories, are widely used by the media. Sponsors will receive all

relevant alerts, and will have the chance to contribute expert comments where appropriate.

Media training support for scientists

The SMC offers introductory media training workshops for scientists that provide basic skills for working with news media. These workshops can be customised to fit the needs of sponsors.

Science information for media and public

The SMC's weekly Heads-up newsletter (distributed to 1500 subscribers), its weekly Research Radar, its public science events calendar and website can help target information about sponsors' important research and upcoming events to media and key stakeholders.



The Science Media Centre champions evidence-based dialogue, publicises relevant research, and works to ensure the voices of scientists are heard on the important issues affecting society.

What people say about the SMC...

Journalists

"We've found the centre and its people brilliant. Whether it's helping us find the latest research or the best scientist to explain questions from our readers, they're always quick and thoroughly professional. They understand how science and the media need to interact and strive for the best results."

Glen Scanlon, NEWS EDITOR
Stuff.co.nz

"The SMC provides valuable resources for our programme. The frequent email roundups let me stay on top of breaking stories, and are great 'top-of-mind' way of making information accessible and easy to parse. The online briefings are great for getting me up to speed on particular issues where my knowledge is sketchy, backed up by the excellent website."

Mark Cubey, PRODUCER - SATURDAY MORNING WITH KIM HILL
Radio New Zealand

"One of the things that's great about the SMC is its world view. The centre's ability to be able to tap into international resources and get views from experts no matter where they are has been invaluable."

Mike McRoberts, REPORTER AND ANCHOR, 60 MINUTES
3 News, TV3

"The Science Media Centre is a great 'go to' for journalists who want an independent referral to Kiwi experts on local or international issues. They're across every story making the news, and readily supply contact details for experts in stories being worked on by reporters."

Renee Graham, ONE NEWS REPORTER

"The Science Media Centre provides a valuable service highlighting newsworthy research and facilitating contact with experts. Our science coverage is richer as a result."

Patrick Crewdson, HEAD OF NEWS
The Dominion Post

"The SMC's value has reached beyond offering advice, information, and connections to journalists researching stories and now acts as a valuable bridge between reporters and the scientific community. For this alone the SMC deserves credit in encouraging scientists to speak out about their work, confident that the centre has tapped into a pool of reliable and informed journalists."

Andrew Stone, FEATURES EDITOR
New Zealand Herald

Scientists

"The SMC has been a boon to journalism as it has (in the words of an editor of a major newspaper) stopped a lot of nonsense in the areas in which it has chosen to concentrate. By contacting people who actually know the facts, rather than people who feel they should be contacted because they have an opinion, the SMC has enabled a science voice. With the world and New Zealand crying out for reliable and credible information, the SMC has created and is now fulfilling a valuable role."

Prof. Jacqueline Rowarth, AGRICULTURAL SCIENTIST
University of Waikato

"The Science Media Centre is what puts science in the media in New Zealand. The loss of specialist science journalists has been very noticeable over the last few years but thankfully the SMC have been able to bridge the gap between the new breed of general purpose journalists and scientists. Their ability to stay on top of breaking scientific issues is incredibly valuable to both the media and the scientific community. From a personal point of view, it was their establishment of sciblogs.co.nz that enabled me to become a commentator on the link between science and the economy."

Prof. Shaun Hendy, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
MacDiarmid Institute for Advanced Materials
and Nanotechnology

"Our first port of call, when deciding that we needed to get our story out to the wider scientific community and the public in general, was the SMC. They provided a centralised location, with good facilities for hosting media (including radio, print and TV) as part of the press conference, and for distribution of the information further afield. The whole experience was positive, with the operational side run very smoothly, professionally, and with some humour! A very useful organisation and one which I would not hesitate to work with again".

Dr Cornel de Ronde, GEOLOGIST
GNS Science

"New Zealand's future as a successful, sustainable, and healthy society depends on finding collective solutions to often complex problems as well as identifying promising opportunities and better ways of doing things. Science, in its broadest sense, is a core resource in all of these areas. The SMC seems like a highly cost-effective way of using the results of New Zealand and global scientific investment and making these resources more available to all of us."

Dr Michael Baker, ASSOCIATE PROF. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
University of Otago



Science Media Centre

The SMC is an independent centre established by the Royal Society of New Zealand with funding from the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology. It is overseen by a five-member advisory board made up of representatives from the media and science and draws on the expertise of 30 scientists through its Science Advisory Panel. The SMC maintains one of the largest and most comprehensive expert databases of scientific contacts in the country.

SMC Establishment Board

Rick Christie - CHAIR
Professional Director and Company Chairman

Vincent Heeringa
Publisher, Tangible Media

Dr Gavin Ellis, PHD
Senior Lecturer, University of Auckland

Staff

Peter Griffin
Manager

Dacia Herbulock
Senior Media Advisor

John Kerr
Media Advisor

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