

Science Media Centre

Where science meets the headlines

What is the Science Media Centre?

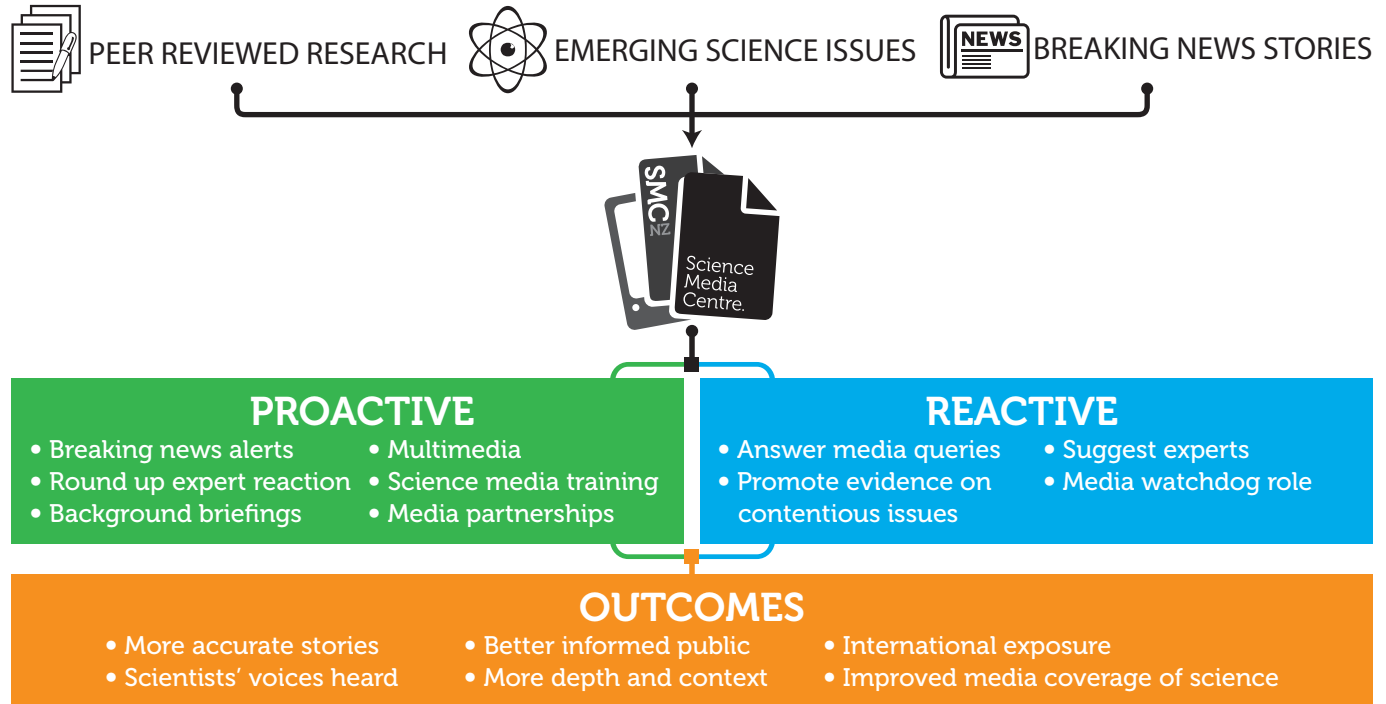
The Science Media Centre is an independent resource centre promoting evidence-based media coverage of emerging issues where science meets society.


The SMC connects journalists and experts with the aim of improving the quality and quantity of media coverage of science and research. We identify science angles in everyday news stories and work proactively with researchers to enable more effective interactions with the media. We work tirelessly to unlock the research sector's knowledge and expertise in order to inform public discussion of important issues for society in immediately accessible ways.

The SMC has made an impressive impact since opening in 2008, having injected evidence-based comment into more than 20,000 news reports and informed more than 250 mainstream issues such as:

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

How we work



A detailed microscopic image showing various cellular structures and numerous spherical virus-like particles. The structures are rendered in a glowing orange and yellow color against a dark background. The virus-like particles have a distinct outer shell with spikes or protrusions. The cellular structures are more complex, with visible internal components and irregular shapes.

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

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 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

Expert reaction on breaking news

Our SMC email alerts, in which we round up comment from researchers on breaking news stories, provide much needed background and context when the media need it most.

Building media capability

Through our newsroom workshops, Science Journalism Fellowship programme and work with journalism schools, we help journalists gain the skills to confidently tackle science-related issues.

Media training support for scientists

The SMC offers a suite of media training services for scientists, from developing basic skills for working with news media, through to more intensive two-day Science Media SAVVY workshops.

Support for media officers

We work with communications professionals across the science sector to keep them informed of opportunities and recent changes in the media, offer advice and support with upskilling their researchers in science communication.

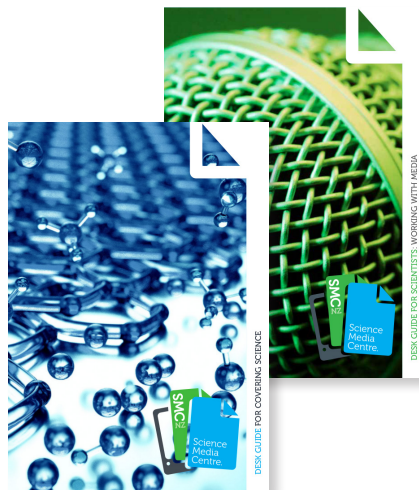
Information for media and public

Journalists registered with the SMC's Scimex platform receive email updates highlighting new research, reports and related material being published in scientific journals around the world. All of our output is publicly available through the SMC website, Scimex and Sciblogs, the blog network which we host for researchers.

Upskilling scientists and journalists

Desk Guides

Free, handy reference guides are available from the SMC, filled with practical tips for journalists covering science and scientists working with media.



Science Media SAVVY

Our Science Media SAVVY workshops are designed to help researchers gain the confidence and skills they need to engage effectively with media and communicate their science in public.

More than basic media training, our courses are designed to meet the specific needs of scientists. We offer practical exercises to help researchers explain complex ideas clearly, introduce tools and strategies for connecting with new audiences, all while providing feedback and support from fellow researchers.

Our full workshops offer a unique chance to make valuable media contacts and gain first-hand insight into news media practices. A range of SAVVY short courses introduce new skills such as working with social media, multimedia and communicating risk and uncertainty.

For more information visit
www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/savvy

SMC newsroom workshops

The SMC organises regular events inside media organisations around the country to help media engage with science and support more in-depth and evidence-based coverage of science-related topics.

We also offer mentoring and support to journalists interested in developing their networks of contacts and science reporting skills through our Science Journalism Fellowship programme.

Introducing Scimex – the Science Media Exchange

Scimex is a central hub designed to increase access to research news for reporters covering science.



A two-way platform, Scimex encourages greater interaction and collaboration between scientists and journalists.

Contributors can upload embargoed information and multimedia to the site for use by registered journalists.

Once the embargo for news stories has lifted, the information becomes publicly available.

Scimex features:

- News content from a range of registered contributors
- Password protection for sharing of embargoed content
- A multimedia library of downloadable visual content
- A directory of media savvy scientific experts

A collaboration between the Australian and New Zealand Science Media Centres, Scimex helps journalists keep on top of newsworthy science and gives New Zealand institutions exposure to their research across Australasia.

Around 1,200 journalists across New Zealand and Australia are registered on Scimex

Visit www.scimex.org to register for Scimex.

Value and impact

Ongoing feedback from media and scientists indicate widespread support and endorsement of the SMC, its role and the services it provides.

This is backed up by independent evaluations of the centre completed in 2009 and 2012.

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 commended 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 over 11,000 articles since its launch, and currently boasts a stable of 30 scientists and science writers.

Science Media Centre impact since 2008:

12,000+ media queries

20,000+ media items

500+ media sign-ups



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

What people say about us

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, HEAD OF DIGITAL
Radio New Zealand (RNZ)

"The SMC service always delivers on my requests and to my tight time frames. Conveniently, they will often recommend more than one expert and suggest good communicators as well. The SMC is a fantastic and vital service to ensure we have the best talent available and recognises the depth of science talent in New Zealand."

Mark Wilson, PRODUCER
RadioLIVE

"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,
Newshub, Three

"The Science Media Centre is a fast, friendly shortcut between journalists and media-savvy experts. Need a comment from a professor of biostatistics? No problem. And because the SMC offers a truly independent, informed service – it's trusted by scientists and journalists alike."

Virginia Larson, EDITOR
North & South magazine

"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, EDITOR
Stuff.co.nz

"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 is 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 enables a science voice. With the world and New Zealand crying out for reliable and credible information in a post-truth, 'alternative fact' era, the SMC fulfills a valuable role."

Dr. Jacqueline Rowarth, CHIEF SCIENTIST
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)

"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, PROF. OF PHYSICS
University of Auckland

"As a scientist working in the field of immunisation, we face a lot of risk communication challenges. The Science Media Centre has helped enormously with our ability to translate our science for the media. We have gained and maintained community confidence in immunisation programmes in NZ, in large part due to an effective science communication approach with the SMC and networks. I have, and continue to use, the example of the NZ SMC in my international work."

Dr Nikki Turner, GP and DIRECTOR
Immunisation Advisory Centre

"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."

Prof. Michael Baker, PROF. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
University of Otago

Science Media Centre

The SMC is an independent centre established by the Royal Society Te Apārangi with funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. We help journalists work more effectively with the scientific community. The SMC maintains one of the largest and most comprehensive databases of expert contacts on science topics in the country.

Staff

Peter Griffin

Director

Dacia Herbulock

Senior Media Advisor

Sarah-Jane O'Connor

Media Advisor

Tessa Evans

Media Coordinator

Contact

Science Media Centre

11 Turnbull St
Thorndon, Wellington

PO Box 598
Wellington, 6142

P 04 499 5476

E smc@sciencemediacentre.co.nz

T twitter.com/smcnz

sciencemediacentre.co.nz



Ministry of Business,
Innovation & Employment



EXPLORE | DISCOVER | SHARE