

# Confidence in Communicating about Research

## Dealing with the rough and tumble of communicating in practice

Moderator – Tracey Brown, OBE, Director, Sense about Science

### Speakers

**Christiane Barranguet**

Publishing Director, *Cell Press*

**Nick Ishmael-Perkins**

Editor-in-Chief, *Chemical & Engineering News*

**Lyndal Byford**

Director of News and Partnerships, Australian Science Media Centre

**Dr. Billy Quilty**

Postdoctoral Researcher, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



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**Tracey Brown, OBE**

Director, Sense about Science



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# Resources

Where to find additional resources - **[researcheracademy.elsevier.com](https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com)**

Previous webinars in the series:

- **Webinar 1:** Talking about the quality and reliability of evidence
- **Webinar 2:** Communicating what research is and isn't

# Topics covered in today's session

- How to prepare research information for media and policy audiences
- Where to find tips and advice
- How to handle unfounded criticism and harassment



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# Good practice in reporting findings

**Researchers are increasingly worried that there isn't a common understanding of research practices and principles in society on which they can draw.**

***Confidence in research: researchers in the spotlight*** revealed high levels of concern among researchers internationally, particularly early career researchers, about engaging with discussions about research amid policy debates, polarisation and competing information claims.

- Less than a third of researchers interviewed were confident in communicating about research findings with policymakers (26%) or journalists (28%), and even fewer on social media (18%). This was most pronounced among ECRs.
- And yet... half of those interviewed (51%) feel a responsibility to engage in debate online, with nearly a quarter (23%) seeing publicly countering misinformation as one of their primary roles in society.
- Over half (54%) identified communications training as the most useful form of support.



## Confidence IN RESEARCH

69% of researchers surveyed report the pandemic increased the importance of separating quality research from misinformation.

## About the speakers



**Christiane Barranguet** has been Publishing Director of Open Access at Cell Press since 2022, leading a team of 100+ and overseeing the expansion of its Open Access journals, which publish over 20,000 articles annually across diverse scientific fields. With 20 years in publishing, she has driven innovation and Open Access in areas including Aquatic Ecology, Water Resources, Computer Science, and Materials Science. Trained in Oceanography and Aquatic Ecology, Christiane has authored 30+ international publications and conducted research in Uruguay, Spain, France, and the Netherlands.



**Nick Ishmael-Perkins** has worked as a journalist, media trainer and project manager for nearly 30 years in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. He founded the consultancy group Media for Development and was Head of Research Communication at the Institute of Development Studies for five years. He was Director of SciDev.Net, an online news service for science and technology in the developing world, prior to moving to CAB International to be Lead Technical Advisor in research communication for agriculture in emerging markets. Nick led the International Science Council's Public Value of Science program, including producing the award-winning multimedia project 'Unlocking Science', before heading to Washington, DC, to become Editor-in-Chief at Chemistry and Engineering News. He has a post-graduate degree in anthropology and international development and has written extensively on development communication and knowledge mobilization.



**Dr Billy Quilty** is a postdoctoral researcher specialising in infectious disease epidemiology and mathematical modelling at Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin. He holds a PhD from LSHTM (2023) and MSc in Epidemiology from Imperial College London (2018), and retains an honorary position at LSHTM. His research includes evaluating pneumococcal vaccine schedules, COVID-19 modelling as part of UK SAGE's SPI-M subgroup, and supporting WHO's 2018 Ebola response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his work on travel quarantine duration and daily contact testing were cited in UK and US policy decisions, with his research and opinion writing featured in newspapers such as The Guardian. Currently, he explores artificial intelligence applications in outbreak response and pandemic preparedness, collaborating with WHO Pandemic Hub Berlin, LSHTM, and MSF Epicentre. His research has been funded by WHO, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the National Institute for Health Research.



**Lyndal Byford** has over 25 years of experience communicating science, with a focus on science journalism in Australia and the UK. She has an Honours Degree in biotechnology from Flinders University and a Graduate Diploma in Science Communication from the Australian National University. Lyndal runs the AusSMC's science news site [Scimex.org](https://scimex.org) and regularly talks about science on ABC Radio. She has written for publications including Crikey, Cosmos, and News Corp Australia and was a member of the Australian Government's Science and the Media Expert Working Group. In 2023, she was awarded the Unsung Hero of Science Communication award from the Australian Science Communicators, reflecting her dedication to making science accessible to all Australians.

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**Dr. Billy Quilty**

Postdoctoral Researcher, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin



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**Nick Ishmael-Perkins**

Editor-in-Chief, Chemical & Engineering News



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**High**

**Trust in  
Science**

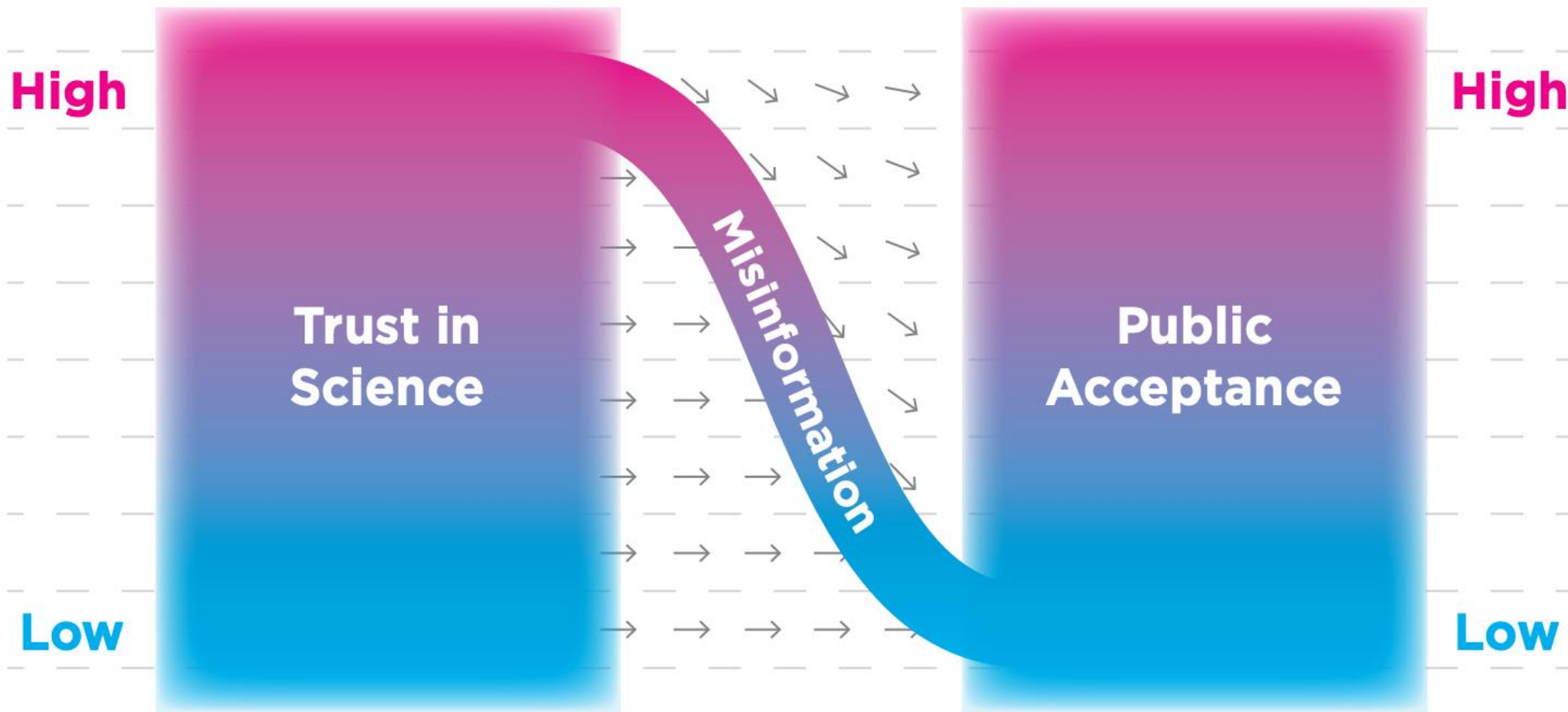
**Low**

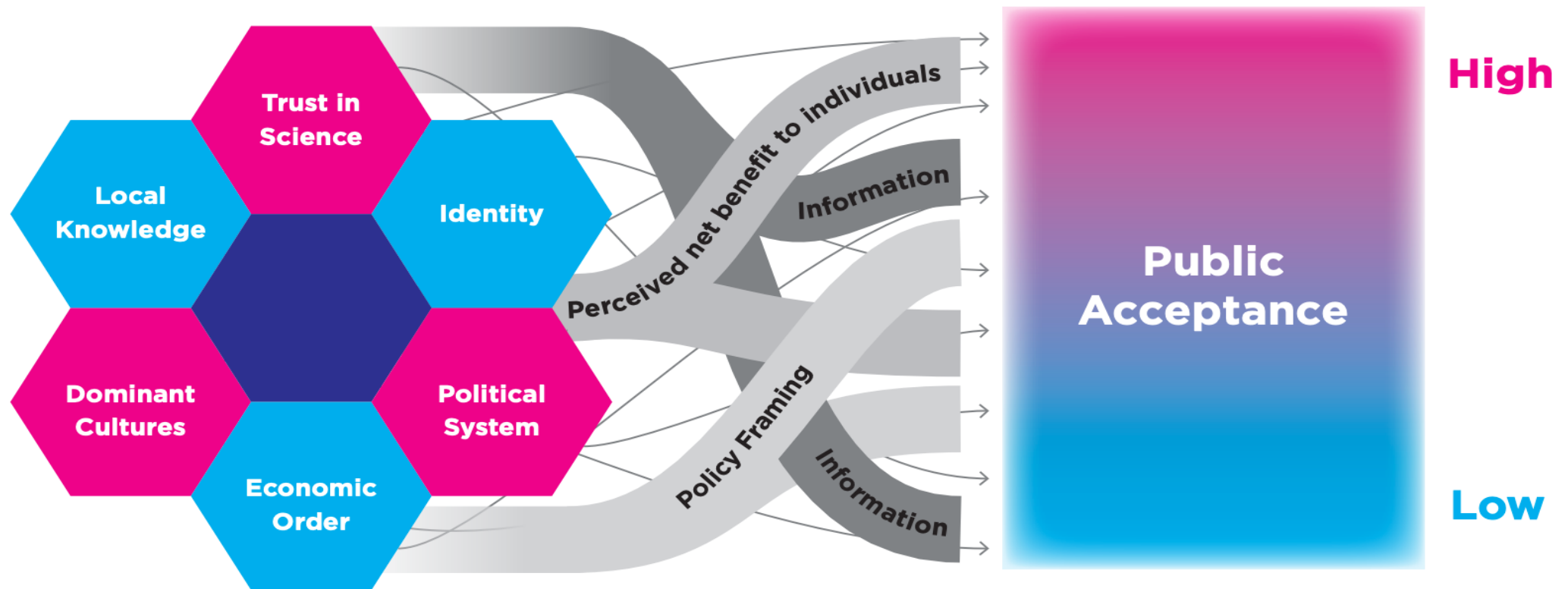
**Misinformation**

**High**

**Public  
Acceptance**

**Low**





A mosaic of  
different factors  
determine individuals  
starting points

Various external  
factors contribute  
to driving  
public response

Leads to a range of  
public responses  
not solely correlated  
with trust

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**Lyndal Byford**

Director of News and Partnerships, Australian Science Media Centre



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# Evidence that informs the headlines

HOME OF SCIMEX

australian science media centre

The Australian Science Media Centre works to enhance the media's coverage of science, for the benefit of all Australians. We run Scimex - the breaking science news portal for Australia and New Zealand - and provide the evidence and experts when science hits the headlines [READ MORE](#)

## JOURNALISTS



## EXPERTS



## RESEARCH ORGS



## SUPPORTERS



**2007**

JOURNALISTS

**3200**

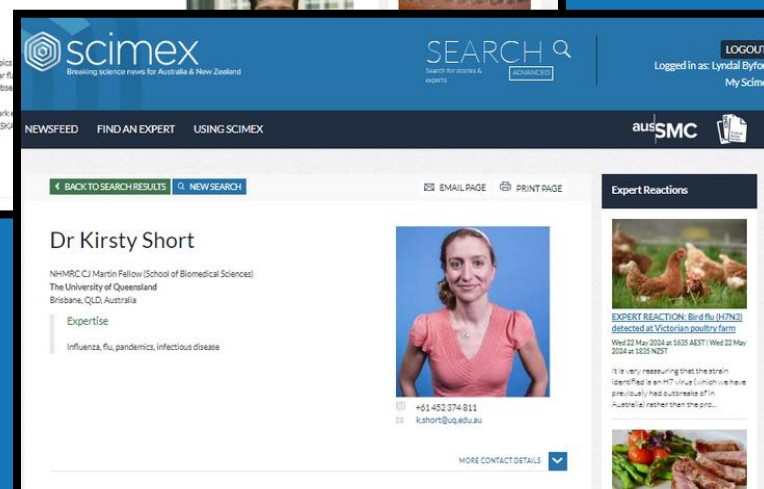
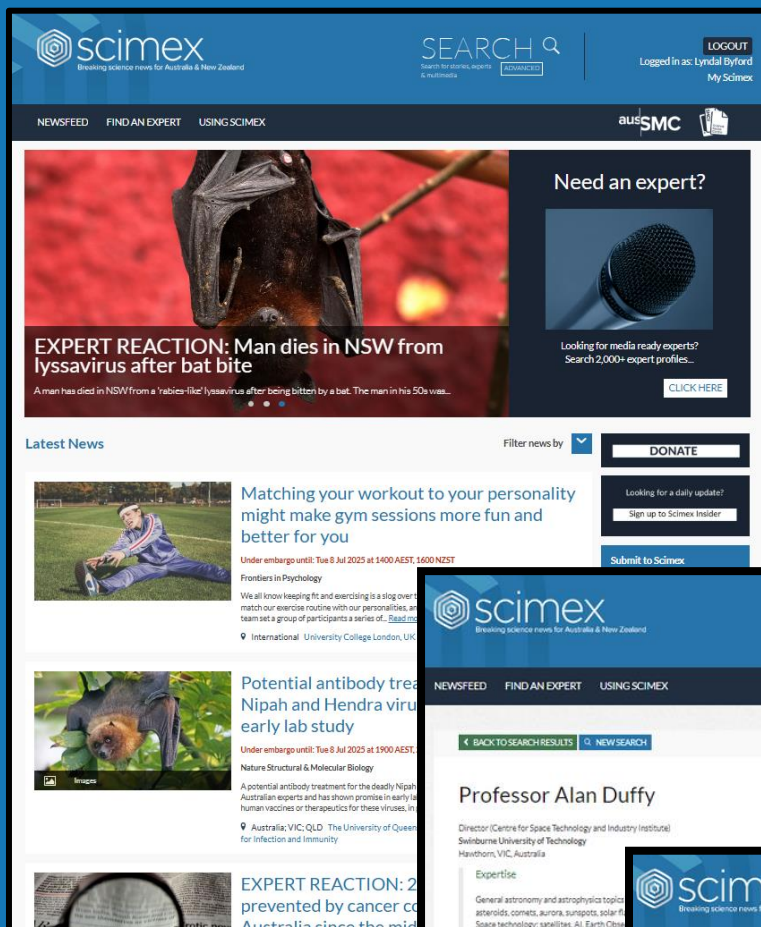
SCIENCE STORIES / YEAR

**6434**

EXPERTS

**33000**

NEWS ITEMS LAST YEAR

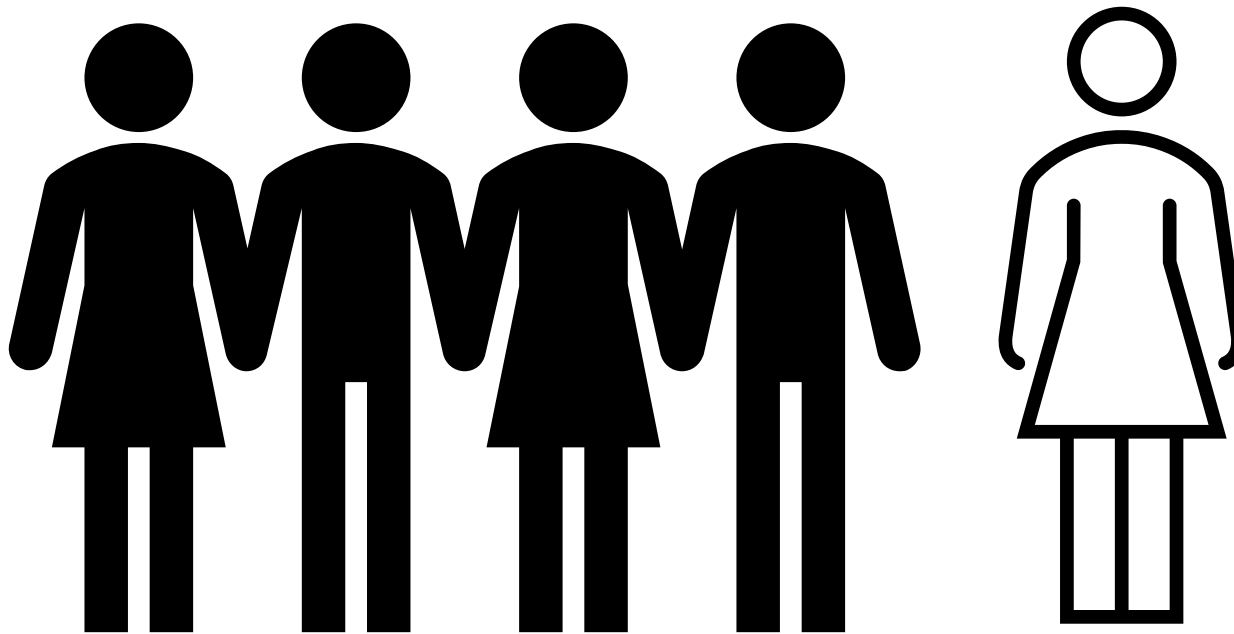


 **scimex**  
Breaking science news for Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific

An initiative of the

**ausSMC**  
australian science media centre

## Pandemic levels of abuse

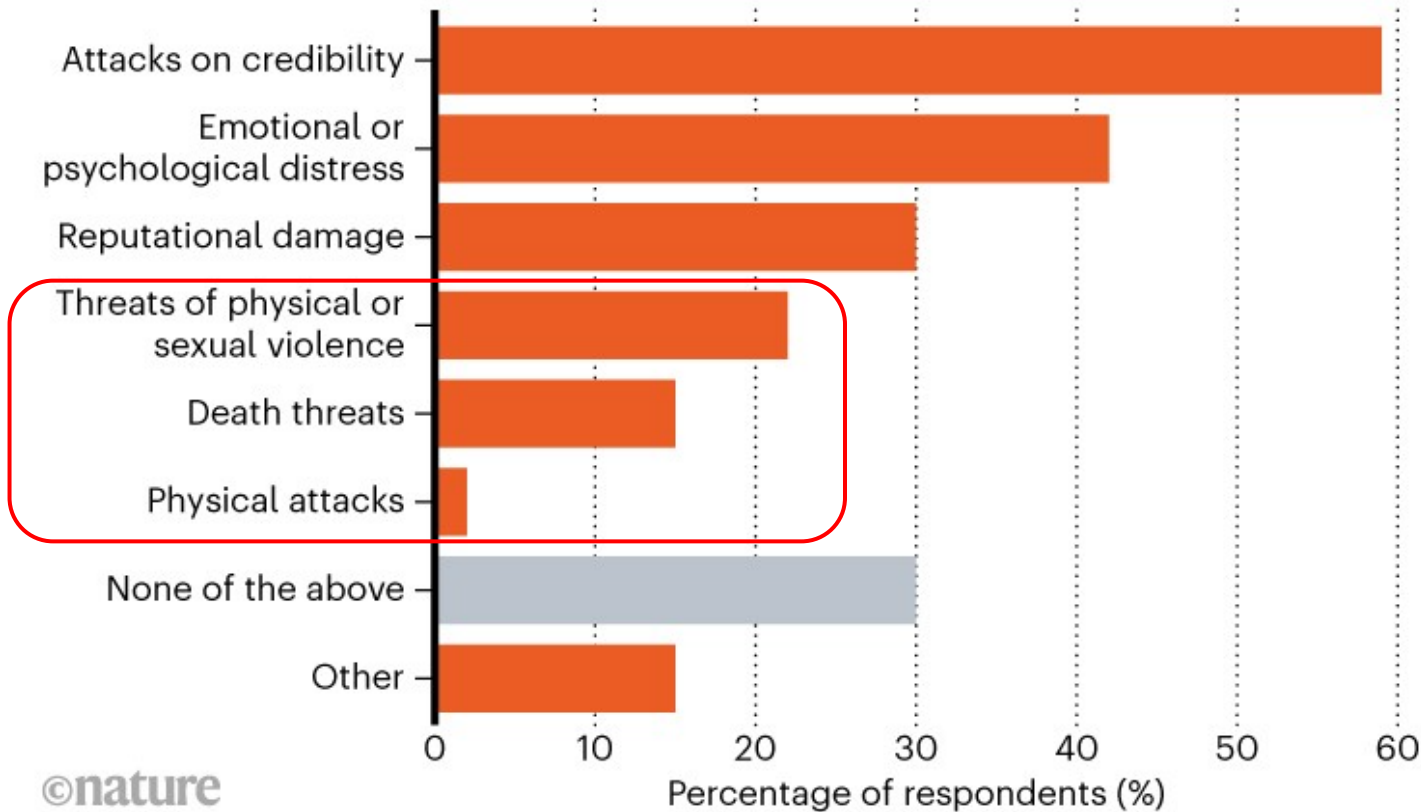


- **1 in 5 Australian scientists experienced death threats and/or threats of physical or sexual violence**
- **Attacks on credibility most common (50%)**

## NEGATIVE IMPACTS

In a *Nature* survey of scientists who have commented about COVID-19, 15% of 321 respondents said they had received death threats.

**Question: Have you experienced any of the following negative impacts after speaking about COVID-19 to the media, or posting on social media? (You may select multiple options.)**



Source: *Nature* analysis

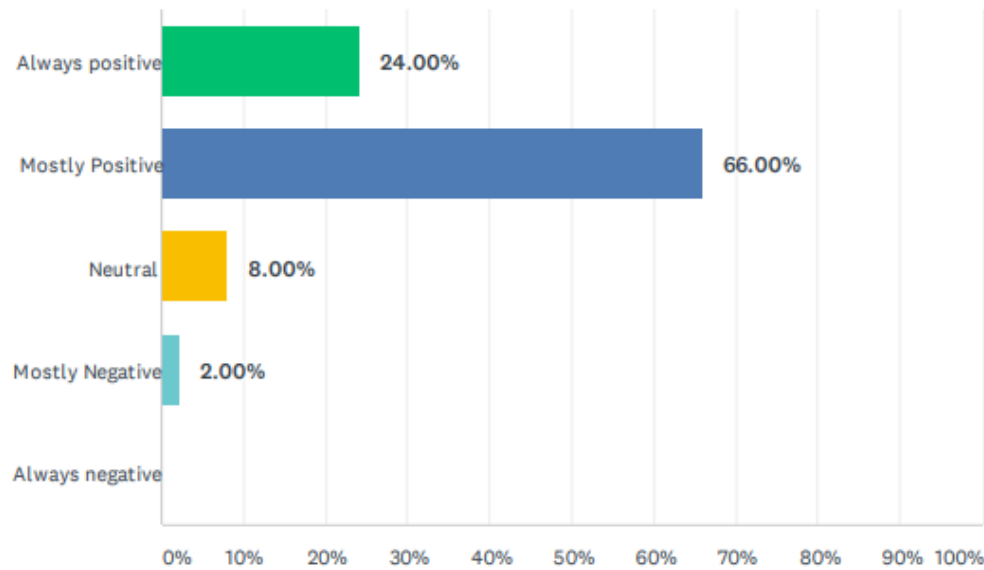
@lyndalbyford  
@AusSMC



# The media can be fun and positive

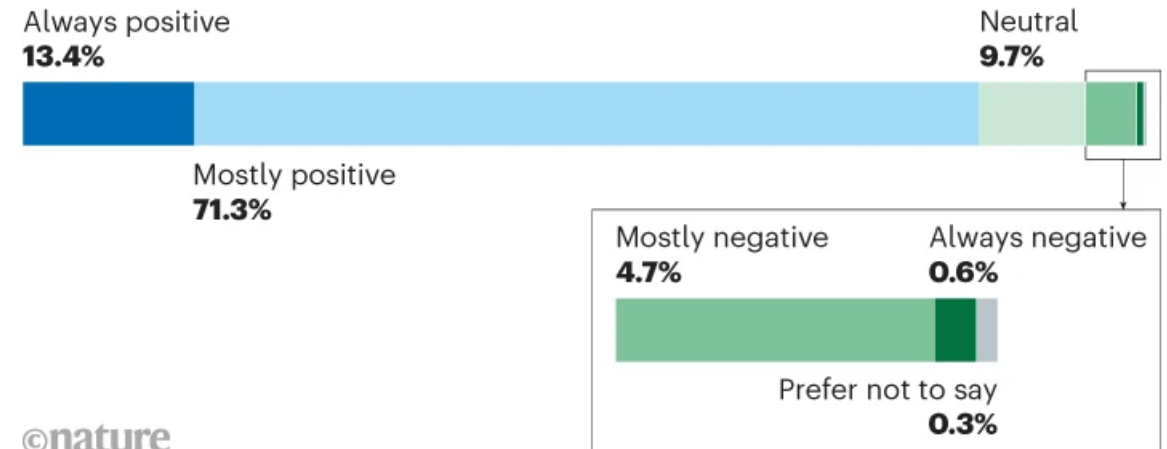
Q6 How would you rate your experiences with the media during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



Question: How would you rate your experiences with the media during the pandemic?

321 respondents



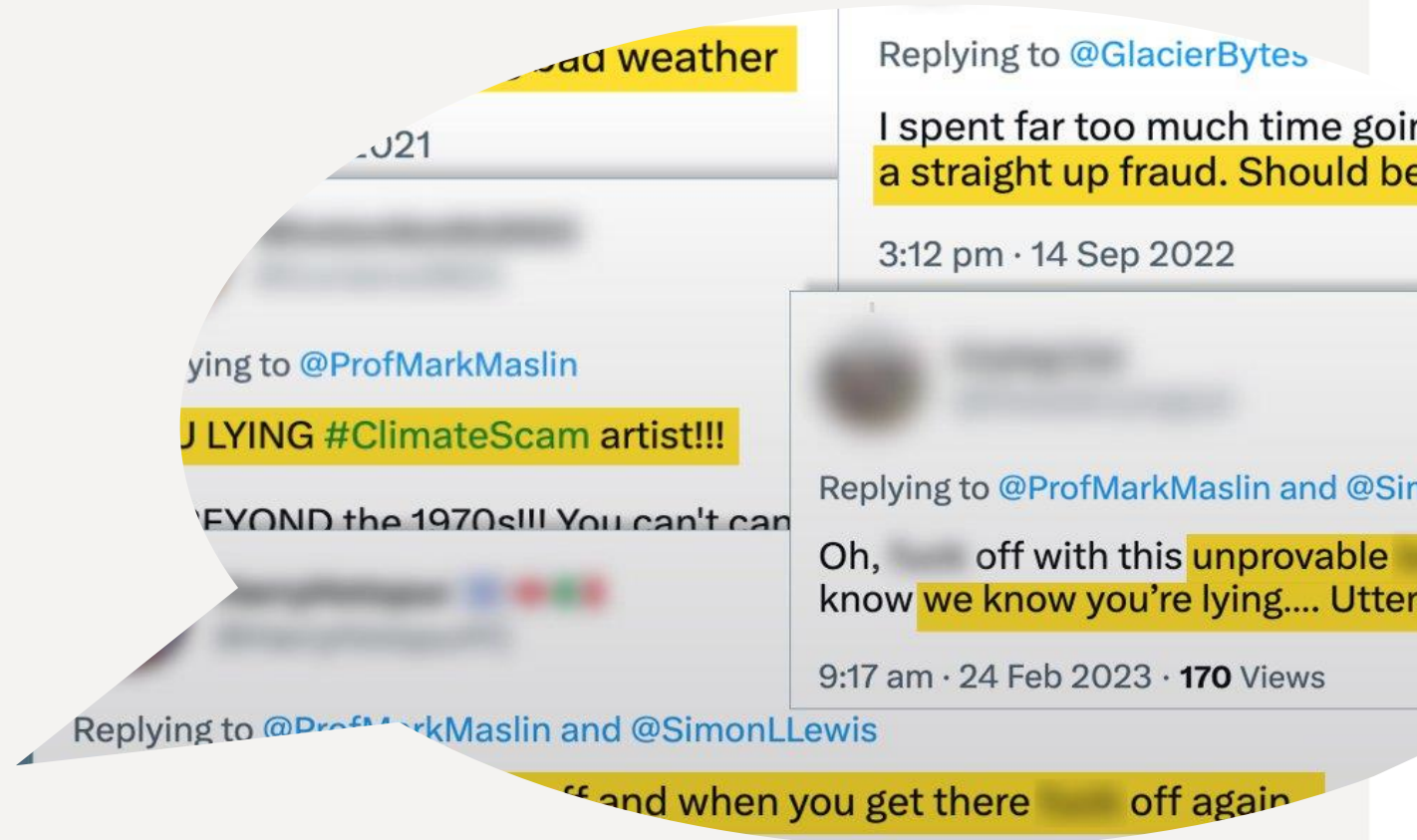
©nature

Source: Nature analysis

# ausSMC When does debate become abuse?

- Is it repeated and unrelenting?
- Is it coordinated?
- Does it include personal attacks, hate speech?
- Does it make you feel unsafe?
- Is it intended to harm your physical or mental health?
- Is it menacing, harassing or offensive?

How is it impacting you? If it is affecting the quality of your life – seek help.



# Setting yourself up for safety

## Privacy check up

Set social media accounts to private.  
Check location info  
Google yourself  
2 factor authentication/  
password manager

## Quiet the noise

Reduce notifications  
Block or mute  
Use the 'mute' setting on X (Twitter) – for people words and phrases  
Ask a colleague/friend to monitor for you

## Have a self care plan

Plan ahead for what you would do if you get abuse

- Turn off notifications
- Go for a walk
- meditation app
- Speak to a friend
- Report to employer

Plan to do something that makes you feel good

# What can I do if it happens?

## Assess

- Red flags
- Physical safety
- Tell someone
- Review privacy settings

## Look after yourself

- Acknowledge your feelings – be kind
- Remember your strengths – focus on values and goals.
- Do something you enjoy (Acknowledge your feelings – you are allowed to be upset.
- Digital break

## Get support

- Don't suffer on your own.
- Your peers
- Friends and family
- Your institution
- Science Media Centre (UK, Spain, Germany, Taiwan, Aus and NZ)
- The media outlet
- Country regulator
- Mental health professionals

## Record & Report

- Social media platform
- Regulator (eg eSafety)
- Your employer
- Police if you fear for your safety
- Ask someone to do this for you.

# ausSMC Should I respond?



Esther Choo MD MPH @choo\_ek · Nov 23, 2018

One day I was being bullied by a condescending troll and just had it. So I posted a picture of a otter - just thinking, what's the exact opposite of this asshat? - and blocked the guy.



Esther Choo @choo\_ek · 2d



3



4



... · 2d

Huh? I don't know what that means. Is that an otter?

1

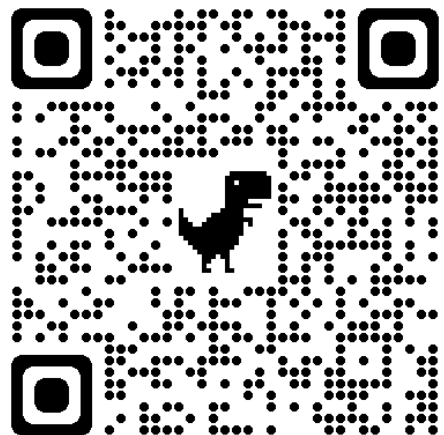


- Will it empower you or stress you more?
- Choose who to respond to and when
- Try counterspeech
  - response to hateful speech, meant to decrease its harmful effects
  - can include challenging, debunking, or critiquing harmful speech, amplifying alternative viewpoints, providing accurate information, and fostering empathy and understanding.



## Helping scientists work effectively with the news media

Dealing with the media can be a challenge.  
Find resources here to make it easier.



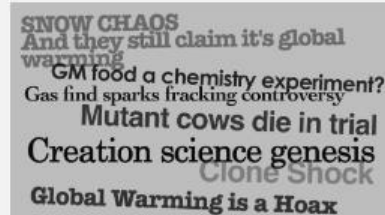
### Dealing with the news media

Be ready for media exposure,  
follow these short videos



### Using social media

Use social media to communicate  
better professionally



### Contentious research

Learn to deal with those  
controversial science situations



### Handling online harassment

How to protect yourself if you are  
facing harassment online when  
engaging with the media and public

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**Christiane Barranguet**

Publishing Director, Cell Press



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# Who we are and what we do

Cell Press is a leading scientific publisher across life, medical, physical, and sustainability sciences.

We engage and empower **millions** of scientists across all disciplines, all geographies, and all stages of research. We're committed to serving the scientific community so that every paper we publish makes an impact—whether it wins a Nobel Prize or sparks a single idea that contributes to future breakthroughs.

## 50+ journals

covering life sciences,  
physical sciences, sustainability,  
and clinical research



## 3 of the top 10

biology and biochemistry  
journals. (*Cell*, *Cell Reports*,  
and *Cell Metabolism*, are  
consistently ranked for impact)



## 10 publishing partners

The organizations we collaborate  
with include the American  
Society of Human Genetics  
(AJHG) and the  
Biophysical Society  
(Biophysical Journal)



## 19 fully OA journals

and 42 hybrid titles to make  
science more accessible



# Cell Press in the news

 **Cell** Supports open access

ARTICLE · Volume 188, Issue 12, P3117-3134.E11, June 12, 2025 [Download Full Issue](#)

# Snake venom protection by a cocktail of varespladib and broadly neutralizing human antibodies

Jacob Glanville <sup>1,4,5</sup>  · Mark Bellin <sup>1,4</sup> · Sergei Pletnev <sup>2,4</sup> · ... · Hannah Hirou <sup>1</sup> · Tracy Liu <sup>2</sup> · Peter D. Kwong <sup>2,3</sup>  ...

The image is a horizontal composite. The left half shows a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark blue t-shirt, holding a large snake (likely a python) with both hands. The snake is coiled around his arms. The background is dark. The right half is a screenshot of a news article from 'The Washington Post'. The article title is 'One man's snakebite obsession could yield a lifesaving breakthrough'. The byline mentions 'Tim Friede' and his experience with snakebites. The article is categorized under 'Science'.

**nature**

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NEWS | 02 May 2025

# Blood of man who's had 200 snake bites helps make a potent antivenom

**c&en**  
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BIOCHEMISTRY

## A new antivenom may neutralize 13 of the world's deadliest snakebites

The screenshot shows a YouTube video player. The video content features a man in a tuxedo and bow tie, identified as Seth Meyers, holding a book titled 'Cell' by Peter Dinklage. The background is a city skyline at night. The video player interface includes a progress bar at 3:58 / 12:05, a play button, a volume icon, a closed captions icon, a settings icon, and a share icon. Below the video, the title 'CORRECTIONS Episode 138: Week of Monday, June 2' is displayed, followed by the channel name 'Late Night with Seth Meyers'. The video has 8.1K likes and the user is subscribed to the channel.

 **Current Biology** Supports open access

ARTICLE · Volume 33, Issue 8, P1431-1447.E22, April 24, 2023 · [Open Access](#) [Download Full Issue](#)

# Genomic analyses of hair from Ludwig van Beethoven

[Tristan James Alexander Begg](#)<sup>1,6,24</sup>  · [Axel Schmidt](#)<sup>2</sup> · [Arthur Kocher](#)<sup>9,22,24</sup> · ... · [Robert David Attenborough](#)<sup>8,13</sup> · [Toomas Kivisild](#)<sup>1,3,25,29</sup>  · [Johannes Krause](#)<sup>6,9,24,29,30</sup>  ... [Show more](#)

 **CNN**style Arts Design

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## DNA analysis of Beethoven's hair reveals health issues — and a family secret

 Ashley Erickson, CNN  
5 minute read • Published 2:25 PM EDT, Wed March 22, 2023

The image shows the top portion of a Scientific American article. At the top, the text "SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN" is displayed in a large, bold, black serif font. Below this, a dark horizontal bar contains the date "MARCH 23, 2023" and the time "3 MIN READ" in white. The main headline, "Beethoven's Cause of Death Revealed from Locks of Hair", is written in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the headline, the sub-headline "DNA from locks of Beethoven's hair may have helped explain why his hearing loss remains a mystery" is in a smaller, regular black serif font. At the bottom of the image, a dark navigation bar features a white hamburger menu icon on the left and the words "NEWS", "CAREERS", and "COM" in white capital letters on the right.

A screenshot of a BBC News article header. At the top is the BBC logo. Below it is the article title "Beethoven: Tests on hair prove composer's genetic health woes" in a large, bold, black serif font. Under the title is the date "22 March 2023" in a smaller font. To the right of the date are two icons: a share icon and a save icon. Below the text is a large, high-contrast portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven, showing his characteristic wild, grey hair and a serious expression. The portrait is partially cut off on the left side.

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## Question and Answer session

Please pop your questions in the Q&A section



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# Thank you.

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Build your confidence in communicating about research with our free training on:

**[researcheracademy.elsevier.com](https://researcheracademy.elsevier.com)**



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