

Australasian Science

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The Editor welcomes original articles of interest to the general public written by qualified writers on fields within their expertise. Writers' guidelines are on the web site under "Contact Us". Prospective authors should submit an abstract to the Editor prior to submitting a manuscript.

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This year marks the publication of the 25th volume of *Australasian Science*. It was first published as *Science Mag* by the Darling Downs Institute Press (later renamed USQ Press), and underwent several name changes throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

But at the end of 1997 the University of Southern Queensland disbanded USQ Press, and *Australasian Science* merged with the independent science magazine *Search*. The official journal of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, *Search* had first been published in 1937 as the *Australian Journal of Science*.

When the *Australian Journal of Science* was relaunched in 1970 as *Search*, its editorial policy was "to publish articles which deal with the social and economic consequences of advances in science and technology". This ambition, combined with *Australasian Science's* motto of "exploring science and technology in everyday life", lives on through the present dictum: "World-class science from our most inspiring minds".

To mark *Australasian Science's* silver jubilee, this month we commence a four-part series profiling some of the more memorable stories that have captured the attention of the present editorial team. The first installment, published this month (pp.18–22), explores significant scientific achievements in the broad fields of astronomy and nature. Future installments will examine technology and medicine before we conclude with a look at scientific controversies.

One controversy that won't feature is the blackballing of *Australasian Science* by CSIRO's Executive following our criticisms of the appointment of former tobacco lobbyist Donna Staunton as CSIRO Director of Communications. Last month CSIRO HQ was in a spin after *Australasian Science* questioned the accuracy of answers it gave on the issue in Senate Estimates hearings.

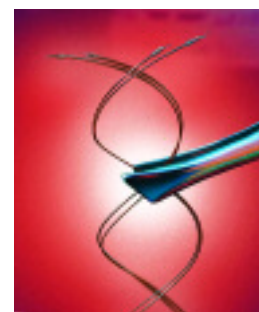
On 12 July CSIRO issued two responses to the *Australasian Science* articles. One was a statement of solidarity signed by 20 CSIRO communicators and educators that was published via the Australian Science Communicators email network. The statement claimed to be independent of the Executive, but the leaking of a memo from Staunton on 8 July casts doubt on the authenticity of this claim. "We are currently drafting a response to the criticisms raised by *Australasian Science*," Staunton wrote. "The response will be published in the upcoming Monday Mail and copied to the Australian Science Communicators list."

However, Garrett's Monday Mail to staff did not rebut any of the revelations published in *Australasian Science*. While Garrett claimed that "a number of the articles published by the magazine are misleading and/or factually incorrect", he didn't support this claim with any contrary evidence (see p.45).

Given that Staunton's memo denies that CSIRO has blackballed *Australasian Science*, despite the correspondence we published last month, we again challenge Garrett and Staunton to rebut any factual errors in an open interview.

ABOUT THE COVER

Jurors often overestimate the accuracy and reliability of scientific evidence compared with other types of evidence, such as eyewitness testimony or confessions. Jane Goodman-Delahunty and Ben Newell explain why the chance of a DNA match is closer to one-in-1000 than one-in-43 trillion, as was claimed in a recent murder case in Queensland (see pp.14–17).



Jamie Tufrey