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Research Informing Policy

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1. The complex nature of policy making and factors influencing decisions

2. How to be more strategic and savvy when presenting the evidence base to decision makers

3. Anna Maria's top 5 tips on how to use evidence to influence policy

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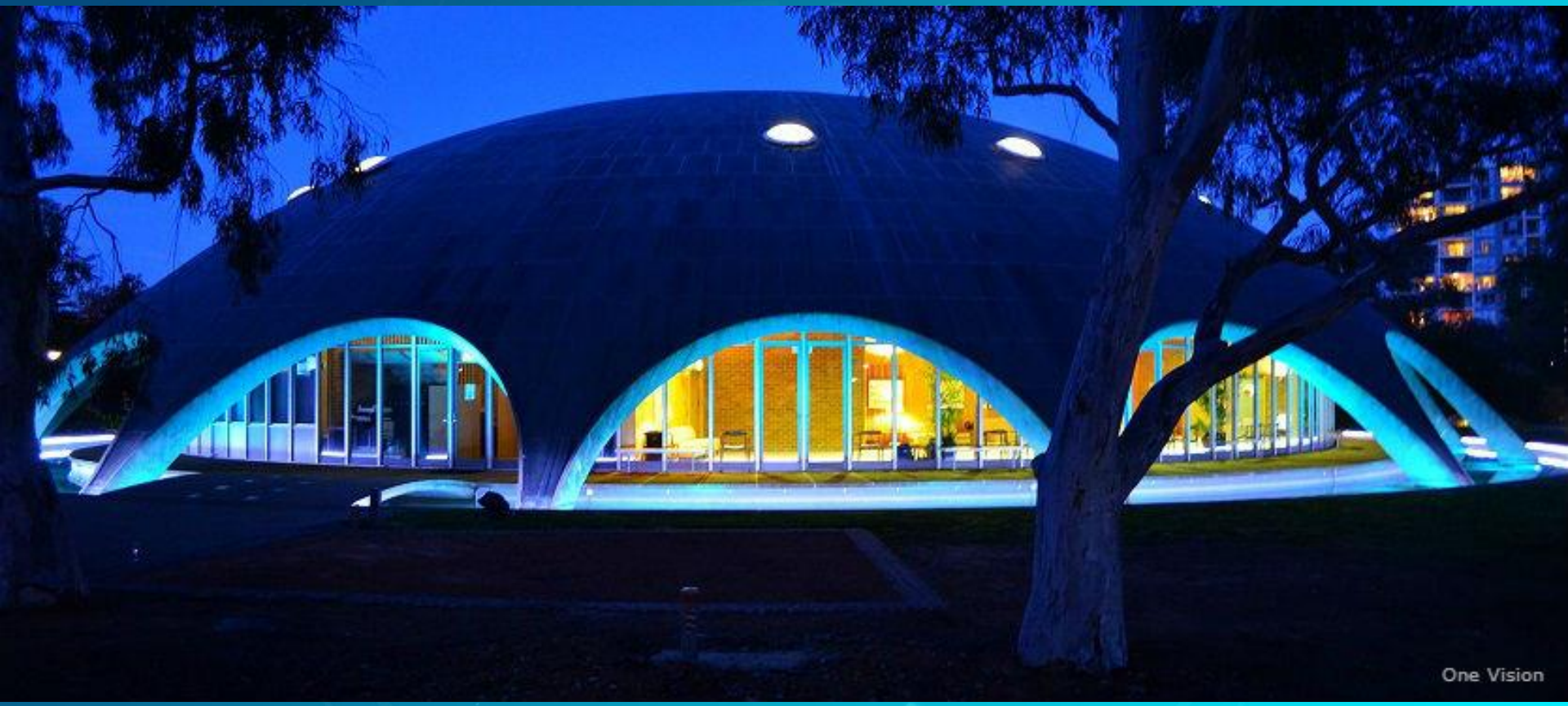

The Shine Dome

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School Education Programs

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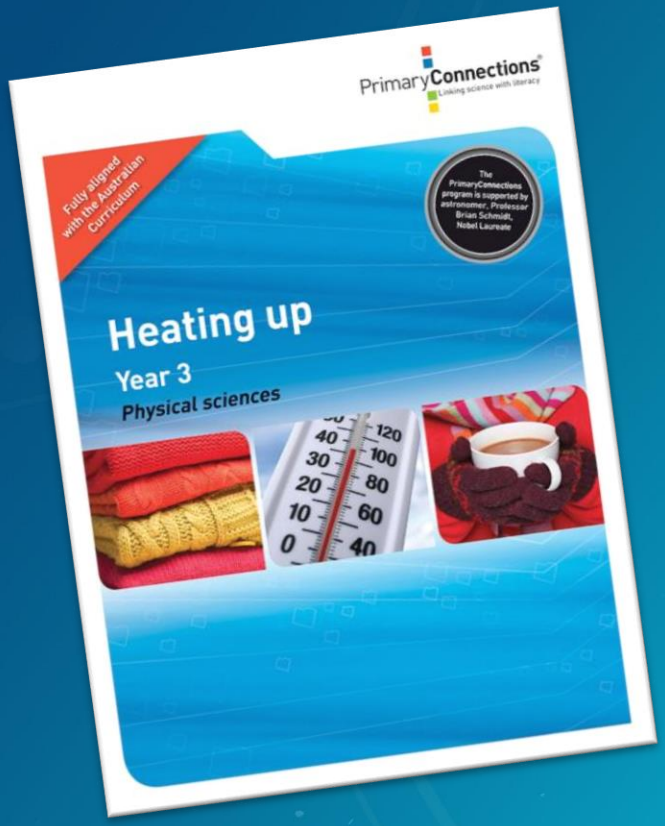

Science by Doing
Engaging students with science ®

re(Solve) MATHS BY INQUIRY

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Diversity and Inclusion

- Science in Australia Gender Equity (with ATSE)
- Women in STEM Decadal Plan
- Early- and Mid-Career Researcher Forum

emcrforum
The voice of Australia's future scientific leaders

SAGE
SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA GENDER EQUITY

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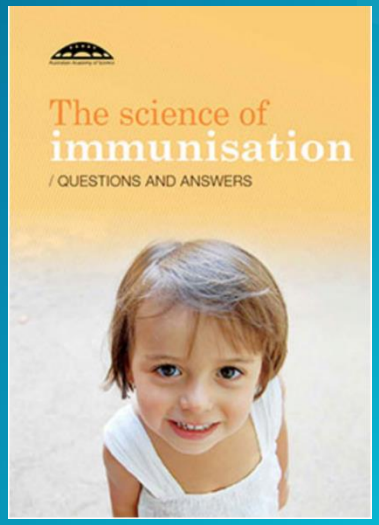
Policy and Advocacy



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Support for Scientists

- Honorific awards
- Research funding
- Conference support
- Travelling Fellowships and bursaries
- Support for Women and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers

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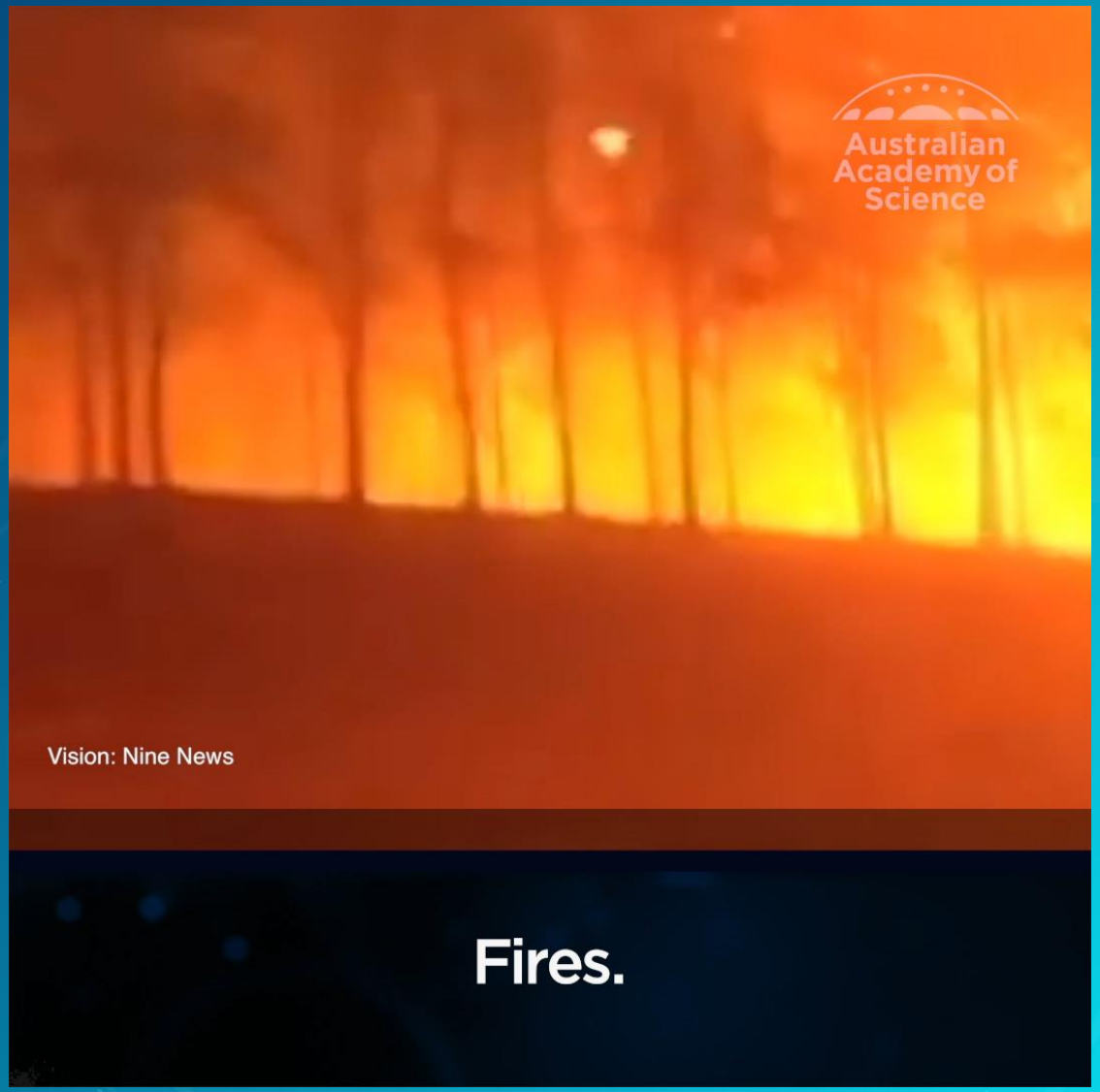

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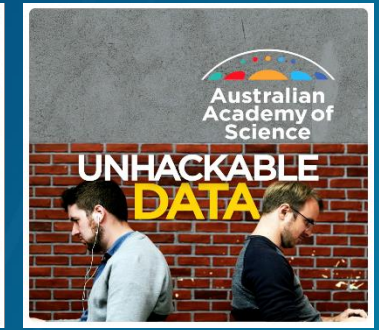

CONTENT OVERVIEW

In October 2017, Australian Academy of Science launched high-volume, short-form videos for social and mainstream media audiences. These videos satisfy wide audiences and lead them back to quality, evidence based information.

We have over 711,000 Facebook followers – and growing!

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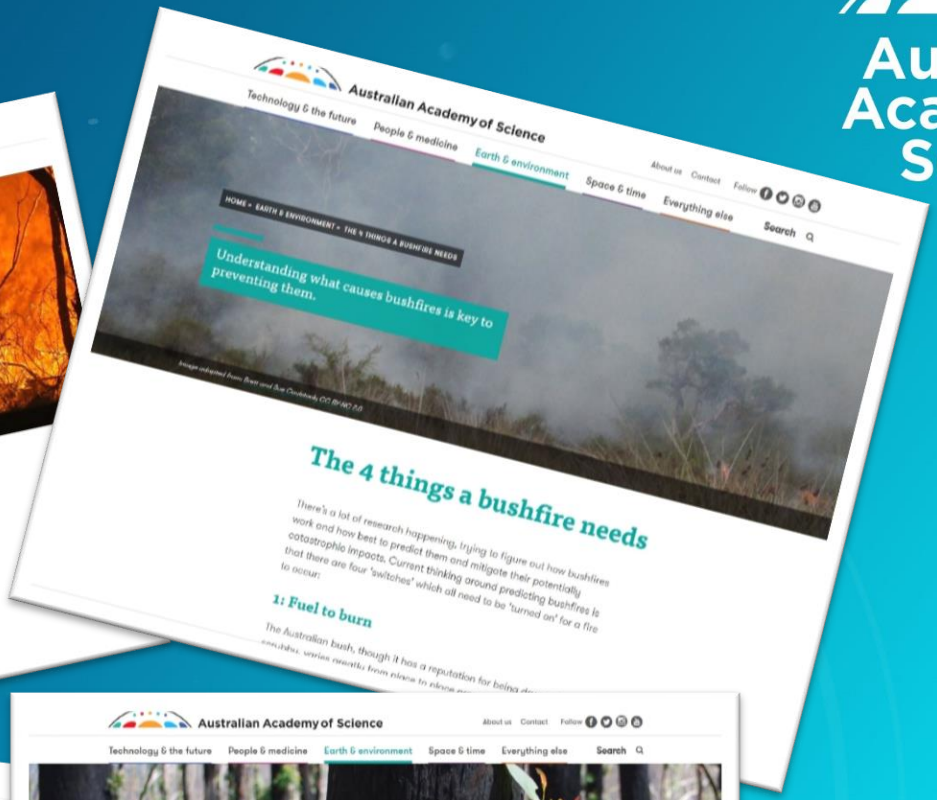

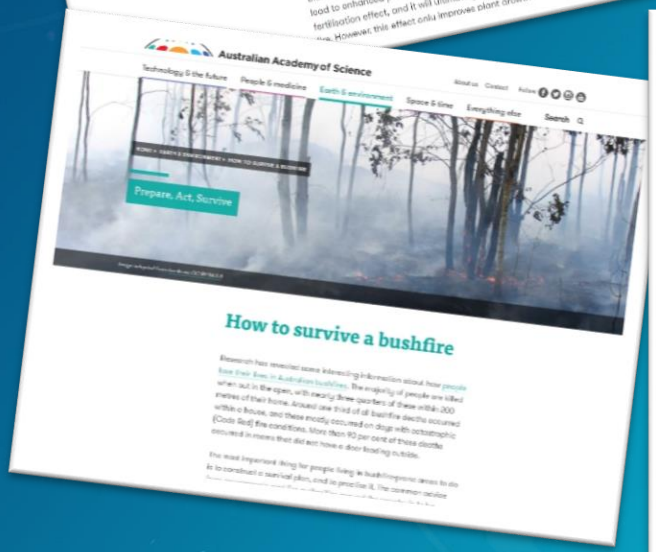

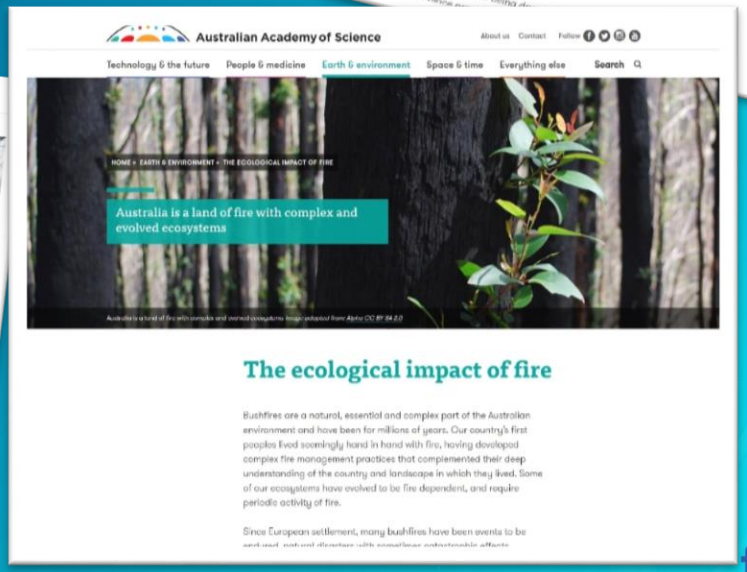

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Informing policy

There are two things you don't want to see being made – sausages and legislation

- Otto von Bismarck -

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"There is nothing a government hates more that to be well-informed; for it makes the process of arriving at decisions much more complicated and difficult"

- J.M. Keynes, 1937 -

Table 2
Importance attributed by state and federal officials to various means of obtaining research information.

Very important/important %	State	Federal
Searching the internet	94	93
Meetings with work colleagues in my department	91	91
Emailing or phoning colleagues in my department	88	90
Meetings with personnel from other departments	77	75
Involvement in forums/networks that share research	68	52
Conferences or seminars involving university researchers	63	54
My department's library	47	64
Active involvement in research projects with academics	44	29
Membership on expert panels or committees involving researchers	43	38
Commissioning private sector consultants	41	24
Commissioning university researchers	37	26
Emailing or phoning academics about their research	33	28

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Table 4
Levels of agreement with propositions about 'policy-making in your department'.

Strongly agree/agree %	State	Federal
Policy-making is driven by budgetary considerations	83	78*
Policy decisions are based on what is politically acceptable	80	66*
Responding to urgent day-to-day issues takes precedence over "long-term" thinking	75	64*
The timeframe to make policy decisions is too short in which to consider all policy options	61	54*
My policy-related work increasingly involves working with people across different levels of government or even outside government	60	54*
Research-based analysis is valued by decision makers in my organisation	60	68*
The media has too much of an influence over policy-related decisions	60	49*
Policy-making is crisis driven	56	46*
Senior decision-makers are usually generalists who may lack specialised content knowledge	41	35*
Policy decisions are based on research data and evidence about what works	41	39
Policy-making is captured by special interest groups	28	28
There are too many competing interests to consider when making policy-relevant decisions	25	22
There is very little benefit in using research to inform policy-related decisions because Heads of Departments and their advisors just ignore it	20	15*

* $p < 0.05$ (Pearson chi-squared test of independence).

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- Policy decisions made under time pressure, by people non-experts
- There are always competing priorities
- There are almost always resource constraints
- Uncertainty about the precise nature of the problem and the likely outcomes of the decisions
- Evidence needs to be relevant & timely, and is unlikely to be actively sought out
- Decisions usually result in happy and unhappy voters.

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Tips for Influence

1. Get involved
2. Build relationships
3. Communicate clearly and widely

3. Clear communication

- Year 10 equivalent comprehension level
- Avoid technical terms and no acronyms!
- Graphics where possible
- Include key facts and stats
- Clearly state why the information is important and what it means for policy
- Two-pages, or a stand-alone executive summary

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Tips for Influence

1. Get involved
2. Build relationships
3. Communicate clearly and widely
4. Be timely
5. Be relevant

Advocating for change

- Collaborating with likeminded organisations – alliances work
- Build the case for change – define problems AND solutions
- Generate public interest and support
- Enlist champions and third-party supporters,
- Proactively engage with policy makers

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