

New science Ambassadors aim to put science on national agenda

Science & Technology Australia (STA) has today announced 16 STEM Ambassadors who will work together with their local MP to help bridge the gap between science and government in Australia.

These STEM Ambassadors represent 16 different electorates across Australia and have been matched with MPs from across the country and the political spectrum who have expressed a desire to build stronger scientific networks.

STA President Associate Professor Jeremy Brownlie said that the STEM Ambassador Program encourages the involvement of science in Australian politics and aims to put science and evidence-based policy on the national agenda.

“The STEM Ambassador Program is vital to forging relationships between science and parliament,” he said.

“STA advocates for evidence-based, science-informed policy, and the STEM Ambassador Program helps to connect our national decision-makers with scientific experts who can give them direct access to research, data and evidence.”

Each Ambassador will meet regularly with their local MP to build associations between parliament and the broader STEM sector. It enables federal politicians to gain a deeper understanding of the potential impact of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Australia.

“It’s brilliant to see so many of federal parliamentarians involved in the program and keen to know more about the science and technology happening in their own back yards,” Associate Professor Brownlie said.

“Australia’s STEM professionals play an incredibly important role in shaping Australia’s health and wellbeing, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. This program empowers our highly skilled STEM workforce to make positive change and use their work to help build better policy and shape Australia’s future.”

The STEM Ambassador program builds on the successful 2019 pilot program and brings the total number of STA STEM Ambassadors to 23 across Australia.

The latest cohort of STEM Ambassadors come from a wide range of science, technology, and engineering mathematics professions, representing a range of sectors. They are:

Dr Kiri Beilby – Reproductive Biologist, Monash University
Electorate: Hotham | MP: Clare O’Neil

Professor Rachel Burton – Plant Biologist, University of Adelaide / ARC Centre of Excellence in Plant Energy Biology
Electorate: Mayo | MP: Rebekha Sharkie

Susan Caldis – Geography Educator, PhD Candidate, Macquarie University
Electorate: North Sydney | MP: Trent Zimmerman

Dr Tracey Ann Cuin – Agricultural Scientist, University of Tasmania
Electorate: Lyons | MP: Brian Mitchell

Alicia Heskett – Turnaround Engineer, Shell Australia
Electorate: Brisbane | MP: Trevor Evans

Dr Jennifer Hollands – Stem Cell Researcher, Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health
Electorate: Cooper | MP: Ged Kearney

Dr Brenda Lin – Ecologist, CSIRO
Electorate: Moreton | MP: Graham Perrett

Dr Anna Lintern – Civil Engineer, Monash University
Electorate: Goldstein | MP: Tim Wilson

Dr Vanessa Lussini – Organic Chemist, Reserve Bank Australia
Electorate: Calwell | MP: Maria Vamvakinou

Dr Ben McAllister – Quantum Physicist, University of Western Australia / ARC Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems
Electorate: Perth | MP: Patrick Gorman

Tara Roberson – Science Communicator, University of Queensland / ARC Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems
Electorate: Ryan | MP: Julian Simmonds

Dr Alex Russell – Gambling Researcher, CQUniversity
Electorate: Warringah | MP: Zali Steggall

Associate Professor Deanne Skelly – Biomedical Scientist, Griffith University
Electorate: McPherson | MP: Karen Andrews

Dr Gregory Staib – Energy Data Scientist, Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
Electorate: Ballarat | MP: Catherine King

Ben Tadgell – Nanoparticle Researcher, University of Melbourne / ARC Centre of Excellence in Exciton Science
Electorate: Wills | MP: Peter Khalil

Jo Withford – Engineer, Transport for NSW
Electorate: Newcastle | MP: Sharon Claydon

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