

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a colorful parrot, likely a Rainbow Lorikeet, with vibrant feathers in shades of blue, green, red, and purple. A semi-transparent white mosaic pattern is overlaid on the image, creating a textured, grid-like effect. In the top right corner, there is a white rectangular box containing the text 'Ri Aus'.

Ri Aus

**THE ROYAL INSTITUTION
OF AUSTRALIA
ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As the world entered its second year of pandemic and as a nation we engaged other important matters, such as energy planning, climate, and the environment, the fact that science intersects directly with our lives, came into sharp focus. In these extraordinary times, The Royal Institution of Australia stepped up and engaged these challenges with new vigour and focus. It is in these times that the importance of our mission to bring science to Australians of all walks of life is brought into sharp focus.

During this reporting period, the organisation launched new products, doubled its journalistic output, and achieved greater reach and relevance; serving its mission in providing all of Australia with quality science journalism and content with a focus that reflects the importance of issues of our time. The organisation now has a comprehensive podcasting service and twice weekly video programming dedicated to highlighting where science intersects with the issues of the day on platforms and media relevant to the new and vibrant places where Australia gets its content. It has launched a new subscription service that highlights the intersection of science in the economy and business – reinforcing the importance of science in our future prosperity.

Through new content supply partnerships with mainstream media outlets across the country, including publishers, radio stations and television providers and their digital avenues to market, our content has been delivered more deeply into the Australian community than at any time in our 14-year history.

Our RiAus Education arm has also grown its offering. RiAus Education serves an important role in providing materials to teachers, who may not have a direct qualification in science, to teach science to high school students. We have 6,000 teachers who we communicate with and the materials we produce are accessed over 20,000 times each month. With home schooling in play, our products have been a valuable support to educators, parents and students.

Our achievements in growing platform depth, audience size and content relevance this year are the result of 14 years of trial and error and continual innovation, some yielding long term benefits to the organisation. Since establishment we have either developed or acquired valuable brands, readily recognised, and sought out by a global audience. We've also derived and developed proven editorial processes and content production workflows. These crafts developed over time are difficult to recreate and they serve as an important part of the science communication machinery of Australia.



However, the future is far from guaranteed. Our establishment funding that has supported us for 14 years is running out and the commercial endeavours that we have made to become self-sufficient have either been curtailed due to COVID impacts or have lost their relevance in an ever-changing media and digital landscape – impacts not unique to our organisation.

The board and management of the organisation are working day-by-day to explore options and avenues for the funding that we need to restore the financial base of the organisation and start up the new lines of revenue that we have developed to return the organisation to financial self-sufficiency. The positive news is that the team have developed these new products and revenue opportunities over this year of product growth; the funding we seek is to activate them. We've prepared a detailed plan for potential funding partners. Although we have not secured funding at this stage, we continue to have constructive discussions. We must be clear that nothing can be guaranteed as to our future operations.

The board and its relevant financial and audit committees continue to engage in detailed oversight of the current trading position of the organisation to ensure that until we secure the funding we need, the organisation has the resources it needs to operate and meet its commitments. The organisation currently has the resources to cover its commitments and operate until the end of FY21/22. As the Chairman, I am working closely with the management team to review this position to ensure tight financial governance of the organisation in these difficult times.

Halfway through this reporting period, in December 2020, our CEO, Noelene Buddle, resigned from the organisation to take up a senior position with the South Australian Film Corporation. Will Berryman, a long-term board member of the organisation with experience in media operations and finance was appointed as Executive Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation. I'd like to thank Noelene for her time with the organisation, a time that coincided with the pandemic and the resultant significant decline in our revenue lines. Noelene found efficiencies for the organisation, and ACMA funding to provide the organisation its newsroom.

The staff of the RiAus also deserve much thanks for the new products and platforms they have developed and their extraordinary focus in covering the stories relevant to our times; an effort of which the success of is clearly seen in the growth in our own audience and the other press outlets who have taken advantage of our syndication to inform their audience with our content. Our COVID19 material and our pieces on vaccination have been highly syndicated.

I would like to thank Will Berryman for his leadership of the team and his continued daily attention to securing the future of the organisation.

And although outside the reporting period, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our lead scientist Professor Alan Duffy for his amazing contribution to RiAus over the past four years. His contracted period of engagement ended on October 4. He has been the organisation's north star, and as we head towards future successes, it will be because we have stood on the shoulders of giants.

Finally, I would like to thank the Council of the RiAus for their support in lending their expertise and experience to our mission and our task of seeking the support to allow us to operate into the future. The difficult task of securing our financial future, would only be so much more difficult without this support.

Peter Yates AM

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Our organisation stands at a crossroads. We are delivering our social dividend of bringing science to Australia and Australia to science across more platforms and avenues, reaching greater audiences with a greater volume of content of the highest quality than in the 14-year history of the organisation. However, we are commercially challenged, with COVID19 exhausting our revenue lines and previous business development initiatives of the last few years to raise new revenue unsuccessful. Lockdowns and government and business locked on dealing with the direct impacts of the pandemic have made it difficult for the organisation to bring its current planning, underpinned by commercialising the growth in platforms, audiences, and content depth to the attention of the market, government included.

In terms of core product and its social reach, 2021 has been a very successful year. Even with the pandemic and our financial constraint we have launched new compelling products to the market.

The *Cosmos Weekly*, is, as named, a weekly subscription product that looks at the intersection of science and the economy. It has had more than 25 editions and in trial go-to-market campaigns (all our current funding will allow) has secured over 1000 subscribers. We have derived a comprehensive plan, that with funding will grow this base.

We have also launched the *Cosmos Briefing*, a twice weekly video program looking at where science intersects the issues of the day. From the *Cosmos Briefing* we have also spun off a successful podcasting program. We now have a sustainable production model for our audio and video programming - tightly integrating it into daily digital publishing. We have optimised our existing digital products, both daily science news and RiAus Education, and grown their functions and performance, improving the size of the audience. We outline this performance later in this report.

We've also made our content available for mainstream media organisations to use – syndicating it and participating in other media outlets explanation to their audience of science and its role in the issues of the day. This has grown the reach of the organisation nationally and internationally, allowing us to fulfil our mission in a more substantial way. Details of our syndication reach are outlined further in the report.

Our content has formed an essential part of the education of the public with facts during the pandemic. We have syndicated and developed content about the pandemic and vaccination for publications, TV stations and Radio programs the length and breadth of the country.

However, at a time when we are fulfilling our mission more comprehensively, financially we are in a precarious position. Our revenue lines have been terminated as sponsors and tertiary education partners withdrew from their agreements with us due to COVID impacts. We are reliant on direct revenue sources from our publishing products and have been slow to pivot to grow these. With limited revenue we continue to deplete our reserves.

With the growth we have witnessed in our core products and the revenue possibilities the new products provide, we can see a path to revitalise our revenue (based on hard evidence) and

restore the self-sufficiency that the organisation has operated by since inception.

However, we need some funding over the next 18 to 24 months to realise these new revenue lines and derive a financially sustainable base to our social dividend.

We continue to have constructive discussions with all levels of government and commercial and philanthropic organisations about 12 – 24-month funding that will set us back on the path to self-sufficiency. However, at this stage we have not been successful in securing funding.

While there is general acknowledgement of the importance of the task we are undertaking and the quality of our acquittal of our mission, the funding of science communications is not stated policy or a priority to the funding bodies or parts of government we have had discussions with.

Without this funding the organisation will need to cease its publishing activities and mothball its operations early 2022. It will also have to cease its RiAus Education operations, stopping the supply of science teaching materials to over 6000 teachers. One of the national major pieces of the communication of Australian science to the world will be shut off. Australia will be one of the only G20 nations without a NFP centre of consumer science journalism. At a time when the population needs more science and greater access to science communication and education and access to sources of facts and truths in the face of digital misinformation.

We do hope that we can secure the support required to continue our mission and we are grateful for all the support we have received this year.

I would like to thank the staff of the RiAus who have operated heroically in the face of an uncertain future to pivot the organisation to relevance and develop new products and platforms to deepen the mission. With the pandemic and the sharpening of the climate and renewable energy discussion in the economy, our volume of work great and mission more essential, the team has well risen to the occasion. They are a rare and valuable resource for the nation.

I would also like to thank the Chairman and the board for their support and counsel in what has been a busy and difficult year.

Will Berryman



COSMOS

THE SCIENCE OF EVERYTHING



BY THE NUMBERS

Page views: 7,663,536
Highest monthly site traffic: 1,026,788
page impressions

There's no doubt that 2020/21, particularly since the new year, has been a period of dynamic and rapid change in electronic publishing.

At the core, a more considered and reliably measured approach to assigning and commissioning daily news stories on cosmosmagazine.com, with particular emphasis on stories that have resonance with Australian audiences saw our daily website pageviews and reader numbers grow steadily from January through June. Our ability to scale up our production capacity around key events is also crucial in approach.

Our digital content is also being widely syndicated across both Australia and the rest of the world, and our journalists are featured regularly as experts on a wide range of media outlets when important stories need explanation.

We introduced the *Cosmos Briefing*, a now twice-weekly video production where we interview experts on the important issues in science. The *Briefing* has also become a highly successful podcast production that has expanded our reach into new areas, as well as a pivotal part of our YouTube channel. It has become a core product in our suite.

Towards the end of the reporting period, we also introduced *Cosmos Weekly*, a weekly subscription product that looks at the intersection of science and the economy. With over 1000 subscribers, we continue to fine-tune the product and are excited about its role moving forward.

Cosmos magazine continues strongly with its now established broader editorial focus, and the design team have played an important role in keeping pages bright and lively. Across the year, the result on magazine

metrics of readership and subscriber numbers was essentially steady in spite of uncertainty in the print publishing market.

In a world where the creation and dissemination of the highest quality science-based content is increasingly rare, our newsroom's ability to create and curate for our daily, weekly and print outlets is exceptional. From an extensive range of contributors such as Elizabeth Finkel, Sabine Hossenfelder and James Bradley, through to our own staff, it is a sophisticated model that has taken a significant amount of time and effort to put in place. An important and invisible part of the editorial team's work is the focussed and scientific approach to measuring what we do on all publishing outlets. A regime of hypothesising, testing, reviewing results and – if necessary – changing strategy or practice is the rule.



SCINEMA

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FILM FESTIVAL

BY THE NUMBERS

Total Audience: 126,834 (up 30%)
Film watched: 15,434 times
Total films: 68
Schools registered: 617
Screenings: 4,927
Registrations: 1,988
Most played playlist: Year 7 to 9
(4,174 times)
Most played film: Alice in
Typhoidland (1,270 times)



SCINEMA International Science Film Festival continues to grow, and in 2021 exceeded all of our expectations.

Whilst we were disappointed that we were still unable to travel around Australia, we took all of our learnings from 2020 and drove the message that no matter the restrictions and lockdowns in your area, SCINEMA was there for anyone to screen at home or within a community setting.

For the first time the festival was able to present an award for Indigenous / First Nations science film and SCINEMA Junior entries increased by 20%. Films from over 27 countries entered and a huge increase in films entered into the intriguing genre of Animation and

Experimental, meant that a dedicated playlist could be offered.

Education and SCINEMA continued to cement its relationship as a powerhouse activity for schools and educators to be easily involved in an engaging and entertaining activity for National Science Week. Building on the success of last year, Education offered an online "how to" video ahead of the launch of the festival and during the festival month SCINEMA provided educators with additional tailored ways in which to access the schools playlist and resources, exceedingly important for all of those homeschooled and remote learners and those requiring more flexible access during periods of lockdown.



Among a host of amazing films, the award winners in 2021 included Seven Worlds, One Planet (top), On/Off (above) and Jim Allison Breakthrough (left).



EDUCATION

SUPPORTING STEM LEARNING



Above: Australia's newest icebreaker, RSV Nuyina, will get plenty of coverage through our AAD partnership.

Despite its challenges, 2021 has seen the continuation of our broader objective to target all “educators” – parents, grandparents, etc – rather than an exclusive focus on teachers.

Of course teachers remain the core, and there has been an increase in our work directly with them to make more of the content we create and the way that they can use it. It's about giving teachers more ideas, lightening their workload and supporting out-of-field teachers who may not have a science or maths background, and creating more equal opportunities for students.

Our STEM packs continue to be our most popular resource, covering STEM in the real world. They are pick-up-and-go, resources, guiding teachers and students through learning, with examples of people working in the field.

The learnings and experiences from the 2020 STEP Program were translated into 2021. We continued to offer more in-depth educational resources for the SCINEMA films and produced a “How To” video for teachers in advance of the release of the SCINEMA films. This talked them through how to use SCINEMA films in the classroom. We are very proud of the excellent resources that were created specifically for lockdown which allowed students to actively participate with no input from a teacher required.

We have also put in place an agreement with the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) and we are now their official education partner. We produce their educational science/STEM content and host it on our website.

Finally, our professional development workshops were delivered to science and maths teachers through SASTA and MASA (on top of our own STEP workshops). These were a combination of face-to-face and online workshops to South Australian educators.



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How do radio telescopes work? Astronomers have different ways of watching the universe, including optical telescopes like Hubble and radio telescopes.

A LETTER TO YEAR 10 STUDENTS FROM AUSTRALIA'S FORMER CHIEF SCIENTIST Australia's Chief Scientist from 2014 to 2020, Alan Finkel, responds to a letter from a Year 10 student through...

CHANGING THE COLOUR OF FISHING NETS COULD SAVE THOUSANDS OF PENGUINS Melbourne Zoo's little penguins have been participating in scientific research that could save thousands of penguins...

COMING UP IN CLASS WITH... DR ALAN FINKEL Renewable energy powerhouse Dr Alan Finkel is taking on questions from school students around Australia in this video...

STEM CAREER PROFILES IN STEM - SYSTEMS ENGINEER Find out about the work of Systems Engineer, Anthony Salvinho, in his career with Optus, a biomedical manufacturer...

AMAZING AUSTRALIAN SCIENTISTS AND STUDENTS RECOGNIZED WITH EUREKA PRIZES National science awards honour school students' science communication talent and innovation and leadership of research...

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST TRAINED WOMAN ASTRONAUT TESSIE LOU WHEAT OF TAKES AND SAYS: I'm currently training to be Australia's first woman astronaut. Find out what it takes. Learn about...

HOW MANY STARS ARE THERE IN SPACE? Exactly how many stars are in space? - MadDog, Astronomer Brian Jackson answers a student's question about the...

HOW MAKING A FILM EXPLORING INDIGENOUS STORIES OF THE NIGHT SKY ENRICHED MY PERSPECTIVE AS A SCIENTIST Pacific astronomer and Indigenous STEM Tigger tells the story of his children learning the astrophysical and Indigenous...

PHENOMENA - EPISODE 3: WAVES Waves are all around us. As sound waves move through water and air, they exhibit the greatest patterns that exist...

HEAR ME OUT This documentary is based on the true life events of Sam Waters, 500 billion and just... Talk. The rapstar explains...

AUSTRALIA'S NEW ICEBREAKER IS ON ITS WAY HOME The gateway to Antarctica is on its way to Australia in the form of a new icebreaker. Learn about Australia's new...

BY THE NUMBERS

6,176 educators subscribed to our resources - a 25% increase on last year

4,429 teaching resource downloads

Education website users increased to 38,485

Education - RiAus
Supporting STEM learning through FREE teachers' resources, student activities, and more - all inspired by the Australian National Curriculum.

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INCOME STATEMENT	2021	2020
Income		
Donations	562,105	538,762
Funding/Grants	450,021	145,519
Publishing	415,867	345,038
Membership	48,154	155,211
Investment Income	138,818	269,503
Venue Hire	27,123	136,844
Other	347,731	230,981
Total Income	1,989,818	1,821,857
Expenses		
Programs & Publishing	1,030,255	743,153
Management & Administration	1,461,857	2,199,317
Investment Costs	25,200	32,188
Venue Hire	3,461	10,064
IT & Website	140,922	283,249
Depreciation	90,017	183,572
Other	100,577	139,099
Total Expenses	2,852,289	3,590,641
Net Operating Surplus/(deficit)	(862,471)	(1,768,784)
SUMMARY OF POSITION	2021	2020
Current Assets		
Cash	76,249	131,872
Other Current Assets	207,886	249,686
Non-Current Assets		
Investments	3,168,261	3,339,103
Property, Plant & Equipment	113,005	203,024
Other non-current assets	-	-
Total Assets	3,565,401	3,923,687
Current Liabilities	620,718	814,126
Non-Current Liabilities	29,099	29,882
Total Liabilities	649,817	844,008
Net Assets	2,915,584	3,079,679
Total Equity	2,915,584	3,079,679

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