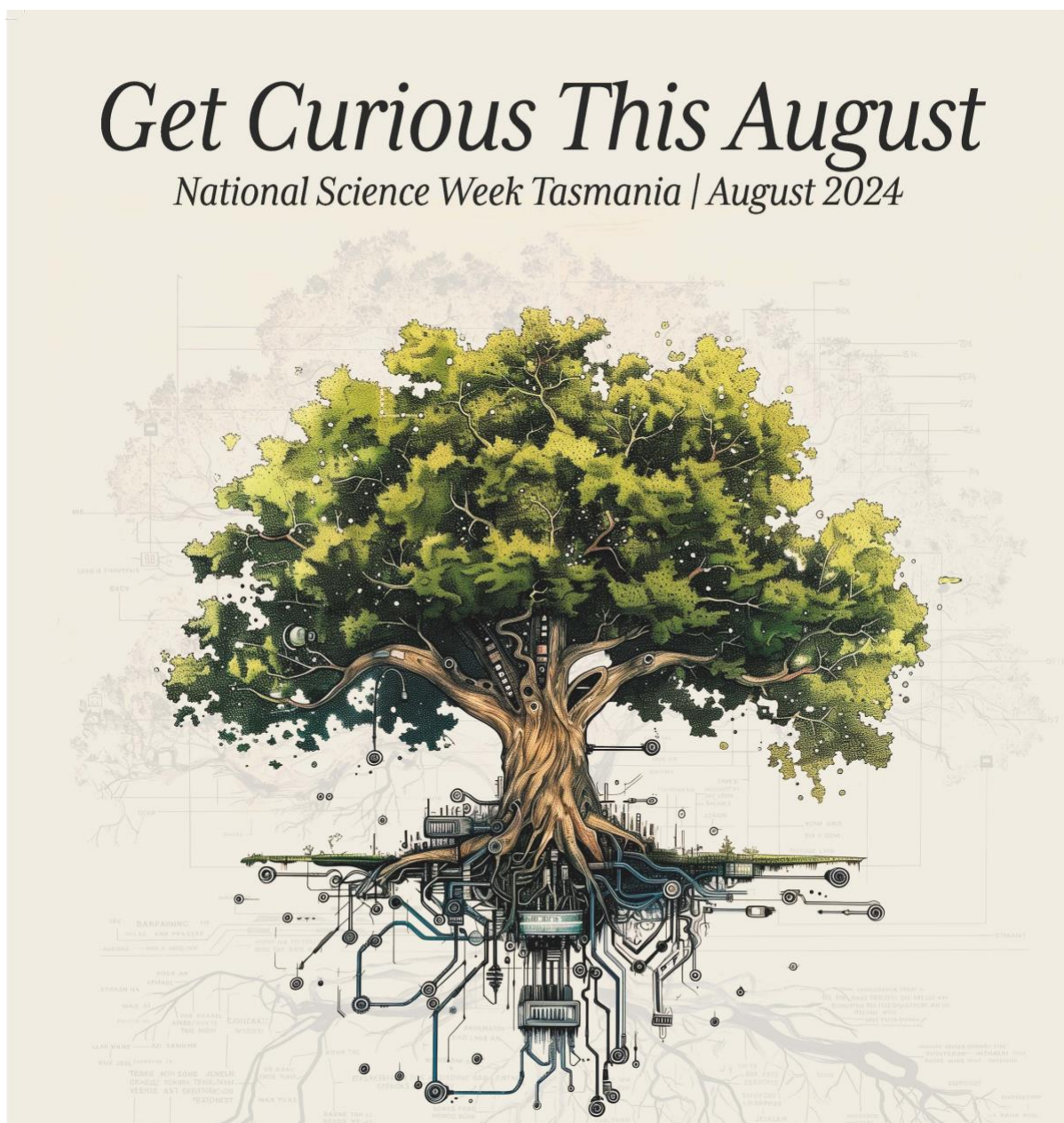




We acknowledge the palawa/pakana, the traditional custodians and first scientists of the land upon which we live and work. We honour their enduring culture and knowledges as vital to the self-determination, wellbeing and resilience of their communities, and to shaping a just, inclusive and equitable Australian society.

# Get Curious This August

*National Science Week Tasmania | August 2024*



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## 1. Summary

National Science Week 2024 was another hugely busy one in Tasmania. With events happening all in all corners of the island, catering to a widely diverse audience, and topics ranging from space to beer, there was something for everyone.

Tasmanian National Science Week 2024 saw 306 events registered, which was a 33% increase from 2023. For a state with only 0.002% of the national population, 15% of the events held nationally were in Tasmania. 17 of these events were supported by Tasmanian National Science Week Engagement Grants, awarded by the IAT Reference Group. New regional events were included in this year's National Science Week festival, including MakerX Fair and the West Coast Space Show. These regional events helped this year's science week reach target regional audiences.

25,000 community members participated in National Science Week events, a record number of participants. This increase was largely due to the expanded Beaker Street Festival, which, following the cancellation of Dark Mofo, received extra support from the state government to expand the event, as well as the increase in the number of events happening around the state.

The Inspiring Australia -Tasmania (IAT) project saw a dramatic increase in its social media reach and engagement, and a significant increase of 37% in media coverage. National Science Week Tasmania's Facebook achieved a 78k daily reach (up 1751%) and 95.1k impressions (up 1652%) when compared with 2023.

For those who participated or attended National Science Week events the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and our communities have shown that they will continue to support into 2025 and beyond.

## Chair's Statement

### Dr Adele Wilson, CSIRO

Reflecting on National Science Week activities in lutruwita Tasmania this year leaves me feeling inspired and energised, I hope that reading this report will do the same for you!

As you will read within, the structure of our National Science Week committee underwent major change in early 2024, with the Inspiring Tasmania Reference Group taking a more direct approach in oversight of National Science Week delivery in our state, supported by task-based subcommittees.

The longstanding Tasmanian National Science Week Coordinating Committee has been retired, having countless remarkable achievements under their collective belt. We are grateful to the many dozens of people who built and contributed to the TNSWCC over the years. Numerous individuals were members for a decade or longer. With others, they facilitated incredible growth for Science Week in Tasmania – in particular I'd like to acknowledge Wayne Goninon, Sarah Bayne, Jenni Klaus, Denise Devitt, Jenny Dudgeon, Dr Deborah Beswick, Dr Diana Nahodil, Dr Ben Arthur, Andy Baird, and our dedicated and longest-standing Chair, Jeannie-Marie LeRoi. Their impact within STEM engagement in Tasmania over recent decades cannot be overstated.

Our brilliant Inspiring Tasmania Manager Dr Tiana Pirtle has delivered beyond expectations once again, particularly given that she works part time! Dr Pirtle consistently delivers excellent work, hitting all targets while keeping everyone on track, and doing so while delivering her own hit Science Week events to boot.

Significantly, compelling calls from our Patron Dr Jess Melbourne Thomas and other leaders in the STEM sector were heard, with the reinstatement of a Minister for Science portfolio into the Tasmanian Government in September 2024.

I thank Jenny Dudgeon for her leadership of the Festival of Bright Ideas subcommittee, and for taking on the interim Chair role during my parental leave. Jenny's insights contribute immensely to the Festival, to Science Week, and to the Inspiring Tasmania Reference Group.

Our subcommittee for The Festival of Bright Ideas delivered a wonderful and engaging event in 2024, introducing new approaches with great success. Thank you too everyone involved in the planning and delivery of the Festival, in particular to Belinda Brock and her team at the University of Tasmania who deftly handle production of the event.

Congratulations to everyone who ran events in Tasmania, big and small! With a growing number of regional events and festivals including Beaker Street in Southern Tasmania, MakerX on the North West Coast, the touring West Coast Space Show, and our inspiring and ever-growing Young Tassie Scientists!

Looking ahead to 2025, our Inspiring Tasmania Reference Group are looking forward to establishing regional subcommittees to encourage and support National Science Week events across Tasmania. We are in the process of reviewing and refining our grant application guidelines and assessment processes, with the aim of ensuring we are best supporting events that encourage diversity and inclusion, particularly for groups that are historically underrepresented in STEM.

## Message from the Tasmanian National Science Week Patron Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas

Dear Tassie,

I'm so excited to welcome you once again to National Science Week!

You will notice that my welcome message\* this year features words in *palawa kani*, the language of Tasmanian Aborigines. The Palawa people were the first scientists of these lands and waterways, and I am very grateful to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Language Program for granting permission to use *palawa kani* words in this message. If you would like to learn more about the *palawa kani* language, including protocols for using it, you can check out <https://tacinc.com.au/programs/palawa-kani/>.

Our program for 2024 features activities across *Lutruwita*, including from *Pataway*/Burnie and *Limilinatori*/Devonport in the north, to *Larapuna*/Bay of Fires and *Trayapana*/Triabunna on the east coast, to *Nipaluna*/Hobart and *Taluna*/the Huon River in the south. And there are many more locations to explore. You can learn more about *palawa kani* place names here: <https://tacinc.com.au/pk/GIS/index.html#9/-42.6309/146.7018>.

Exciting activities for all ages encompass science from the *wurangili*/sky to the *muka*/sea and from *lutha*/gumtrees to *patrula*/fire to *truwala*/mountains, (italicised words are in *palawa kani*, the language of Tasmanian Aborigines). I hope to see you there!

*\*Formatting of palawa kani place names (including capitalisations) and acknowledgements of language in this welcome message follow the current protocols and guidelines from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's Language Program*





## 2. The Committee

### 2.1 Committee Members

#### Inspiring Australia Tasmania Reference Group

Dr Adele Wilson, CSIRO (Chair)

Dr Alfonsina Arriaga Jiménez, QVMAG *incoming August 2024*

Belinda Brock, University of Tasmania

Clarissa Forster, University of Tasmania *incoming June 2024*

David Barbalet, Questacon *outgoing April 2024*

Glenda Routley, State Growth

Jenny Dudgeon, Community Educator

Jesse Jorgensen-Price, Questacon

Maria Dalla-Fontana, State Growth

Sarah Clark Reeves, Questacon *incoming June 2024*

Dr Tiana Pirtle, Inspiring Australia

#### Festival of Bright Ideas Sub-committee

Jenny Dudgeon (Chair)

Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas (Tasmanian National Science Week Patron)

Dr Adele Wilson, CSIRO

Bob Fletcher, Science Teachers Association of Tasmania

Caryn Shield, Geography Teachers Association of Tasmania

Claire Knowles, Hobart City Council

Dr David Klaver, Southern Christian School

Eve O'Neile (Secretary)

Jarod Earley, Engineers Australia

Dr Tiana Pirtle, Inspiring Australia

Savannah White, University of Tasmania

Timothy Gibbons, Science in the Pub

#### National Science Week Grants Sub-committee

Dr Adele Wilson, CSIRO (Chair)

Belinda Brock, University of Tasmania

Glenda Routley, State Growth

Jenny Dudgeon, Community Educator

## 2.2 Operation of the Committee

The Tasmanian National Science Week Coordinating Committee (TNSWCC) was disbanded in 2024, to be replaced with smaller, more focused sub-committees of the Inspiring Australia-Tasmania Reference Group. These sub-committees were established to allow members of the Tasmanian STEM Ecosystem to contribute specifically in-line with their interests, expertise and capacity. The sub-committees this year included the National Science Week Grants sub-committee and the Festival of Bright Ideas (FOBI) sub-committee.

The FOBI sub-committee meet monthly from September 2023 – September 2024. The sub-committee provided advice and direction to the festival organiser and host and were involved in recruiting sponsors and activity providers (exhibitors).

The National Science Week Grants sub-committee assisted in the preparation and assessment of applications and recommendations for awarding grants. They met twice in May 2024 to moderate the allocation of grant funding for Tasmanian National Science Week events.

It is important to acknowledge that Committee members are volunteers and as such, their contribution is dependent on competing demands for their time and the support of their employers. Many Committee members also took on responsibility for coordinating events within the organisation that they represented. Committee members were also encouraged to share information about their events as well as attending and cross-promoting other Science Week events.

## 2.3 Organisations working with the committee

Atomic Blender  
 Australian Association for Environment Education – Tasmania  
 Australian Science Innovations  
 Australian Broadcasting Commission  
 Beaker Street  
 Big Fish Game  
 Bob Brown Foundation  
 Bookend Trust  
 Children's University  
 Chocolate Winterfest  
 Circular Head Council  
 City of Hobart  
 CSIRO  
 Cradle Coast Council  
 Department for Education of Children and Young People  
 Department of State Growth



Devil Robotics  
 Elizabeth College  
 Engineers Australia  
 Fisheries Tasmania  
 Friends of Bruny Island  
 Friends of QVMAG  
 Geography & Spatial Sciences, University of Tasmania  
 The HIVE  
 Hobart Hackerspace  
 Hobart College  
 Hydro Tasmania  
 Inala Nature Tours  
 Latrobe Council  
 Libraries Tasmania  
 Mawson's Hut Foundation  
 Meander Valley Council  
 Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania  
 Nature Trackers  
 Nipaluna Nursery  
 NITA Education  
 Promed  
 Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery  
 Robot Man  
 Rosny Library  
 Royal Australian Chemical Institute  
 Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation  
 Royal Society Tasmania  
 Science in the Pub  
 Sustainability Learning Centre  
 Tasmanian Government House  
 Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture  
 Tasmanian Invertebrate Fossils  
 Tasmanian Land Conservancy  
 Tasmanian Model Solar Challenge  
 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery  
 Tasmanian Dept of Natural Resources and Environment  
 Tasmanian Wilderness Society  
 Tas Networks  
 TasPorts  
 TasWater  
 Ten Lives Cat Shelter  
 The Advocate Newspaper  
 The Examiner Newspaper  
 The Mercury Newspaper  
 University of Tasmania  
 West Coast Space Centre

Wildcare Friends of Larapuna Coast  
 Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre  
 Young Tassie Scientists  
 7HO Radio

## 3. State Event Coordination

### 3.1 Committee funded events

The Inspiring Australia Tasmania Reference Group coordinated activities across Tasmania in several ways:

- Promoted local grant opportunities amongst networks across the state.
- Convened a competitive grant round for National Science Week Engagement grants.
- Continued to provide support for winners of local grants for Tasmanian events.
- Produced a coordinated communications strategy that integrated promotional activity and media engagement.
- Provided a point of contact for local event support, maintaining oversight of events state-wide to facilitate collaborative opportunities and maximise a diverse, cohesive calendar of events.
- Supported the coordination and promotion of the Festival of Bright Ideas.
- Undertook evaluation of the grant holder's events.

The Inspiring Australia Tasmania Reference Group offered \$63,812 in funding this year. In response to feedback from event holders last year, the Reference Group revised the grant types offered. The types of grants and amounts were revised in 2024 following feedback from previous grant winners, with the dropping of the grant to support an event at a larger festival and the increase in available grant amounts for the remaining two categories. Two types of grants were available, 1) up to \$5,000 of support for a public STEM engagement event/activity and 2) up to \$8,000 of support for a program of STEM events/activities delivered outside of the Greater Hobart area. Event topics ranged from animal reproduction to indigenous food. Engagement grants were provided to 17 organisations/individuals within the local STEM ecosystem for National Science Week events/activities.

The Inspiring Australia Tasmania Reference Group and Festival of Bright Ideas sub-committee provided financial and logistical support for the Festival of Bright Ideas, the flagship event of National Science Week in southern Tasmania. The Committee also provided in-kind support to several other events, including the University of Tasmania's Island of Ideas Public Talks program and Beaker Street Festival.

IAT supported events contributed to a vibrant National Science Week festival by providing:

- **High participation and diversity:** Events attracted enthusiastic participants, including a significant representation of underrepresented groups in STEM, such as females, neuro-diverse individuals, and those with disabilities.

- **Engaging topics and activities:** activities included science of chocolate and other topics that captivated audiences.
- **Career Inspiration:** Events inspired attendees, especially young people, to consider careers in STEM, with some events specifically targeting regional areas and underrepresented groups.
- **Networking and in-depth discussion opportunities:** Events facilitated informed discussions on science and conservation. There were ample networking opportunities among scientists, innovators, and participants, fostering collaborations across disciplines into the future.
- **Promotion of local science:** Efforts were made to highlight local scientists and their contributions, raising awareness and encouraging community participation in STEM.
- **First nations involvement:** There were several events highlighting indigenous science led by community. Topics included healing country and wild foods

### 3.2 List of events funded by or organised by the Committee

Event	Organiser	Grant/Support	No. People attended
Festival of Bright Ideas	Inspiring Australia-Tasmania Project	IAT Major Event	4,224
TNSWk Science Week Launch	Inspiring Australia-Tasmania Project	IAT Major Event	60
Science Meets Parliament	Inspiring Australia-Tasmania Project	IAT Major Event	48
Beaker Street Festival	Beaker Street	In-kind	12,127
Dr Karl vs Everyone Game Show	UTAS/Beaker Street	In-kind	Incl. above
Dr Karl Communications 101	UTAS/Beaker Street	In-kind	Incl. above
Dr Karl's Periodic Tale	UTAS/Beaker Street	In-kind	Incl. above
The Cat Catastrophe: Pet or Pest (included program launch for TNSWk)	UTAS Island of Ideas	In-kind	82
Antarctic Wildlife: Skating on thin ice	UTAS Island of Ideas	In-kind	212
Australia and the Antarctic Treaty	UTAS Island of Ideas / Australian Antarctic Festival	In-kind	243
Tasman Tutoring Afternoon Tea	Casey Garrett	TNSWk Grant	16
Exhale: The Art and Science of Relaxation	Dr Penny Jones	TNSWk Grant	98

The Science of Chocolate	Latrobe Council	TNSWk Grant	160
The Science of Selecting, Planting and Establishing Trees	Inala Nature Tours	TNSWk Grant	25
Circular Heads Science Gig	Circular Head Council	TNSWk Grant	450+
Cryptic Wonders: Enchanting slime moulds and other hidden gems	Meander Valley Council	TNSWk Grant	268
Vaginal Vignettes: Sex in the Animal Kingdom	Dr Tiana Pirtle	TNSWk Grant	700
By Gum: Healing Country, East Coast Field Day	Nipaluna Nursery	TNSWk Grant	30
Camera Trap Chronicles	Tasmanian Land Conservancy	TNSWk Grant	342
STEM in the North-East STEM in the East	Sustainability Learning Centre (DCYP)	TNSWk Grant	772
Wild Food: Tasmanian Native on the Menu	Nipaluna Nursery	TNSWk Grant	50
Larapuna/Bay of Fires Community Weekend	Wildcare Friends of Larapuna Coast - Wildcare	TNSWk Grant	100
Science of Brewing	Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture	TNSWk Grant	37
Discover CallTrackers	Bookend Trust	TNSWk Grant	97
Nature Journalling in the Deep South	AAAE	TNSWk Grant	30
Marine Environment Excursion for Migrants	AAAE	TNSWk Grant	36
QVMAG Big Day of Science; In Conversation; & Pub Trivia	QVMAG	TNSWk Grant	1029

## 4. Promotional activities undertaken by the Committee

The promotional strategy was coordinated by Dr Tiana Pirtle (Manager, Inspiring Tasmania, UTAS), Belinda Brock (Manager, Community Outreach, UTAS), and Jack Hayes (National Science Week Promotions Coordinator). The promotional activities for National Science Week commenced in April with the advertising of the TNSWk engagement grant opportunities. Promotional activities ramped up in June with the announcement of grant winners and continued until the final Science Week activities in the last week of August.

The cornerstone of the promotion strategy was the production and distribution of a full-colour, 8-page printed program. The program highlighted National and IAT Project grant-funded events as well as several in-kind supported public events. The program included a regional event guide and other supplementary information (e.g. STEM Excellence Awards). The annual program was launched at an UTAS Island of Ideas public talk - *The Cat Catastrophe: Pet or Pest*, on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Through an ongoing partnership with the three major Tasmanian newspapers, 49,000 programs were distributed throughout Tasmania. The Mercury agreed to print the program at a subsidised cost and distributed 28,000 copies. The Examiner and Advocate distributed 28,000 copies. The Mercury also joined as the Tasmanian festival Media Partner, providing contra advertising of \$16,000+. In addition, 500 Science Week posters were distributed throughout Tasmania to museums, café and other public place.



The program, poster and newspaper ads were designed by Andrew Knott at Atomic Blender, inspired by the 2024 Science Week theme: 'Species Survival: More than sustainability'.

The promotion of the Committee's flagship event, Festival of Bright Ideas (FOBI) was coordinated by the University's Community Engagement team, with the support of the FOBI sub-committee. Activities included a five-week commercial radio advertising campaign and outside broadcast by HIT100.9FM, posters displayed around the Tasmania, signage on and around Princess Wharf 1 location on the Hobart waterfront for a two-week period, promotions through school newsletters and Infostream, and a social media campaign.



Image: 2024 FOBI program

A printed program was also produced for the Festival of Bright Ideas, which was handed out to the public on arrival. The FOBI program was also available to download on the festival website.

## 4.1 Traditional Media

### National Coverage

Nationally, there was an 18% increase in media coverage from 5,651 appearances of 'Science Week' tracked last year to 9,000 this year (Source: Isentia). With the exception of 2022, the 2024 National Science Week had the greatest volume of media coverage since Isentia began tracking the event in 2016. The leading media type for coverage was radio, with 4,329 reports, or 48% of the total. This was an increase from 3,063 reports in 2023.


### State Coverage


The media in Tasmania continued their support of National Science Week with several stories covered across all platforms. The Mercury, Advocate and Examiner all continued their support by distributing the printed program and featuring stories from National Science Week. Circulation from print, radio, online, and television in Tasmania reached 1,082,165 people in the form of 496 reports (Source: Isentia). This is an increase in audience reach and the number of articles from previous years. The cumulative ASR value of all media coverage in 2024 was \$489,379.


Year	Media	# of News Items	Audience	Value
2019	Print	49	852,931	\$173,397
	Radio	39	21,600	\$253,809
	TV	39	437,000	\$27,830
2020	Print	23	363,532	\$66,603
	Radio	85	Na	\$356,721
	TV	23	100,000	\$20,372
2021	Print	33	407,822	\$96,923
	Radio	165	Na	\$216,622




	TV	30	204,000	\$18,103
2022	Print	24	503,183	\$70,524
	Radio	297	na	\$768,569
	TV	99	359,306	\$81,846
2023	Print	16	394,887	\$77,252
	Radio	169	n/a	\$157,489
	TV	127	517,129	\$85,101
	Online	29	103,917	\$14,707
2024	Print	14	378,840	\$75,010
	Radio	320	13,600	\$295,739
	TV	99	505,409	\$76,693
	Online	24	78,611	\$41,937


**Local activities to feature in National Science Week**  
12 Aug 2024 1:57AM • Sea FM Tasmania by Martin Agatyn  
Brief: Science Week • 189 words • Market: Australia • Item ID: 2100941685  
... stown, Zeehan, Ulverstone and Devonport at various dates between tomorrow and August 21st, and the Science of Making at the University of Tasmania Makers Technology and Innovation Hub in Burnie on August 25th. The Chocolate Winterfest at Latrobe on Sunday ...  
[Read on source site](#) AUD 6,150


**'MUCH MORE WE CAN DO TO FOSTER STEM'**  
10 Aug 2024 12:00AM • Hobart Mercury  
Brief: Science Week • 743 words • Market: Australia • Item ID: 2100327018  
Science Week patron calls for return of A leading Antarctic and marine researcher says the reinstatement of a dedicated Minister for Science in Tasmania could help elevate STEM learning across the state. CSIRO expert and former Tasmanian Australian of the Year Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas, in her role as patron ...  
[View original](#) AUD 9,152 PPR 45,000


**Are you fascinated by the night sky and based in Nipaluna / Hobart? Join us this Saturday 17 August at 6pm for a very sp...**  
16 Aug 2024 7:23AM • Facebook by The Wilderness Society  
Brief: Science Week • 195 words • Market: Australia • Item ID: DS0319992558  
... world. This discussion will explore the science of Sky Country and reinforce the importance of protecting and restoring dark skies. Where: In person at Stanley Burbury Theatre, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay TAS When: Saturday 17 August at 6:00pm. Joining Duane for a panel discussion will be: Palawa woman Sharnie Read (Aboriginal Heri...  
[Read on source site](#)


**Mini MakerX at Burnie, Sunday 25 August**  
21 Aug 2024 1:28AM • Tasmanian Times  
Brief: Science Week • 401 words • Market: Australia • Item ID: 2103947210  
... "Mini MakerX is a family-friendly show-and-tell that brings together the whole community," said University of Tasmania Executive Dean (Regional Education), Professor Natalie Brown. "This year's National Science Week theme is ...  
[Read on source site](#) AUD 1,240 PPR 945


**A busy week of science outreach with an appearance on ABC radio Hobart to discuss the @YTS\_UTAS program and paleoclimate...**  
19 Aug 2024 12:02AM • Twitter by Joe Cresswell  
Followers: 62 • Following: 183 • Tweets: 51 • Item ID: DS0320134812  
A busy week of science outreach with an appearance on ABC radio Hobart to discuss the @YTS\_UTAS program and paleoclimate research followed by the festival of bright ideas. <https://t.co/NSfYblwzv>  
[Read on source site](#) | [Favourite](#) | [Retweet](#) | [Reply](#) PPR 62


**A beer-illiant way to celebrate National Science Week on Saturday 24 August. Join us at Saint John Craft Beer from 4pm...**  
12 Aug 2024 6:00AM • Twitter by Tia  
Followers: 2685 • Following: 422 • Tweets: 2999 • Item ID: DS0319322423  
A beer-illiant way to celebrate National Science Week on Saturday 24 August. Join us at Saint John Craft Beer from 4pm-6pm. Sample a selection of kegs and cast your vote for the best brew! A judging panel will select the homebrewer winner. Book now <https://t.co/DoTOU353f> <https://t.co/ly9IM02BQj>  
[Read on source site](#) | [Favourite](#) | [Retweet](#) | [Reply](#) PPR 2,685

## 4.2 Social media

The IAT project uses its own Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts to promote National Science Week in Tasmania. These accounts were managed by the Inspiring Tasmania Manager and Promotions Coordinator. The Inspiring Tasmania account is the primary social media channel throughout the year. Leading up to and during Science Week, activity is primarily shifting to the Science Week Tasmania and Festival of Bright Ideas accounts. The social media accounts are:

- Facebook: Science Week Tasmania, Festival of Bright Ideas, and Inspiring Tasmania
- Twitter: Science Week Tasmania and Inspiring Tasmania
- Instagram: Inspiring Tasmania, Festival of Bright Ideas

National Science Week was also promoted through the host organisation, the University of Tasmania's social media accounts.

### Reach and Engagement

From 1 August to 31 August, Inspiring Tasmania and National Science Week pages saw significant growth in reach and impressions across Facebook and Instagram. Inspiring Tasmania's Facebook had a 44.4K daily reach (up 474%) and 52.4K impressions (up 436%), while Instagram had a 1.9K daily reach (up 102%) and 2.4K impressions (up 74%).

National Science Week Tasmania's Facebook achieved a 78K daily reach (up 1751%) and 95.1K impressions (up 1652%). The Festival of Bright Ideas' Facebook had a 77.7K daily reach (up 131%) and 89.1K impressions (up 116%), with Instagram reaching 10.7K daily and 17.5K impressions.

Additionally, through the University of Tasmania's social media channels, National Science Week content reached 212.7K total daily, with Facebook at 200.1K daily reach (236.6K impressions) and Instagram at 12.6K daily reach (19.9K impressions).

Facebook drove most of the reach, while Instagram had the strongest engagement.

### Audience

Thanks to dedicated resources to manage the social media campaign during National Science Week, the audience for the National Science Week Tasmania channels and Festival of Bright Ideas channels increased while the audience for Inspiring Tasmania remained steady. The audience for the Festival of Bright Ideas channels rose sharply immediately prior to the festival.

#### AUDIENCE

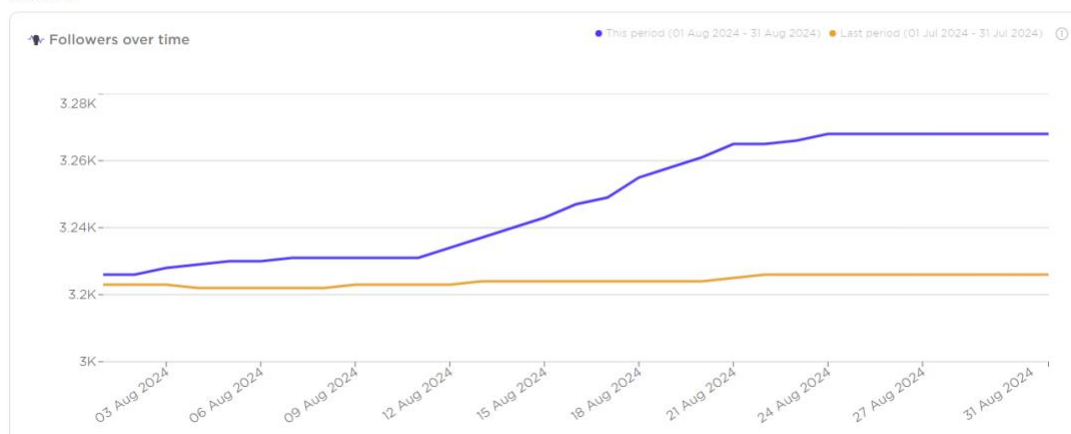


Figure 1. Audience for TNSWk Facebook

#### AUDIENCE

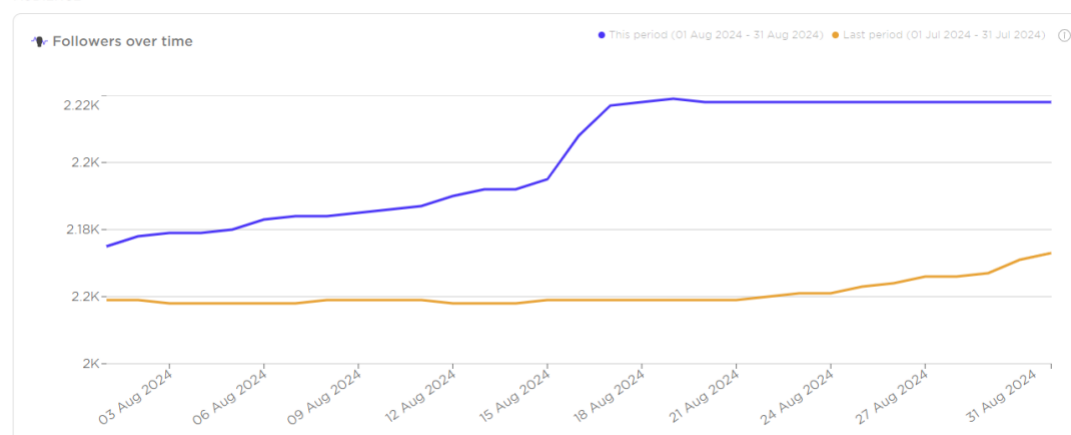


Figure 2. Audience for FOBI Facebook

## 4.3 Advertising

Print ads were placed in all three Tasmanian daily newspapers – The Mercury, The Advocate and The Examiner Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Each of the ads were designed by Atomic Blender and featured regional events specific to the newspaper’s audience. Contra editorial space was provided by The Advocate and The Examiner allowing for a 1000-word article promoting National Science Week. Six adverts were placed within The Mercury as part of the contra agreement.



Advertisement placed in The Examiner

## 4.4 Sponsorship

This year, the IAT committee offered a new sponsorship opportunity for local organisations to support national science week. The two sponsorship opportunities offered were the Principal STEM Champion for \$15,000 and Supporting STEM Champion for \$7,500. Both sponsorships offered acknowledgement across all Tasmanian NSWk promotional material, invitation to VIP events, custom exhibition space at the Festival of Bright Ideas.

Hydro Tasmania supported NSWk as the Principal STEM Champion Sponsorship and TasNetworks as the Supporting STEM Champion Sponsorship.

## 4.5 Other promotional activity

Additional promotional activities included:

- A3 posters were distributed online and state-wide in print
- Events were promoted through [Infostream](https://www.infostream.com.au/) to reach educators and schools
- National Science Week merchandise (hats, badges and T-shirts) was provided to event holders on request, as gifts to speakers/guests and prizes to the audience
- The Inspiring Tasmania website was used for event promotion
- Media releases were sent for key activities and events such as the TNSWk launch and large events like Beaker Street and Festival of Bright Ideas
- Street banners were hung along the main eastern arterial road into Hobart
- Radio listener competition with prizes being free tickets to FOBI
- Postcard art competition for school students focussed on their favourite Tasmanian species in the lead up to FOBI with art displayed at the festival
- Word of mouth, which remains a powerful tool for promotion and relationship building in Tasmania

## 5. Events

### 5.1 Tasmanian National Science Week Launch

Tasmania's National Science Week was launched in conjunction with the Beaker Street Festival. Over 50 STEM ecosystem stakeholders attended the event. Presentations were made by the Minister for Events, The Honourable Nic Street MP, The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Hobart, Councillor Anna Reynolds, Tasmanian National Science Week Patron, Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas and Beaker Street Festival Director, Margo Adler. Neurologist and Superstar of STEM, Lila Landowski provided Master of Ceremonies duties. There was a special guest appearance of Australia's only astronaut, Katherine Bennell-Pegg. A number of media outlets attended the launch and good media coverage was achieved.

During the launch, the patron of Tasmanian National Science Week called for the return of a dedicated Minister for Science and Technology. The portfolio was removed in the state election earlier this year. Shortly after this event and the subsequent media coverage, the Tasmanian government announced a new ministry: Minister for Science.



#### Science Week patron calls for return of dedicated Tasmanian minister, portfolio

## 'MUCH MORE WE CAN DO TO FOSTER STEM'

#### Genevieve Holding

A leading Antarctic and marine researcher says the reinstatement of a dedicated Minister for Science in Tasmania could help elevate STEM learning across the state.

CSIRO expert and former Tasmanian Australian of the Year Dr Jess Melbourne-Thomas, in her role as patron of Science Week, said on Friday more could be done to accelerate the importance of learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

"I know, for instance, that we no longer have a Tasmanian minister for science," she said.

"We've never had a Tasmanian chief scientist.

"There's much that we can

do to better recognise the importance of Indigenous knowledge and science in lutruwita/Tasmania, and I've made the point before that I think we really do need rapid and drastic change in terms of the way that we support and reward our STEM educators in the state."

Member for Clark, Madeline Ogilvie previously held a position of Science Minister but in the new-look Liberal cabinet following the state election, science was absorbed in the Business, Industry and Resources portfolio of minister Eric Abetz.

This, in a state which proclaims to be the gateway to Antarctica and has one of the highest percentages of science professionals, per capita, in the country.

Dr Melbourne-Thomas was

speaking in Hobart to mark the start of National Science Week from Saturday and to celebrate the eighth year of Tasmania's Beaker Street Science Festival.

Festival founder Dr Margo Adler said she never envisioned the event growing as big as it has.

"We're expecting 10,000 people through the festival this year," she said.

"We've got a ton of interesting and overseas visitors this year, so it's really going great."

"It's really amazing, eight years in, to find ourselves in this position where we have so much support behind us."

The eight-day festival wraps up on Tuesday, August 13.

Friday's events included a 'Turn on The Stars' stargazing event in the CBD, a futuristic feast at Hobart restaurants

such as Westside Laundry and a late-night Festival Club at Hobart's City Hall with adult-friendly humour.

It was at Thursday night's Dark Sky Dinner at Frogmore Creek winery that Tasmanians got to meet Australia's first female astronaut Katherine Bennell-Pegg.

Ms Bennell-Pegg said her visit to Tasmania had been focused on encouraging younger generations to become the future of STEM in Australia.

"When I was growing up with the childhood astronaut dream I really cherished getting the chance to meet other Australians that have been to space and getting into the Science Festival was really crucial to be able to imagine what that future might be like," she said.

Ms Bennell-Pegg hopes to address the "diversity challenge" in STEM in Australia by encouraging more women



## 5.2 Event distribution

In total, there were 306 registered events for National Science Week in Tasmania, including public events and private events (excluding events held at schools except those conducted by the Young Tassie Scientist program). This was a 33% increase in the number of events from last year. More than 25,000 Tasmanians attended events around the state.

The 17 events were funded by the Tasmanian Science Week Engagement Grants and reached an audience of over 3,600. More than 4,200 attended the Festival of Bright Ideas on either the school day or public day. Over 12,000 participated in the Beaker Street Festival, which was supported by a national grant as well as the state government. 452 attended the two University of Tasmania *Island of Ideas* National Science Week talks either online or in-person.

There were several unique and successful events held in 2024. Below is just a sampling of the inspiring and unique events that were part of TNSW this year.

### 5.2.1 Notable Events

#### Science Meets Parliament

The Science Meets Parliament dinner has been an annual event and fixture of the Tasmanian National Science Week program since 2006. The event provides an opportunity to connect scientists directly with Tasmanian Members of Parliament and key policymakers to share knowledge and discuss the opportunities and challenges for STEM in Tasmania.

In the absence of a dedicated Minister for Science, the 2024 dinner was hosted by the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources, the Honourable Eric Abetz MP on Thursday, 8 August at Parliament House. The dinner MC was Professor Julianne O'Reilly-Wapstra, Interim Dean of the School of Natural Sciences at the University of Tasmania. Guest speakers for 2024 were Professor Brett Paull, Professor in Chemistry, University of Tasmania and Dr Sheree Armistead, Postdoctoral Research Fellow – Mineral Deposits Research, University of Tasmania. In her speech, Dr Armistead echoed the Science patron in calling for the reinstating of a dedicated Minister from Science.

Feedback from science, industry and policy representatives was overwhelmingly positive.



## Festival of Bright Ideas



The Festival of Bright Ideas celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year as part of National Science Week. Thirty-two local science, tech, engineering, and maths (STEM) affiliated organisations hosted interactive experiences and activities for curious Tasmanians. Activities were highly engaging and varied from robotics, live marine fauna and flora and solar powered vehicles. The full list of activities is viewable [here](#).

Across the School's Day on Friday 17 August and the Public Day on Saturday 18 August, more than 4,200 Tasmanians attended.

Feedback was collected from participants both during the event as well as afterwards via email. Feedback was collected from 183 people. Some key public feedback:

- More than half of the respondents had previously attended FOBI.
- More than three-quarters of respondents were from a non-science background.
- One in five respondents reside in areas of greater socio-economic disadvantage.
- 91% of respondents had positive feedback.
- Most popular activities for respondents were marine-themed and robotics.

Most schools who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that FOBI:

- Made their students more aware of the variety of science organisations in Tasmania.
- Made their students more aware of the number of people involved in science in Tasmania.
- Made their students excited about science.
- Was a worthwhile experience for their students.



Almost all schools indicated that are interested in bringing students to the next Festival of Bright Ideas.

## Beaker Street Festival



The Beaker Street Festival hosted over 12,000 attendees, an increase in attendance by 30%. 70% of these attendees came from a non-science background.

The festival's impressive 2024 expansion saw 70 plus events with half being free to the public, across 30 venues, with highlights including future beer samplings, exciting art exhibitions, hilarious debates, and over 500 kids (and certainly

some adults) inspired by an Australian astronaut. The expansion was largely due to the Tasmanian Government funding filling the gap in visitor activities created by the loss of Dark MoFo for 2024.

Festival favourite, The Roving Scientist Bar, grew to include 150 roving scientists this year, sparking infinite science-inspired conversations. A new highlight this year, Hobartica saw around 1,800 people develop a better connection to Antarctica, 1,100 sweaty Finnish sauna sessions and 882 Antarctic ice plunges!

Nights out at Beaker Street saw guests enjoy 12 scientific strip teases from 8 drag queens and entertaining vignettes about animal vaginas and saw 600 Beaker Street condoms being pocketed across the week.

Festival Founder and Director Dr Margo Adler says "Our goal with Beaker Street Festival is to build community through scientific understanding and to create immersive experiences at the intersection of science and art. Now in our eighth year, the festival has grown into a city-wide celebration, spanning Hobart's cultural and entertainment hubs."



## Young Tassie Scientists

This year the Young Tassie Scientists (YTS) team of 38 volunteer scientists saw a record breaking 109 schools across Tasmania. The expanded reach of the program included visiting 13 schools that had not previously engaged in the program, and attending 10 schools that had not been visited in the last two or more years. The addition of these schools enabled the YTS to engage with more high school students than previous years and have more study and career focussed conversations with these older students.

The YTS team travelled to the very remote Bass Strait Islands. At Flinders Island, the YTS met their pen pals from nearby Cape Barren Island School face-to-face for the first time. These students travelled to Flinders Island School to attend the YTS presentation. As part of the YTS visit to King Island District School scientists were able to present to their whole school and participate in their National Science Week activities.



Furthering relationships with local media, including LAFM Launceston and ABC Hobart, also enabled YTS to expand the team's media engagement showcasing more fantastic volunteer scientists. This included 12 YTS talking about their sciences and in-school activities across 18 radio interviews.

Throughout August the YTS team also participated in ten statewide Science Week events. This included

highlights such as Circular Head Science Gig, Hive Family Day, Festival of Bright Ideas, Beaker Street, Government House Science Week Reception and many more along the way. Overall, in 2024 YTS engaged with almost 10,000 students and teachers, as well as a further 5000 community members at public events.



## MakerX

The inaugural Mini MakerX event at the University of Tasmania's Cradle Coast Campus was a huge success, featuring hands-on activities, demonstrations, and a focus on sustainability and STEM education. The event, held on Sunday, 25 August, included a variety of activities from digital technology and gaming to science experiments and sustainable practices, engaging participants of all ages.



The key highlight of Mini MakerX was its diverse range of activities. The event offered something for everyone, and the interactive zones were particularly popular, allowing children and adults alike to explore STEM topics including drone technology, VR, AI, and sustainable living practices in an engaging and hands-on manner. Participants and exhibitors provided positive feedback, with 96% of participants indicating they would return.

The benefits of Mini MakerX extended beyond the event itself. The enthusiasm generated by the event has had a lasting impact on the community, fostering a greater interest in STEM education and breaking down barriers to learning. By providing a platform for hands-on exploration and experimentation, Mini MakerX has helped to demystify STEM subjects and make them more accessible to a broader audience, in particular a regional audience that does not always have access to hand-on science activities and scientists.

## Science Week 2024 at QVMAG

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) hosted a series of events during Science Week to engage the community in STEM and STEAM learning, with a focus on local relevance and inclusivity. QVMAG's Science Week program includes events such as the Big Day of Science, In Conversation sessions at the Art Gallery, and a Science in the Pub trivia night, all designed to engage various age groups in STEM activities.

The Big Week of Science aims to promote community interest in STEM through programs that support national science education efforts, tailored to the Launceston region, and inspire informed discussions on STEM topics. The week encourages young people to pursue careers in science by highlighting local scientific work and achievements, fostering a deeper appreciation for the sciences.

QVMAG's Science Week activities are designed to cater to all age groups, providing diverse learning opportunities and linking science-based learning to everyday life, with both on-site and off-site events. Over 1,500 community members and 29 school groups from northern Tasmania participated in the Big Week of Science.



## Marine Environment Excursion for Newly Arrived Migrants

The marine environment excursion for newly arrived migrants, organized by the Australian Association for Environmental Education – Tasmania (AEEE-Tas) members, was highly successful and engaging. AEEE-Tas partnered with the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania and Tas- TAFE. These organisations liaised with their new clients/students to establish individuals and family groups who were confident to be involved.



The attendees were predominately Farsi speakers and AAEE- Tas arranged for a Farsi interpreter – who volunteered her services and was a wonderfully adept and alert interpreter, who made the sharing of information, clear and purposeful. Within the group there was also a Mandarin & Hindi speaker, who willingly interpreted. One family group had only been in Tasmania for two weeks after fleeing Afghanistan, and the majority had been in Tasmania for less than a year.

Participants, many of whom had never seen the sea, enjoyed exploring rockpools and the beach. The event, attended by over 30 individuals from Afghanistan, China, Hong Kong, Bangladesh and India, along with their children, fostered curiosity about coastal

flora and fauna and marine ecosystems. Young attendees were particularly enthusiastic about the marine environment, while adults engaged in discussions on fishing, overfishing, plastic waste, endangered species, water safety and environmental care. They also had fun creating ephemeral artworks. Despite challenges posed by the cold August weather and short daylight hours, the event was well-received.

## Wild Food

Wild Food was a series of workshops aimed at promoting community interest and participation in STEM through the practical science of cooking and growing Tasmanian native food. Three scientists and innovators presented on seaweed science, native foods, and biochar. Additional workshops were led by Helen Fitton on seaweed products and Christina Giudici on biochar for soil health.

The events were highly successful, reaching a diverse audience and engaging underrepresented groups, particularly through events held in regional areas and mental health centres. The workshops included hands-on science activities, storytelling, and science through the arts, as well as networking opportunities among presenters and participants.



## Vaginal Vignettes

UTAS' Dr Tiana Pirtle hosted three showings of the Vaginal Vignettes, an event focused on the world of female reproduction and dispelling false narratives about female animal agency in reproduction and combating gender bias in science. The purpose of the event was to showcase the diversity in what it means to be female and the wildly different strategies female animals have evolved to take control over reproduction, even when it appears that males are in control.

The consisted of eight skits that each told the story behind a different animal vagina: why they look the way they do and all the fascinating and surprising things they can do. Each story was narrated by a scientist with expertise in that particular animal. These narrations were supported by two professional actors who acted out the story in costume and with a variety of props.

This year's event reached the largest audience thus far: over 700 people across four different events. Three of the four events were part of the Beaker Street Festival, with the first being a game show with Dr Karl and Adam Spencer: "Guess who's vagina", where Dr Karl had to guess which animal the



3D vagina model belonged to. The next two shows were part of Beaker Street's Late Night Sessions. Feedback from the audience indicated the skits were the highlight of late night show, as both hilariously entertaining, empowering, and very informative.

The final show was a stand-alone event at the Founders Room at the Salamanca Arts Centre. The show sold out at over 100 with all seats occupied and several people left standing. In addition to the skits, eleven 3D animal vagina models were on display.



The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees found the skits wildly entertaining but also easily understandable, thanks to the brilliant acting that made quite complex evolutionary stories comprehensible. Many also expressed gratitude and relief at the public dispelling of the patriarchal myths that have for too long dictated how the Western world views and studies females. Some feedback included: 'absolutely brilliant' 'this is the best thing I have ever seen' 'very clever' 'I wish the show had gone on for longer'.

The event was seen by Science Vs Podcast creator Wendy Zuckerman, who absolutely loved it and invited Tiana to be on her podcast. Tiana was also interviewed for the local podcast, That's What I Call Science.

## 5. 4 Audience distribution

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that the Tasmanian population was approximately 578,000 at September 2024. As of 2021 15% of people living in Tasmania were born overseas. Tasmania's average population is four years older than the national average, at 42. Tasmania has a lower proportion of people ages 20 to 44 years (31%) than Australia as a whole (35%). The proportion of Tasmanians over 65 years is continuing to grow and the portion of young people under 15 has reduced, resulting in a reduction in the working age population.

In the 2021 Census, almost two-thirds of Tasmania's population lived outside of the capital city area of Greater Hobart. 30,000 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in Tasmania, making up 5.4% of the population, higher than the Australian percentage of 3.2%.

In Tasmania, the median weekly income was \$701 for individuals and \$1,720 for families in 2021. For comparisons, in Victoria, the median weekly income was \$803 for individuals and \$2,136 for families in 2021

Reference: [2021 Tasmania, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/2021/Tasmania/Census/All%20persons/QuickStats)

Reflecting Tasmania's demographics, the target audiences for 2024 included:

- Regional communities throughout the state. This audience was targeted through the regional engagement grants and working with community groups and community-minded organisations such as Libraries Tasmania.
- Young people and families. This audience was targeted through the engagement grant funded activities that catered to families, such as the Science Gig, QVMAG Science week program and Festival of Bright Ideas.
- Politicians and decision makers, including the Tasmanian Cabinet.
- Young people who are engaged socially but not necessarily with science (ages 18 – 35). This audience was reached through events such as Beaker Street Late Night Sessions, and The Science of Beer.

In 2024 more than 25,000 people were recorded to attend public National Science Week events, with many more attending private events, primarily at schools. Audiences included families, young people, kids of all ages, all genders, and communities in low socio-economic regions in the state.

## 6. Outcomes

### 6.1 Analytics

#### Evaluation and feedback from TNSWC grant recipients

In 2024, we surveyed Tasmanian National Science Week grant recipients through the grant acquittal process and the following challenges were identified, particularly for smaller regional events.

Grant holders appreciated the support and funding provided, which made the events possible, although some faced challenges due to the short time between grant approval and event dates.

They identified that there were difficulties in effectively advertising the event, especially in small regional towns where reliance on social media excluded older demographics. When events were held at school venues, challenges were faced in spreading the message beyond their immediate community. In particular, one grant holder gave this feedback: 'Many people heard about it through social media (Facebook and Instagram) but many older people don't use social media. As far as I could ascertain, only two people came as a result of seeing the NSWk piece in the local paper, and one woman didn't investigate further (i.e. go to the website) to find out the particular details of the venue.'

Grant recipients felt that their activities would benefit from increasing advertising and training, communications training for more passionate scientists, and extending the event window to include better weather conditions.

### 6.2 Success stories

#### Grant holder survey comments and quotes

Grant holders rated the success of their events highly and well attended. Given access to funding, the consensus amongst event organisers was that they would be very likely to run an event for 2025.

Select quotes provided by grant holders is provided below:

*'We had a great turnout. The vibe was lovely, feedback was positive and participants have asked if we can do something similar next year.'*

*'This event was incredibly valuable for engagement and raising awareness of both conservation science in Tasmania and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, with many attendees being new to the TLC.'*

*'This is one of our largest and most popular community events.'*

*'It was especially rewarding to welcome a woman and her granddaughter who had flown from Sydney to see the exhibition after corresponding with me through my website.'*

*'This was my event's most successful year with a massively expanded audience and several different engagement opportunities across science week (but actually month). As a result of the activities supported by this grant, I ended up on stage with Dr Karl and Adam Spencer and on the Science Vs podcast, further expanding the number of people we got to engage with.'*

*'Thank you for the opportunity to engage underrepresented demographics in STEM. The event was a really lovely opportunity for families to participate in something in their local area without needing to travel to the city. Being free, it also gave families something to attend without needing to pay, which may discourage them in the cost of living crisis.'*

*'Loved the smiles and interactions from this presentation.'*

*'This is a fantastic program and thanks for offering it, and making it relatively easy to apply for and receive (and acquit) the grants, while still making it a strong selection/acquittal process. That does make it much easier to apply for and run programs.'*

## 7. Challenges

### 7.1 List challenges

- **Late Announcement of national grants:** The late announcement of National Science Week national grants caused complications in settling state grants and compromised the timeline for promoting key events.
- **Volunteer contribution:** Committee members are volunteers, and their contribution is dependent on competing demands for their time and the support of their employers. It is increasingly hard to find suitable time to gather a full committee for planning meetings. Volunteers that help deliver events are also becoming more difficult to secure and it is necessary to supplement with paid staff.
- **Financial viability:** Local grant holders experienced increased costs in running their activities and events and found it necessary to provide increased in-kind and separately funded to organise and deliver their projects. The increase in the amount of funding available greatly contributed to the ability to run events, however, the success of the events still relied heavily on in-kind contributions and voluntary hours of event organisers.
- **Promotions of events:** Some local grant holders also expressed difficulties in effectively advertising their event, especially in small regional towns where reliance on social media excluded older demographics.

### 7.2 Learnings to share

- **Expanded Reach:** The IAT project saw a dramatic increase in social media reach and engagement, with a 37% increase in media coverage. National Science Week Tasmania's Facebook achieved a 78k daily reach (up 1751%) and 95.1k impressions (up 1652%) compared to 2023. The expanded reach in communications can be attributed to drawing on the University of Tasmania's communications team for assistance with traditional media coverage, and the appointment of a dedicated social media management resource which resulted in more strategic placement of social media advertising spend and greater organic reach. The IAT project also invested in a commercial radio campaign which expanded reach to new audiences.
- **Increased Participation:** Tasmanian National Science Week 2024 saw a 33% increase in registered events compared to 2023, with a record audience of over 25,000 community members participating. Having key events in regional locations along with the expanded Beaker Street festival provided greater visibility of the National



Science Week festival, resulting in increased awareness and participation across the festival.

- **Audience Diversity:** As efforts focussed on supporting events for historically underrepresented groups in STEM and a greater diversity of audiences engaged with National Science Week, we saw an increase in groups identifying as females, neuro-diverse individuals, migrants, First Nations, and those with disabilities. Three of the events this year were led by First Nations community members and focused on traditional knowledge.

### 7.3 Recommended actions

Through the experience of the committee and after receiving feedback from event holders, these are the following recommendations for next year:

1. National grant winners should be announced earlier, so that those winners can be marked ineligible for state funding. Currently, recipients are applying for both national and state rounds and the delay in national funding announcement is impacting the timely acceptance of state funding. Feedback indicates the state round should remain with the earlier grant round timing as it provides sufficient time between grant announcement, and event delivery to allow the promotion of events.
2. Review the state grant guidelines, application, categories, selection criteria, and acquittal form. This includes reviewing the type of grant offered and what the key selection criteria are for each.
3. Continue to support and further expand TNSWk in regional Tasmania. There were several new key regional events that brought STEM activities to a regional audience. Next year should build upon this momentum to continue to reach the underserved rural regions of Tasmania.
4. Continue to pursue new/expand on current partnerships with for example MONA, Beaker Street, CSIRO, etc
5. Further support the engagement of underrepresented groups.
6. Committee members to further use their own networks to promote TNSWk events and activities.
7. Due to the regionality of Tasmania, look to recruit more representatives from the northwest and north of the state on the Reference Group and its sub-committees.
8. Look into the viability of acquiring new street banners for each of Tasmania's major cities, Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Burnie, to elevate the visual recognition of the

National Science Week festival. Also look into the viability of street signage in key areas around cities.

9. Explore opportunities to leverage national and state STEM award winners in the promotion of science week.
10. Grant recipients felt that their activities would benefit from increasing advertising and training, communications training for more passionate scientists. Next year look to providing upskilling opportunities.

## 8. Attachments

Attachment 1: TNSWk Program

Attachment 2: FOBI Program

Attachment 3: Feedback from grant recipients

Attachment 4: Feedback from FOBI attendees and participants

This report has been compiled by Dr Tiana Pirtle, Belinda Brock, Eve O’Neil, and Jack Hayes.

We wish to thank the Chair, Dr Adele Wilson, FOBI Sub-committee Chair, Jenny Dudgeon, Tasmania’s NSW Patron, Dr Jess Melbourne Thomas, and all the committee members for all their hard work to ensure this year’s Tasmanian National Science Week was a success.

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