

ASM Science Meets Business report

Four ASM representatives, Prof. Liz Hartland, Prof. Liz Harry, Prof. Enzo Palombo and A/Prof. Dena Lyras, attended Science & Technology Australia's second annual 'Science Meets Business' meeting held on 24 October 2016 in Melbourne. Around 200 leaders from research organisations, the private sector and government attended this meeting which examined cultural, policy and economic barriers to better collaboration between the STEMM research sector and the corporate sector.

Keynote speaker Joanna Batstone, who is the head of IBM Research Australia and Chief Technology Officer for IBM Australia and New Zealand, began the day with an inspiring keynote address which included success stories of corporate investment in research and development. The Assistant Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Hon. Craig Laundy MP, and Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry and Science, Senator Kim Carr, gave the Government and Opposition perspectives. Some key messages were that a greater culture of collaboration is needed and that new initiatives will see the Government itself is moving away from being a regulator to becoming a business partner. Discussion panels on the nexus between Government, research and industry, entrepreneurship, emerging technologies and looking for the next big idea stimulated very lively discussions and featured a wealth of experience from leaders in industry, science, universities and other agencies.

The statistics presented early in the day were striking: while we are the 10th most innovative nation in the world with respect to

research innovation, we rank 81st when it comes to the translation of that research by business. Several other countries, including the UK and Switzerland, produce greater research outputs than Australia with proportionally smaller GDP spends. The reasons for this disparity were explored. Former Chief Scientist Ian Chubb suggested that there is a cultural problem in Australia and that teaching, science and research are not valued by Australians. He also believes that this thinking is embedded in our education system, which is skewed against excellence in STEMM studies. NHMRC CEO Prof. Anne Kelso commented that young people in our sector need to be immersed in commercialisation, which will allow them to develop an understanding of what is required to successfully navigate this sector. Funding challenges were also discussed from the perspective of all sectors represented at this meeting.

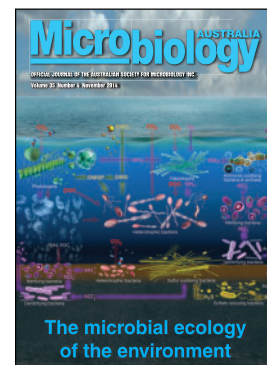
Science and Technology Australia and the annual *Science meets Business* meeting must be applauded for pushing forward the conversations that must happen between science and business. Although there is a long way to go, the discussions held at this meeting brought together the ideas and people required to highlight this neglected interactive space. Scientists are essential to successful and forward-thinking business development, particularly in this new age of climate change and reduced resource sustainability and energy production. A culture of better communication and collaboration is essential, which is fostered through initiatives such as the *Science meets Business* forum.

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