

Building better science communicators

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Communicating the wonderful world of scientific research to a general audience is vital in ensuring its viability.

The inability to communicate science to a general audience can decrease the impact and translational potential of research.

Consumers also represent a critical—and often overlooked—engine of research funding. Mater Foundation raises funds to support annually approximately 45% of the research activity at Mater Research.

So to improve researcher interaction with consumers and attract interest from potential donors, Mater has launched the BRIDGE (Bringing researchers and donors together) program.

The BRIDGE program is founded on the simple idea that scientists speaking about their own research make the best science communicators.

Effective communication skills are critical to create awareness of research beyond the scientific community, yet researchers rarely receive training to help them better engage with the general public.

BRIDGE provides scientists with comprehensive training on how to effectively engage with consumers and convey the importance of their research in an accessible way.

The BRIDGE Program utilises the talents of science communicators and philanthropic engagement experts to engage and mentor researchers. They provide researchers with communication strategies that assist in creating a broader awareness of their research through academic channels, government and other funding bodies and philanthropic agencies. The BRIDGE Program assists researchers at any stage in their career to effectively improve their communication with the public by providing comprehensive guidance on shaping research messages into a format that is understandable, relevant and attractive to a target audience — and conveys the importance of their research.

Through this program researchers are then given opportunities to speak at major fundraising events organised by Mater Foundation.

This presentation will summarize the key aspects of the BRIDGE program and the preliminary outcomes of a pilot implementation of this program, including researchers and donors' feedback.