

## Testimonials, media coverage and program participants

### Testimonials from scientists and researchers in the program

- I have had the best experience with Sydney Comedy School. As a PhD student, I had become confident with presenting science talks at conferences, but knowing how to incorporate humour and making my talks more digestible for a wider audience was very daunting. Sydney Comedy School helped me rework and practice with comedians and experts - who were incredibly professional and helpful. Performing at Sydney Fringe Fest as a result of the work and training was unreal. 10/10 recommend! (Hannah Kunst - Sydney University)
- I was in the science comedy program and learned so much. It was fun and a great way to meet diverse, intelligent people! (Amanda Khoury - Garvan Institute)
- Was amazing to get the opportunity to talk about my science at the Sydney Comedy Festival and the Enmore Theatre! Great program connecting scientists to amused audiences (Sally Hurst - Sydney Museum)
- Had a great experience with Dave and the Sydney Comedy School! Super fun and I learned heaps! (Lorenzo Logi - UNSW)



UNSW Science · Follow

6d · 🌐

...

"It was really rewarding to hear people laugh at the jokes I thought of."

👋 Meet Inna Osmolovsky, [UNSW](#) Science PhD candidate and recent performer at the Sydney Fringe Festival as part of the 2023 Future Sydney Talks: Comedy Edition program.

The [Future Science Talks Sydney](#) and [Sydney Comedy School](#) program is designed to help scientists jazz up their public speaking skills and infuse comedy into how they present their research.

Each participant comes to the program armed with a 10-minute scientific presentation, and over two months they develop their presentation until they're ready to hit the stage.

Inna's talk was on how plants are escaping climate change.

"The most challenging part of preparing for a comedy science show was learning how to add humour to a scientific talk, especially when studying a serious topic like climate change, and how to make the science itself more understandable," says Inna.

Despite initial comedic challenges, Inna describes the program as an invaluable learning experience.

"The program gave me so much! Both show mentors David and Seaton were able to explain the 'mechanics' behind a good joke, and how to appear approachable to the audience. I can apply these tools not only in future comedy talks, but in any talk in general."



👍❤️ You and 16 others

1 comment 3 shares

👍 Like

💬 Comment

🔄 Share



***Macquarie University microbiologist Dr Paige Erpf never imagined doing stand-up comedy, but after years of competitive rock climbing she's ready to scale this new challenge.***

I'm a microbiologist but also a rock-climber, a snowboarder and recently, I accidentally became a stand-up comedian.



Earlier this year, I found myself on stage at the Enmore Theatre delivering my first-ever stand-up routine to a live audience at the Sydney Comedy Festival (this was not something I ever expected to put on my CV). Of course, with my work involving a variety of fungus, I started with a few jokes about thrush. My parents flew down from Queensland to watch, which wasn't awkward at all!

It all started when my friend and colleague was asked to do a Science Comedy program and he sensibly said no immediately – then said, you should ask Paige; and it kind of snowballed from there. I was one of nine scientists on this program called Future Science Talks, Comedy Edition, and we had some training from an actual comedian before they sent us all out on stage.

It was a sold-out show, and though I'm usually quite confident about public speaking, I was pretty nervous going on and had a mild asthma attack about half an hour beforehand. When I was on stage I spoke a bit faster than I had planned to. But once I got a few laughs from the audience, I relaxed and the rest was fine.

I thought it would be a one-off, but I've been asked to do a repeat performance next month at the Sydney Fringe Festival, and I'm also a panellist on the National Science Quiz, being live-streamed from Melbourne's Capitol Theatre on 27 August, so watch this space!

## Media coverage

ABC Science Unit: <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/scienceshow/scientists-brave-stand-up-comedy-experiment/102528942>

THE SCIENCE SHOW →

# Scientists brave stand-up comedy experiment

Broadcast Sat 1 Jul 2023 at 12:02pm



Scientists on stage at the Sydney Comedy Festival at Enmore Theatre.

Share   



Transcript ▼

Jokes aren't all fun and games — they also keep us engaged and help us retain information.

Producer Shelby Traynor followed a group of early-career scientists taken under the wing of a couple of comedians, to inject some humour into their presentations.

### References

[Future Science Talks](#)

[Sydney Comedy School](#)

### Guests

[David Crisante](#), director of Future Science Talks

[Seaton Kay-Smith](#), comedian

[Dr Amanda Khoury](#), research officer

Broadcast 1 Jul 2023

SBS: <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/urdu/en/article/inspired-by-personal-loss-researchers-turn-to-comedy-to-spread-awareness-of-science/bqqhcze2z>

## Scientists like Narjis and Suraj are using comedy to share their knowledge

A program of talks will see top scientists bring a comedic touch to the stage to illuminate heavy topics like cancer and dementia.



🕒 4 min read

Published 31 August 2023 2:48pm  
Updated 7 September 2023 5:36pm

By Rehan Alavi

Source: SBS

Tags

Science Dementia

Share this with family and friends

Copy link

Share

### KEY POINTS

- 'Future Science Talks: Comedy Edition' will feature in the 2023 Sydney Fringe Festival, following shows at Sydney Comedy Festival and Science Week.
- The goal is to break down stereotypes about science and researchers.
- Researchers share how their work is inspired by personal loss.

Suraj Samtani was seven when his great-grandfather was diagnosed with dementia.

"We lost him without early detection of dementia when I was a child," Dr Samtani told SBS Urdu.

"Only later I realised that he was lonely and disconnected (after being moved from his old neighbourhood to a care home), and this made me curious about what can be done to keep elders connected with people," he added.

This realisation continues to fuel the Indian-origin researcher's work to this day.

Dr Samtani is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing at the University of New South Wales, where he is involved in the SHARED (Social Health And Reserve in the Dementia Patient Journey) project.

"My research is derived from my personal loss and I am working at the importance of socialisation and networking for the healthy brain," he said.



Advertisement



## **2023 Program Participants:**

### **Sydney Comedy Festival 2023**

- Allegra Angeloni (Garvan Institute)
- Hannah Kunst (University of Sydney)
- Lorenzo Logi (UNSW)
- Amanda Khoury (Garvan Institute)
- Sally Hurst (Macquarie University)
- Zoe Xirocostas (UNSW)
- Paige Erpf (Macquarie University)
- Marina Ulanova (Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing)
- Toby Kovacs (University of Sydney)
- Lachlan Gray (Garvan Institute)

### **Sydney Fringe Festival 2023**

- Aashi Parikh (Macquarie University)
- Alex Kilby (Macquarie University)
- Ben Rohald (Flagship.ai)
- Camille Mora (The University of Sydney)
- Clare Fletcher (UNSW's Australian Centre for Astrobiology)
- Elisabetta De Simone (Macquarie University)
- Elizabeth Surovic (UNSW)
- Ellie Solomons (Arup)
- Faraidoon Haghdooost (The George Institute for Global Health)
- Ian Woolf (Diffusion Science Radio)
- Inna Osmolovsky (Evolution & Ecology Research Centre at UNSW)
- Isabel Hyman (Australian Museum)
- Jack Wilson (Matilda Centre)
- Jared Bergman (Vow)
- Joel Raymond (The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre)
- Joshua Karras (UNSW's School of Population Health)
- Julia Forkgen (Garvan Institute)
- Kate Gunther (Royal Hospital for Women)

- Kovi Rose (Sydney Institute for Astronomy)
- Levi Tegg (The University of Sydney)
- Marcus Greenwood (UNSW)
- Narjis Fatima (Garvan Institute)
- Nora Campbell (UNSW)
- Samantha Burke (UNSW)
- Saul Wodak (Behavioural Insights Team)
- Savannah O'Connell (Garvan Institute)
- Suraj Samtani (Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing at UNSW)
- Tanja Rosenqvist (Arup)
- Taylor Szyszka (The University of Sydney)
- Tina Baradaran (UNSW)
- William Jorgensen (Psylo)