



**Weekly Wire**  
**News from East Asia and Pacific**  
**National Science Foundation**  
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**AUSTRALIA: Top Scientists Met for Science at the Shine Dome**

Australia's science leaders gathered in Canberra on May 26 for the Australian Academy of Science's annual celebration, Science at the Shine Dome. During the three-day event celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the event, 21 high achievers from all fields of science were admitted as new Fellows of the Academy. They spoke about their ground-breaking research, and winners of the Academy's 2015 career and early-to mid-career researcher awards were presented with their medals.

*Source: <https://www.science.org.au/news/australias-top-scientists-meet-science-shine-dome>*

**JAPAN: RIKEN New Regime**

To follow up the research integrity case in 2014 that invited considerable public distrust not only in RIKEN but also in science generally, RIKEN's new President Hiroshi Matsumoto announced a new management plan as follows: (1) to establish a system that enables the researchers to change their status from non-tenured to tenured; (2) to create such programs that train excellent young researchers; (3) to promote collaboration with universities, industries, and other research institutions both domestically and internationally; (4) to enrich research support and make English the official language in order to facilitate a world-class research environment; and (5) to make good use of the President's discretionary funds to flexibly promote research. Dr. Matsumoto will first put his hands on the human resources-related issues, as other points require a modification of the budget. This will not be easy because the JFY2015 budget allocation is already made.

*Source: A summary translation of a Nikkei article – May 23, 2015*

**JAPAN: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Research Council (GRC)meeting**

The GRC that was established by the National Science Foundation (NSF)'s initiative in 2012 held its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Tokyo on May 27-28. It was sponsored by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and co-sponsored by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa. Prior to the meeting, JSPS hosted a symposium titled "Global Symposium for Scientific Breakthrough." NSF Director France Córdova gave the first keynote and talked about the importance of funding in STEM fields and NSF's contributions in ultimately bringing innovations. This year's GRC meeting had two topics that are "Research Funding for Scientific Breakthrough" and "Building Research and Education Capacity" both of which were discussed in depth by the 54 funding agency representatives from all over the world. Further cooperation and coordination among the funding agencies were confirmed to be the key for effective and efficient funding in STEM in the future. The 2016 GRC meeting will be held in India and will be co-hosted by the United Kingdom.

*Source: A brief summary of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual GRC meeting materials*

**JAPAN: 5<sup>th</sup> Science and Technology Basic Plan in Draft**

A draft 5<sup>th</sup> Science and Technology Basic Plan was fine-tuned at the 9<sup>th</sup> discussion meeting on the Plan. Having three pillars that are (1) Creating future industries and social innovation; (2) Solving economic and social problems; and (3) Training personnel, the Plan emphasizes the importance of establishing an innovation system that makes good use of personnel, knowledge, and funds. The Plan also mandates the reform of university management and research funding systems, and underscores the importance of setting up international strategies, the relation between S&T and society, and promoting open science. The draft Plan will soon be uploaded to the Cabinet Office website to receive public comments before being finalized by the end of December 2015. The NSF Tokyo Office will separately produce a summary report of the Plan when it is finalized.

*Source: A brief summary of the 5<sup>th</sup> S&T Plan and phone interview to the Cabinet Office*

### **NEW ZEALAND: World's Largest Health Study**

A New Zealand neuroscience team from AUT University is launching what could become the world's largest ever health study. Entitled Reducing the International Burden of Stroke Using Mobile Technology, the study will be conducted through the mobile app, Stroke Riskometer TM. Researchers hope that the findings will significantly reduce the devastating impact of conditions such as stroke, diabetes, dementia and heart disease. The Stroke Riskometer TM app was launched in October 2013, but the newly updated version will be available in multiple languages, and allow users to participate in the cross-sectional study and a subsequent longitudinal study from the comfort of their homes. With an estimated 1.75 billion smart-phone users around the world, the potential scale of the research is immense and could eclipse that of the largest medical experiment in history, a polio study conducted in the 1950s.

*Source: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/SC1505/S00105/new-zealand-scientists-launch-worlds-largest-health-study.htm>*