

Head of Australian stem-cell centre quits to return to science

Sydney Developmental biologist Alan Trounson has stepped down as chief executive of Australia's National Stem Cell Centre to concentrate on his research.

Trounson will retain some management involvement as vice-chairman of the centre, which is to be built at Monash University's Clayton campus, but says that he intends to spend most of his time doing science. "He wants to put his energies back into scientific matters," says Hugh Niall, who will act as chief executive until a permanent appointment is made.

Trounson, a leader of embryonic stem-cell research in Australia who campaigned hard for the A\$43.5-million (US\$30-million) centre's establishment, came under heavy fire last year for allegedly misleading parliamentarians. In testimony before them, he showed a video of a paralysed rat recovering after the injection of what he said were embryonic stem cells — but which were in fact embryonic germ cells (see *Nature* 419, 4; 2002).

Funding for the centre was then suspended while an independent inquiry reviewed the process that selected it, but the project was given a final go-ahead last December.



Alan Trounson: will retain some involvement in the stem-cell centre he helped to set up.

Open-access trial next step in biology journal's life cycle

London Oxford University Press (OUP) has announced that it will pilot an 'open-access' publishing model for one of its leading journals, *Nucleic Acids Research*.

Next January's annual database issue of the journal — a widely used reference guide of review articles about databases used in the life sciences — will be freely available online to non-subscribers. The costs of the open-access experiment will be covered in part by the authors, who will be charged

Grizzly end for environmentalists' bear project

London Poachers have ended the work of two Canadian conservationists who were studying grizzly bears (right) in eastern Siberia.

Charlie Russell and his wife Maureen Enns returned to their cabin on the Kamchatka Peninsula this spring to find a bear's gall bladder nailed to their kitchen wall. There were no other signs of the bears the couple had been studying, and other evidence suggested that human poachers had killed them during the winter.

The couple, who have been working in the area for seven years, say they are unsure who was responsible for the killing. But they concede

that local hunters were angry over their efforts to set up a wildlife sanctuary to protect the grizzlies.



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about \$500 for each paper published.

If the experiment proves successful, the publisher says it will gradually move to an extended open-access model over the next four or five years, where subscription revenues are replaced by author charges.

"We feel that research should be globally accessible," says Martin Richardson, director of OUP's journals division. "But for open access to become a global reality, funding practices will have to change, and grant-givers will have to provide scientists with money to cover their publication costs."

Traditional values for transatlantic venture

Washington The University of Oxford and the Scripps Research Institute at La Jolla, California, are setting up a joint graduate programme in biochemistry — the first venture of its kind for both institutions.

Richard Lerner, president of Scripps, says that the collaboration grew out of talks between himself and Raymond Dwek, head of biochemistry at Oxford. "We were discussing how to bring traditional values to the high-tech, equipment-intensive world that chemistry and biology have found themselves in, and we decided each side could bring something special to this programme," Lerner says.

The joint programme — which will be funded out of a US\$100-million donation from the family of Samuel Skaggs, a drugstore-millionaire and philanthropist — is the latest in a spate of transatlantic alliances between leading research institutions.

"I think this will lay the foundations for significant interactions, and may even lead to joint appointments and research projects," says Dwek.

US neuroscience institute fills directorship at last

Washington A two-and-a-half-year vacancy at one of the largest institutes in the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) was filled last week, as Story Landis was

appointed to head the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

Landis came to NINDS in 1995 to run its intramural science programme. She previously chaired the department of neuroscience at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, in Cleveland, Ohio, where she researched the development of the nervous system.

"The most important challenge for this institute in the next couple of years is going to be to achieve the right balance between basic science and clinical trials," Landis says, adding that she hopes to strengthen links with other NIH institutes that work on issues involving the nervous system.

Landis will take up her new post at the \$1.5-billion institute on 1 September. But there are still three directorships open at the NIH. They include that of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, whose director, Kenneth Olden, announced late last month that he would leave when a replacement is identified.

Arizona State University plans clear-out of faculty

San Diego In a sweeping move designed to open up new positions, Arizona State University (ASU) is offering early retirement to a quarter of its faculty members.

About 570 faculty and professional staff at the university's campus at Tempe near Phoenix, out of a total of 2,100, are eligible for the early retirement programme. The programme is the brainchild of ASU's president Michael Crow, who arrived last year from Columbia University in New York.

"I believe ASU must significantly strengthen and expand its research activities, both to raise our national profile and to secure additional sources of funding," Crow said in a statement announcing the programme.

Staff have until December to consider the offer, after which ASU administrators will begin working out future hiring plans.