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## Chairperson's Message

We are reaching the halfway mark of another busy year! ASET-NSW has been working hard behind the scenes to facilitate PD Days, social catch ups and plan your Conference 2026.

Welcome to all our new members. We currently have 193 paid members.

Our group is run by volunteers and we would love to hear your voices too!



### Ways you can get involved

- **Run a hands on workshop, dissection session, or coffee and chat session at the conference**
- **Instigate a social catch up to meet lab techs in your area**
- **Share your favourite tips and tricks for our newsletter**

***We are here to support you! Help your ASET team get labbies the training, support and networking you need most.***

Hear more about our March Central coast labbie catch up day on [page 7](#). Thank you Jasmina for bringing this event together.

Lisa, our fantastic treasurer, would like to invite you to a **LABBIES LUNCH** at Wests Leagues Friday July 10<sup>th</sup>, see more info on [page 6](#). Let Lisa know if you can make it at [treasurer@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:treasurer@asetnsw.org.au) or just come along!





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# Chairperson's Message cont.

## PD news

Hear more from our host Annette about the Term 2 PD day at Blacktown on [page 7](#). Unfortunately we have had to cancel our Term 3 PD session as Bob is unwell and needs to focus on his health. Bob Death is an amazingly giving human and we have all been so lucky to have him run multiple hands-on learning sessions. We wish Bob all the best for a safe and restful recovery and hope to see him back for the November Conference.

## Training

ASET is working with DET networks to prepare for the next Government Training package upgrades. Existing accredited courses Cert III and IV and Diploma do not fully address the operational realities of school science technicians and more school-specific laboratory training units and programs are required. If you are interested in helping to establish these units, or if you have experience in grant writing and securing funding to support their development and production, please get in touch.

## Conference

Our Conference program will be released mid Term 3 ready for Registrations around Week 8. Check it out early and get ready to sign up early to get your first preferences.

**-Jo Walker** (ASET-NSW Chairperson)



## ASET-NSW Committee

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Committee Member

**Melissa Siddons**

Committee Member

**ASET-NSW**



# **Conference 2026**

**16-17th  
November  
2026**  
**University of  
Technology,  
Sydney**

**SEEDS OF  
SCIENCE:  
NURTURING  
KNOWLEDGE  
FOR ALL**

**Save the date so  
you don't miss out!  
Registrations  
open Mid-Term 3.**



ASET-NSW Inc.

# We need you!

## BE A STAR

RUN A SESSION AT  
ASET CONFERENCE  
2026

WILL YOU BE ONE OF OUR STAR LABBIE PRESENTERS?  
REACH OUT FOR IDEAS OR SUPPORT IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR SESSIONS AT OUR CONFERENCE ARE LED BY LABBIES. WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S CHALLENGES AND REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE, PRACTICAL TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES THAT HELP OTHERS SUCCEED.  
ALL LAB TECHS HOSTING A SESSION GET FREE ENTRY ON THAT DAY.  
REACH OUT FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PRESENTING PLEASE.



OUR PRESENTERS WOULD LIKE TO MIX IT UP AND WANT TO KNOW...

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT?

DOUG AND MATT HAVE SOME NEW IDEAS THIS YEAR AND IF THERE IS A TECHNIQUE OR TOPIC— ESPECIALLY ONE RELATING TO THE NEW CURRICULUM – YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME AT [CHAIR@ASETNSW.ORG.AU](mailto:CHAIR@ASETNSW.ORG.AU) AND WE CAN PASS THIS INFO ON TO OUR AMAZING PRESENTERS.

# Win your way the ASET-NSW 2026 Annual Conference!

Attention all regional members!



are proud to sponsor one **regional** ASET member to attend the ASET-NSW 2026 Conference.

### One lucky winner will receive:

- Transport and accomodation costs of up to \$500 to attend ASET-NSW 2026 conference thanks to **Westlab**
- 2 days conference registration fees & 1 year ASET-NSW membership thanks to ASET-NSW

**PLUS**



All you have to do is tell us about yourself and how you and your school would benefit from your attendance at our fantastic annual conference (in 150 words or less).

Email your entries to [secretary@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:secretary@asetnsw.org.au), using the subject *Regional Competition*.

REGIONAL MEMBERS

MORE INFORMATION AND ALSO TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON THE ASET-NSW WEBSITE HERE:



ENTRIES CLOSE  
FRIDAY 28 AUGUST 2026.

METRO MEMBERS

 **Association of Science Education Technicians NSW**  
Supporting - Monitoring - Training - Facilitating  
For Labbies by Labbies

Win your way to the  
ASETNSW 2026  
**CONFERENCE!**

*If you are a Sydney Metro labbie you could win:*

- Conference registration for BOTH days!
- 1 year membership to ASET NSW!

*Proudly sponsored by the team at ASET NSW.*

### HOW TO ENTER:

*Tell us about yourself and how you and your school would benefit from your attendance (in 150 words or less).*

*Send your entry to [secretary@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:secretary@asetnsw.org.au) with subject of METRO COMPETITION.*



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# Calendar

I am sure you can find an excuse to celebrate here somewhere...!

## Plastic Free July

7-10 ConASTA 73 in Brisbane

JULY

### 10 July

Labbies lunch date.  
All welcome!  
12pm @ Wests Leagues Club  
Campbelltown  
Contact Lisa Corado  
[treasurer@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:treasurer@asetnsw.org.au)

5-12 NAIDOC Week

11 - World Population Day

26 National Tree Day

## AUGUST

4 - National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day



9 - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

**15-23 Science Week!**

national science week

## Biodiversity Month

7- National Threatened Species Day

20- World Cleanup Day

SEPTEMBER



22 - World Car-free Day



27 - World Rivers Day

OCTOBER

4 - World Animal Day



10 - World Animal Road Accident Awareness Day

## NOVEMBER

16-17 November  
ASET-NSW Annual Conference

Don't forget to check out the member's only area on our website. All member's received an email with a password to access the area. **Annual membership is only \$50.**



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# What's Been Going On?

## Central Coast Labby Catch Up on 28 March

Sometimes the best PD has no agenda, no PowerPoint, and definitely no risk assessment. Our little Central Coast lab tech catch-up was meant to be a casual lunch, coffee, cake, and chat. A few people had to pull out due to family commitments, but four of us still made it – and somehow 4.5 hours disappeared in a blur of laughter, stories, shared frustrations, clever tips, and plenty of “oh thank goodness, it’s not just me!” moments. Needless to say, we’ve already agreed there will be a next time.

It did raise an interesting scientific question: if four lab techs can happily chat for 4.5 hours... what happens when 40 turn up?



If you’ve been thinking about getting a local group together, this is your sign. Don’t worry about numbers, whether it’s 4 or 40, the formula seems to be the same: good people + shared chaos + plenty of laughs = success.

Need help getting one started? We might be able to help. Contact me, Jasmina Hazrolaj, at [vicechair@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:vicechair@asetnsw.org.au)

## Trouble Shooting and Equipment Repair workshop with Bob Death April 2026 Evan HS



*“I really enjoyed hosting the Labbie PD with Bob Death from Bobs Instrument Service on our first SDD for Term 2.*

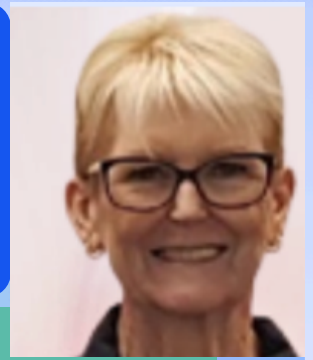
*We all learned some very useful tips and tricks that will help make our Practical lessons more successful.*

*Big thanks to Jo Walker for organising this session and Bob for sharing his wisdom and skills.*

*We had a great day 😊*

*Annette from Evans High School*

# Calling for Nominations Margaret Croucher Award 2026



**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE LOUD  
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**DO YOU MENTOR OTHERS, IMPROVE SYSTEMS, LIFT STANDARDS, SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR QUIETLY KEEP EVERYTHING RUNNING SMOOTHLY?**

**THIS AWARD RECOGNISES TECHNICIANS WHO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR THEIR SCHOOL AND THEIR PROFESSION.**

**NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE.**

**OR NOMINATE YOURSELF.**

**YOU'VE EARNED THE RIGHT TO BE RECOGNISED!**

## **NOMINATIONS**

**OPEN T2 WEEK 10 – MONDAY 22 JUNE**

**CLOSE T3 WEEK 6 – FRIDAY 28 AUGUST**

**Any questions message Kate [secretary@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:secretary@asetnsw.org.au)**

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE AWARD, NOMINEES MUST:**

- **BE A CURRENT MEMBER OF ASET-NSW INC.**
- **HAVE WORKED AS A LABORATORY TECH FOR MORE THAN 5 YEARS.**
- **HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE LAB TECH COMMUNITY.**
- **DEMONSTRATE THE ABILITY TO INSPIRE, MENTOR AND ENCOURAGE OTHER LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS.**

**MORE INFO INCLUDING NOMINATION FORM ON OUR WEBSITE IN WK 10.**



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## Behind the labcoat of... Dearne Stephen



Many of you will already know Dearne Stephen, our first Margaret Croucher Award winner. Dearne is a Laboratory Technician at John Edmondson High School in Horningsea Park.

Alongside her role, Dearne generously volunteers her time to inspire and educate others. Over the years, she has designed, coordinated, and presented many science courses and other WHS courses for the Department of Education (DoE), SASS staff, General Assistants and ASET participants. She has contributed to numerous committees including the ASET, SRG, WHS and PLNTS teams.

She continues to run Science Network Meetings each term and mentors newly appointed Science Laboratory Assistant's each day across Southwestern, Western, Northern and Southern Sydney, supporting collaboration and the professional growth among her peers.

Dearne also designs, co-ordinates and presents Science Primary Enrichment Days at Primary Schools across the Southwestern and Western regions for the DoE. This includes John Edmondson High Schools' (JEHS) HPGE students from local Year 6 schools who are enrolled into year 7 and the JEHS support class. Please note, that Dearne is also a fully trained SLSO and Science Administration Officer.

Yet, beyond the lab coat, there is even more to Dearne's story.

Did you know that Dearne has been a professional singer for over 40 years? Music has been a lifelong passion, and she continues to perform at functions, sharing her talent and love of entertaining.





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## Behind the labcoat of... Dearne Stephen continued

She is also a devoted footy fan and a loyal supporter of the Parramatta Eels.

Dearne's two children have both followed careers in teaching and education support, and each year Dearne also visits her son's class to run engaging Science Primary Enrichment Days with his year 6 students – passing on her science knowledge and enthusiasm to the next generation. She is also immensely proud to say that she has two amazing grandchildren, one is a speech pathologist and the other is a third-year mechanic.

Over the years, Dearne and her husband Paul, have owned racehorses and trotters. She said that every horse they owned has won at least one race at the track. This, she thought, was extremely lucky for two people who just bought horses because they like the look of them.

Dearne and Paul sold their racehorses in pursuit of drag racing and the need for speed! She has competed at many race meetings working her way through several different drag racing categories, from Super Street to Super Charged Outlaws. At first, driving the quarter mile in a 10 second Sedan, followed by a 6 second Altered (type of drag car seen in the video link). She has raced and organised excursions at Eastern Creek Raceway for the physics and engineering students at John Edmondson High School. This was well received by not only the JEHS students but also the Physics and Engineering Teachers alike.



[Check out Dearne's drag race here.](#)

Dearne's story is one of dedication, energy, and generosity—an inspiring example of someone who gives so much to her profession and community, while living life to the fullest outside of it.

Thank you for sharing your story with us and for all you have done for the lab tech community so far.

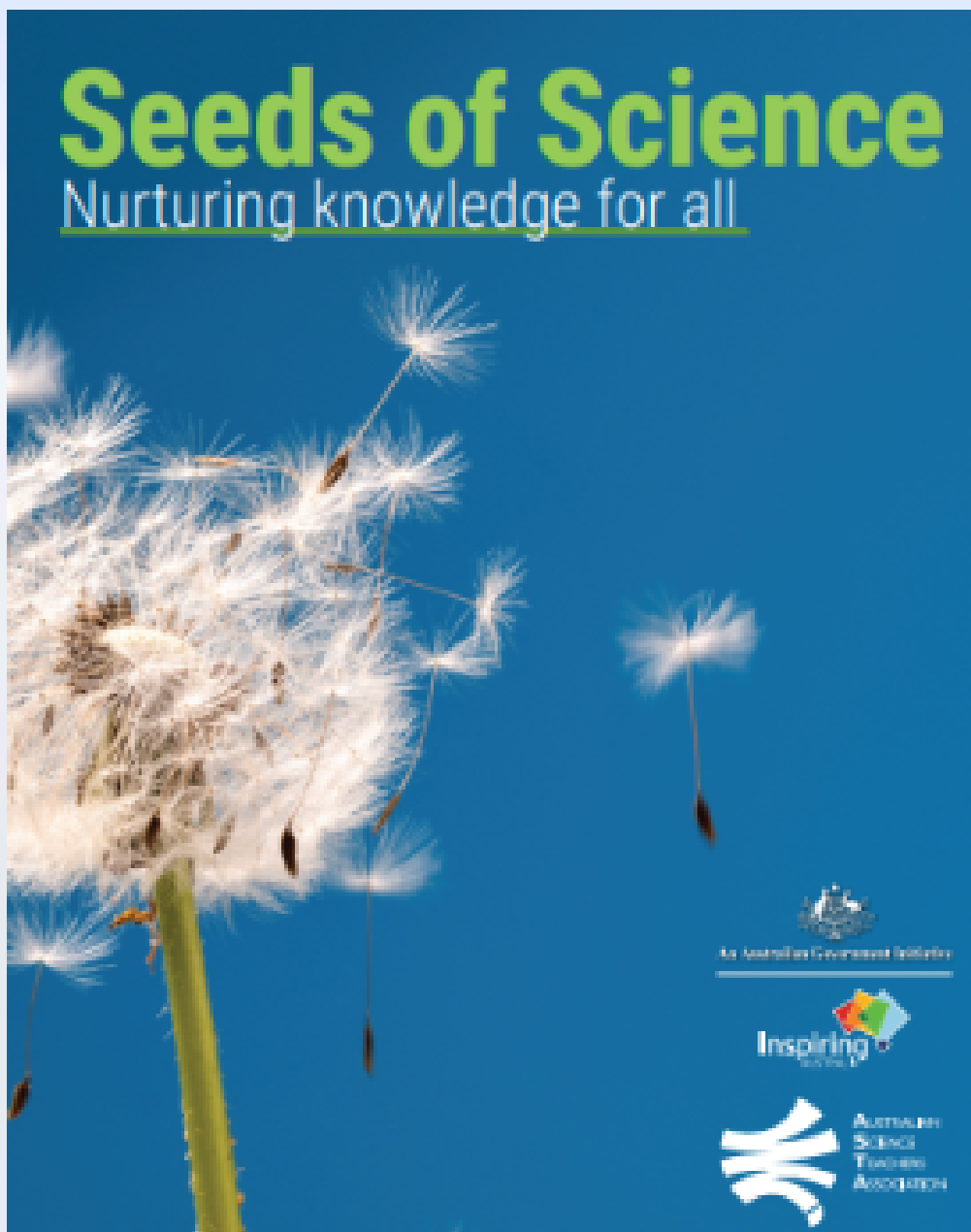


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# national science week

15-23 August 2026 - Australia Wide

## THIS YEAR'S THEME IS...



SCINEMA is an international science film festival that screens every August as part of National Science Week. You can submit your own film or sign up to host a free SCINEMA screening in your school.

They are also trialling a science pub trivia campaign, there are teacher resource books, information for at home science activities and DIY events, and so much more...

VISIT [SCIENCEWEEK.NET.AU](http://SCIENCEWEEK.NET.AU) FOR ALL THE INFO AND RESOURCES YOU WILL EVER NEED. YOU CAN ALSO SEARCH FOR EVENTS IN YOUR AREA.



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**ASET-NSW would  
like to introduce  
everyone to...**



### **Supporting NSW School Science Technicians: Training Built for the School Lab**

Behind every successful science practical is a skilled laboratory technician keeping experiments running safely, smoothly, and effectively. From preparing materials and maintaining equipment to managing chemicals and supporting teachers, science technicians are a vital part of every school science department.

As the role continues to evolve, professional development has never been more important and now there are funding opportunities available to help make training more accessible for NSW school staff.

At ABC Training and Consulting, we know that school science laboratories are very different from commercial or industrial labs. That is why we have specifically contextualised our training to support the real-world needs of high school science laboratory technicians.

Our nationally recognised qualifications, including the *Certificate IV in Laboratory Techniques* and *Diploma of Laboratory Technology*, have been tailored to reflect the day-to-day environment of school laboratories. From chemical handling and laboratory safety to equipment preparation, risk management, stock control, and supporting curriculum delivery, participants gain practical skills they can immediately apply in their school setting.

**Excitingly, there are also current NSW government funding opportunities available for eligible participants. In some cases, newly employed staff may be able to access subsidised training if they commence a qualification within three months of employment, creating a valuable opportunity for schools to invest in capability building early while reducing training costs.**

Whether you are new to the role, looking to formalise your skills, or a school seeking professional development opportunities for staff, ABC Training and Consulting is here to help. With flexible delivery and a strong understanding of school laboratory environments, we are passionate about supporting science technicians to thrive in their roles without having to leave their school lab (That's right our trainers come to site to train) and helping schools maintain safe, effective, and engaging laboratory spaces.

Interested in learning more? We will be exhibiting and presenting at ASET-NSW Conference 16th & 17th November 2026, alternatively reach out to Jasmine Parkinson from ABC Training and Consulting to explore training and funding options available for your school community.

**Email: [jparkinson@abctraining.edu.au](mailto:jparkinson@abctraining.edu.au)**

**Mobile: 0435 179 071**



the  
LABORATORY  
PATHOLOGY COLLECTION  
MANUFACTURING  
LEADERSHIP  
Training Experts



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# SETA Report & ConASTA Info

## SETA Update – Exciting Times Ahead

Things have been quietly busy behind the scenes at SETA, and there are some promising developments on the horizon.

The National Working Party continues to explore pathways for greater recognition of school science technicians across Australia. A survey is currently being refined to gather information on technician qualifications, workloads, and career pathways. The goal is simple: understand who we are, what we do, and how we can better advocate for the profession.

There have also been discussions around updating the SETA logo and branding. Nothing is set in stone yet, but it's exciting to think about a fresh look that reflects the modern, skilled, and diverse workforce that supports science education every day. Constitutional updates are also being considered, including ways to retain valuable experience within the organisation while encouraging new members to become involved. As always, any significant changes will be presented to members for discussion and approval.

One thing is clear: school science technicians are increasingly being recognised as highly skilled professionals who play a critical role in delivering safe, practical science education. The challenge now is making sure the rest of Australia knows it too.

**Watch this space.** *The wheels of change sometimes move at laboratory-glassware-drying speed, but they are definitely moving.*



THINKING ABOUT A MID-YEAR SCIENCE ADVENTURE? CONASTA 73 HEADS TO BRISBANE FROM 7-10 JULY 2026, BRINGING TOGETHER SCIENCE TEACHERS, LAB TECHNICIANS, AND STEM ENTHUSIASTS FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA. WITH HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS, PRACTICAL SESSIONS, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS, AND PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SWAP IDEAS WITH FELLOW LABBIES, THERE LOOKS TO BE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. THE FULL PROGRAM IS STILL BEING RELEASED, BUT LABORATORY TECHNICIANS ARE DEFINITELY ON THE GUEST LIST THIS YEAR. BRISBANE IN JULY, SCIENCE ALL DAY, AND NO LAB CLEANUP AFTERWARDS — WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?



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# Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Lab Life

This is from our Vice Chair, Jasmina, who used this the other day for a senior chemistry prac...

## ETHANOL PRODUCTION BY FERMENTATION

### Fermentation of Sugar with Yeast – Laboratory Technician Setup

**PURPOSE:** To prepare and set up equipment for students to investigate the production of ethanol through anaerobic fermentation of glucose (sugar) by yeast, with carbon dioxide collected as evidence of fermentation.

#### SETUP DIAGRAM (ONE CONNECTION – RUBBER TUBING TO SIDE ARM)

**IMPORTANT:** System must NOT be airtight. Do not seal the tubing outlet. CO<sub>2</sub> must be able to escape through the limewater.

#### EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

- Side-arm conical flask, 250 mL
- Solid rubber stopper (no hole)
- Rubber tubing (to fit side arm)
- Test tube (or small flask)
- Clamp stand
- Limewater (Ca(OH)<sub>2</sub>)
- Sugar (sucrose or glucose)
- Dried yeast
- Warm water
- Kettle
- Spatula
- Balance (0–200 g ± 0.01 g)

#### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Stopper is solid (no hole).
- ✓ Only one connection – tubing on side arm.
- ✓ System must not be airtight.
- ✓ Keep warm (30–40 °C) for best yeast activity.
- ✓ Limewater must be fresh and clear.

#### HAZARDS & CONTROLS

- ⚠ Hot water → burns (prepare only)
- ⚠ Glassware → breakage (inspect)
- ⚠ Pressure build-up → keep outlet open
- ⚠ Limewater → irritant (goggles)
- ⚠ Yeast → avoid ingestion, wash hands

#### PROCESS FLOW

#### TECHNICIAN PREPARATION

##### 1. PREPARE SUGAR SOLUTION

- Measure 10 g sugar
- Add to 100 mL warm water (30–40 °C)
- Stir until dissolved

**Bulk prep option:**  
100 g sugar in 1 L warm water

##### 2. PREPARE YEAST

- Measure 2–5 g dried yeast
- Suspend in small amount warm water
- Allow activation for 5–10 minutes

**Temperature:** 30–40 °C  
Do NOT exceed 45 °C (yeast may be killed)

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

Observation	Meaning
Bubbling in limewater	CO <sub>2</sub> gas produced
Limewater turns milky	CO <sub>2</sub> present
Yeasty/alcohol smell	Ethanol likely produced
No bubbling	Inactive yeast or wrong conditions

#### STUDENT SETUP (PER GROUP)

1. Add sugar solution (100 mL) to side-arm flask.
2. Add activated yeast mixture.
3. Fit solid rubber stopper (no hole) securely.
4. Attach rubber tubing to side arm.
5. Place the other end of tubing into limewater (ensure tubing end is below the liquid level).
6. Place test tube in clamp stand.

#### TECHNICIAN CHECKS BEFORE CLASS

- Flask not cracked
- Tubing fits securely
- Stopper fits well
- Gas path open (no blockages)
- Limewater clear
- Warm water prepared
- Yeast active

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

Problem	Likely Cause	Fix
No bubbles	Dead yeast	Use fresh yeast
Slow reaction	Water too cold	Use warmer water (30–40 °C)
No limewater change	Leak or tubing not submerged	Check connections and submerge tubing end
Stopper pops out	Pressure build-up	Ensure outlet open and unblocked

#### OVERALL REACTION (FERMENTATION)

$$\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 \rightarrow 2 \text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH} + 2 \text{CO}_2$$

(Glucose)                  (Ethanol)                  (Carbon dioxide)

#### CONDITIONS

Temperature	30–40 °C (optimum)
Time	30–60 minutes (approx.)
Conditions	Anaerobic (no oxygen required)

#### DISPOSAL

- Yeast / sugar mixture: Flush to sink with plenty of water (if permitted by school procedure).
- Limewater: Dispose according to school-approved alkaline waste procedure.
- Broken glass: Sharps container.

#### TECHNICIAN TIPS

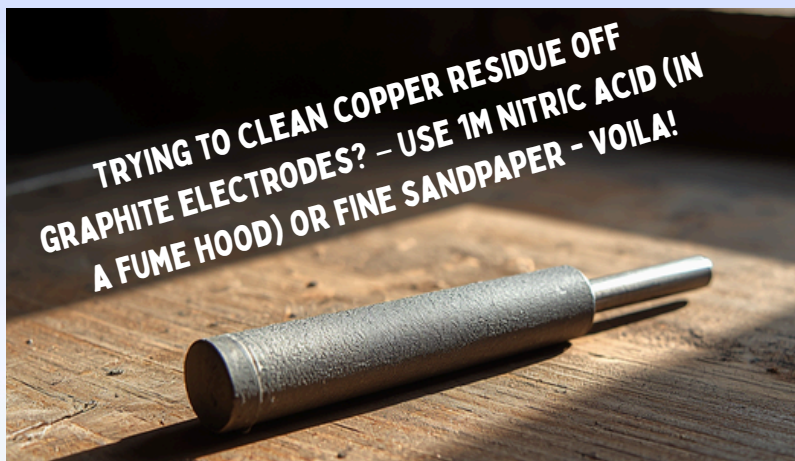
- Pre-test one setup before class.
- Fresh yeast works best.
- Keep tubing clear and free of kinks.
- Slight warming greatly improves results.
- Glucose works faster than sucrose.



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## More Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Lab Life



# FYI

There has been a couple of changes in Chemical Hazard Classification as of 22 May 2026,. Please check your the hazard statements on your labels for Sodium Bromide and Salicylic Acid. More information on Risk Assess.

*Also, did you know Risk Assess has just added a 15 page guide to Chemical Storage in Science? It's a ripper if you are struggling with the Chem Store Guidelines, there is even a diagram with a suggested layout that is sensible and appropriate for our school context. Find it in the Risk Assess News box at the bottom of the Risk Assess Homepage.*

*I wish I knew this one last week when I had to make an Iodine solution for a photosynthesis prac!*



## IODINE/POTASSIUM IODIDE SOLUTION - IN LESS TIME!!

THE STANDARD RECIPE FOR PREPARING I<sub>2</sub>/KI SOLUTION IS 3G IODINE CRYSTALS + 15G POTASSIUM IODIDE DISSOLVED IN 1L WATER. TO SPEED UP SOLUTION OF THE IODINE, DISSOLVE THE POTASSIUM IODIDE IN AS LITTLE WATER AS POSSIBLE (ABOUT 20ML) THEN DISSOLVE THE IODINE CRYSTALS IN THIS SOLUTION (IODINE DISSOLVES RAPIDLY IN CONCENTRATED KI SOLUTION) - THEN MAKE UP TO 1L WITH DISTILLED WATER.



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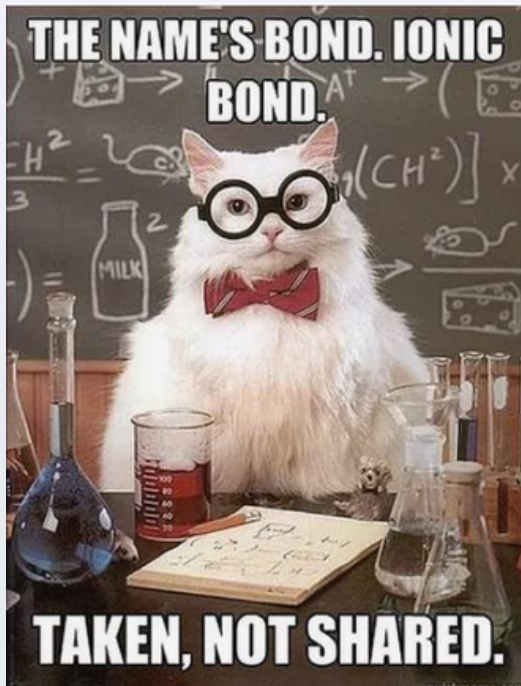
# Science Funnies and other Stuff to Make You Smile



**Water is heavier than butane because butane is a lighter fluid.**

*"I work half my time in the library and half my time in science prep as we are a small school. We had an awful smell in our library (which is above the science block). Then, we started getting maggots falling from the library ceiling onto the floor, which is pretty gross! We had to get some plumbers in to find the problem as we couldn't locate it and it ended up being dead ducks in our ducts! In the ducts that go from the fume hoods and the chem store out the roof of the two story science/library block. It was hard to explain what the problem was when the Principal asked - ducks in the ducts!"*

-Salena



**Calling all wonderful Brain's Trust Labbies out there:**  
Please share your tips and tricks and stories with us - you are all such a wealth of knowledge and experience, its important we share it with each other to improve our professional lives and wellbeing in general. I know you know so much.  
Email me, Salena, at [editor@asetnsw.org.au](mailto:editor@asetnsw.org.au), I can't wait to hear from you.



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# Our Wonderful Sponsors...

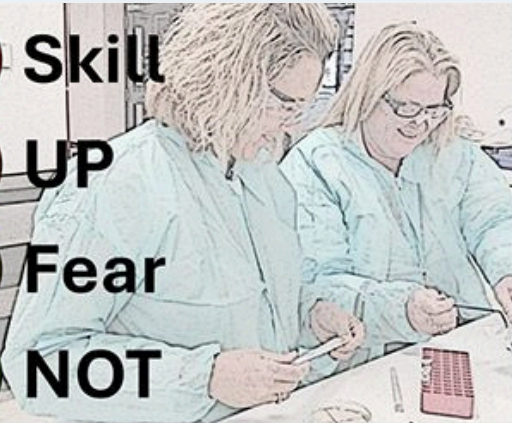
## BOB'S INSTRUMENT SERVICE

Bob's Instrument Service specialises in the service and repair of school science lab equipment including microscopes, balances, power supplies, panel meters and other equipment throughout NSW and ACT.

Please feel free to contact Bob Death on 0416 721 011 or [bobsinstruments@gmail.com](mailto:bobsinstruments@gmail.com) to discuss your school's needs.

Microbiology training & professional development for science education technicians & teachers

-  Skill
-  UP
-  Fear
-  NOT



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*for labbies - by labbies*



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# More of Our Wonderful Sponsors



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# More of Our Wonderful Sponsors

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**Westlab will be at ASETNSW Conference 2026.**

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## ABC Training & Consulting



At ABC Training & Consulting, we prepare the next generation of STEM professionals both during school through our VETiS programs, and after school through workplace and industry training.

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If you have any interesting stories, jokes, photos, tips, events or other information with a science theme, that I can include in this newsletter please email me, I would love to hear your ideas. Similarly, if you have any feedback about the newsletter please let me know, it would be greatly appreciated.

**Salena Bryce**  
(ASET-NSW Newsletter Editor)  
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REMEMBER...  
***Keep calm and put your lab coat on!***

This is most of the committee at last year's conference. We will get an updated one at this year's conference - it's the only time we are all in the same place at the same time... we are a geographically diverse bunch!!!