

2016 Canvassing the awareness of Australian bioinformatics at ISMB and ECCB

EMBL-ABR attended two major international bioinformatics conferences during 2016: ISMB in Orlando, Florida, USA and ECCB in The Hague, The Netherlands. Our booth gave the EMBL-ABR team direct access to conference participants who approached us and were happy to fill in a postcard with a set of standard questions as shown here. In total, we reached 250 individual attendees (119 at ECCB and 139 at ISMB). The collected responses suggested a lack of

international awareness of Australian bioinformatics and bioinformatics resources. This is at odds with the representation of Australian science in the published/refereed literature in biosciences, where Australia produces a higher proportion of publications than expected from its population size. Australian publications in most biological and biomedical research sub-fields also show either an above-EUaverage or above-worldaverage relative citation rate. Australian biosciences are over-represented among highly-cited (top 1%) publications, and Australia is highly productive in research on a per-capita basis, producing approximately 3-4% of the world's publications in biomedical. clinical health and biological sciences from ~0.4% of the world's population (for more details please read here).

EMBL Australia Bioinformatics Resource (EMBL-ABR) A distributed national research infrastructure providing bioinformatics support to life science researchers in Australia.















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EMBL Australia Bioinformatics Resource would like to know more about you.

 know anyone working in bioinformatics in Australia? 	□ Which field?
 have a general perception of Australian science? 	☐ What is it (in a few words)?
know of any Australian bioinformatics tools? currently have any collaborations with Australian	☐ ☐ Which one/s?
scientists / bioinformaticians?	☐ ☐ Who or which institution?
Your details:	
Institution	
Current position	
Most valuable bioinformatics training ever	
Most needed bicinformatics training (for yourself)	
Most needed bioinformatics training for life scientists_	
Optional: Stay up to date with future courses and ever	nts by subscribing here to EMBL-ABR news:
Name Email	

Thank you!



perception of Australian bioinformatics and science are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of international responses collected at the ISMB and ECCB conferences, 2016. Percentages are presented for an average 253 responses per question (not all participants answered every question).

Question	No (%)	Yes (%)
Do you know anyone working in bioinformatics in Australia?	59	41
Do you know of any Australian bioinformatics tools?	80	20
Do you currently have any collaborations with Australian scientists/bioinformaticians?	88	12
Do you have a general perception of Australian science?	63	37

With some exceptions, this exercise found that neither Australian bioinformatics tools nor Australian bioinformaticians appear to have a strong international profile. 80% of international respondents did not know of any Australian bioinformatics tools and 59% did not know of any Australian bioinformaticians. Similarly, 63% responded they did not have any general perception of Australian science. The respondents came from across the globe, including the USA (33% of respondents) and many European countries, as shown in the figure below. Conducting outreach such as participating in key events such as these conferences, with one coordinated effort showcasing and representing the fantastic and vast bioinformatics that is taking place in Australia, is important for delivering impact and raising awareness of the advances and cutting edge bioinformatics that is happening in Australia.

Many Australian bioinformatics tools and/or resources could be promoted either through general outreach or more specifically by addition to existing international registries such as Biosharing.org (for databases, standards and policies), and ToolsAU (biotools.org which is a tools registry from ELIXIR). EMBL-ABR is keen to explore and share experiences with other efforts and national level bioinformatics infrastructure initiatives on the mechanisms and strategy they have implemented to raise awareness of bioinformatics and its importance as a vital part of the life sciences across the variety of stakeholders.

Summary of respondent countries of origin to the international survey about Australian bioinformatics conducted at the ISMB and ECCB conferences, 2016.

