

[View this email in your browser](#)

For the best reading experience, please click the link above.

Some email clients may not correctly render the content.



The Bulletin 471

May 2023

In this newsletter:

- [A message from the President](#)
- [For your diary](#)
- [NEWS](#)
- [Council Elections 2023: announcement of results](#)
- [Just published: December 2022 issue of the JProcRSNSW](#)
- [Welcome to new members](#)
- [ARC appoints Society Fellow, Steven Weller, as an Executive Director](#)
- [EVENT NOTICES](#)
- [RSNSW Online Lecture 2023-1](#)
- [Hunter Branch Meeting 2023-2](#)
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2023-4](#)
- [1313th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#)
- [Ideas@theHouse: June 2023](#)
- [REPORTS](#)
- [Program Committee — Christina Slade FRSN, Committee Chair](#)
- [Southern Highlands Branch — Anne Wood FRSN, Branch Chair](#)
- [Western NSW Branch — Nilima Mathai, Branch Secretary](#)
- [VIDEOS](#)
- [Recordings of Recent Events on YouTube](#)

A message from the President

Dear <<First Name>> <<Last Name>>

Our 156th Annual General Meeting held on 05 April 2023 in person at the State Library of New South Wales provided the opportunity to reflect on the Society's many achievements during the year through the work of Council, its Committees, and the many others who contributed in a myriad of ways. I refer you to the draft [Minutes](#) of the AGM in which some of



these achievements during 2022 are listed, as are the results of the elections for Council which I announced at the meeting.

I congratulate all members of our 2023 Council, whose names are presented here and thank them for committing to the mobilising the transformative power of knowledge, imagination, and ideas possessed so richly within the Society. I welcome four new Office-Bearers, Vice-President Peter Shergold AC FRSN, Secretary Donald Hector AM FRSN, Treasurer Bhavin Raval MRSN and Librarian Stephen Garton AM FRSN. The willingness of all Council members to commit their talents to the Society's governance is a strong indicator of the health of our organisation. The new Council will meet for the first time on 08 May.

Equally, I acknowledge three Council members, Jessica Milner Davis FRSN, George Willis FRSN, and Michael Jonas MRSN, and four Office-Bearers, Vice-President Judith Wheeldon AM FRSN, Secretary Bruce Ramage FRSN, Treasurer John Cameron MRSN and Librarian John Hardie AM FRSN, who retired at the AGM. I have previously acknowledged Jessica's strategic role in re-framing the Society's Awards in a structure that takes effect from this year. I add to this the value of her governance expertise on Council. George Willis (Hunter Branch) and Michael Jonas (Southern Highlands Branch) represented their respective Branch on Council while contributing to the work of Society as a whole.

Judith Wheeldon served as Council Member since the 2014 Annual General Meeting, filling many roles including Secretary of the Fellows Committee, Chair of the Voice and Outreach Committee, member of the Program Committee and Vice-President for the past nine years. As Vice-President and member of the Executive Committee, Judith led discussions and decisions regarding important issues of policy or activity in the Society, represented the Society in organising the Ideas@thehouse program, and until the pandemic intervened organising the Annual Dinner, thus raising its status to be a highlight of the Society's calendar. Judith led the initiative to create and recruit the position of Executive Officer that was so critical during the pandemic.

Elected as Secretary of the Society at the 2019 AGM, Bruce Ramage served in this exacting role for four years bringing to bear his breadth of skills and long experience as Company Secretary in the academic and not-for-profit sectors. His bachelor's degree in fine arts with Honours from the University of Sydney brought an additional dimension to Bruce's work for the Society in the form of our outstanding and elegant bicentennial celebrations during 2021 and 2022, and Annual Dinner and Awards presentations in March 2023. Bruce also applied his expertise to bringing some of the history of the Society to life through his regular columns in our Bulletin and, of course, our bicentennial exhibition NEXUS.

John Cameron served as Treasurer for the past two years. In his calm, measured, and patient way, he guided the Society's finances, back-office functions, and the Society's relationship with The Association Specialists with great expertise, and contributed much wisdom to the deliberations of Council and the Executive Committee. He also served as a member of the Philanthropy and Library and Assets Committees.

John Hardie's record, 50-year-long association with the Society will be hard to beat. He served as President in 1994, again from 2007-2012, and in many other roles most recently as Librarian since April 2020. John played an important role in underpinning the Society's Bicentennial celebrations including our exhibition NEXUS about which he wrote in the [December 2022 issue](#) of the Society's Journal and Proceedings. In honour of his long

service, John received the Royal Society of New South Wales Medal in 2012, proposed the toast to the Society at our Bicentennial Dinner on 24 June 2022, and cut the croquembouche with the ceremonial sword. John continues to serve as President of the Royal Societies of Australia having been first elected in November 2010.

Details of all events held during April and scheduled for May are provided in this Bulletin or on our [website](#). I single out the public lecture hosted jointly by the Society's Western New South Wales Branch and Charles Sturt University that I attended in Bathurst on 20 April. Professor Sharynne McLeod FRSN spoke powerfully about [communication as a human right for everyone, including children](#). Her thought leadership is reaching global halls of influence, including the World Health Organisation and the United Nations. The occasion also enabled me to present certificates to several new Members and Fellows of the Society from the Western NSW Branch. The vibrancy of the event was mirrored by the autumn colour palette of the trees around the city and the drive around the "circuit" that finished on Conrod Straight.



We work for the Society and for NSW because we understand the need to enhance public discourse on a wide range of topics that are crucial to our future. Society members have excellent ideas to contribute. In that spirit, I look forward to hearing your ideas and suggested ways to bring them to fruition.

Susan M Pond AM FRSN

[President](#), [Royal Society of NSW](#)

For your diary

- [RSNSW Online Lecture 2023-1](#) (Wednesday, 3 May 6.30 pm AEST, Zoom webinar), *Artificial Intelligence myths debunked — how AI is transforming humanity for the global good*, Professor Michael Blumenstein FACS, Acting Dean, Faculty of Engineering and IT, University of Technology Sydney
- [Hunter Branch Meeting 2023-2](#) (Thursday, 11 May 5.00 pm AEST, Newcastle City Hall, Hunter Room): *Invention, Innovation, Impact — the I's have it!*, Laureate Professor Kevin Galvin FAA FTSE, Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-efficient Beneficiation of Minerals, University of Newcastle
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2023-4](#) (Thursday, 18 May 6.30 pm AEST, RSL Mittagong Carrington Room): *Brief encounters: literary travellers in Australia*, Susannah Fullerton OAM FRSN, Author, Literary Lecturer, and Tour Leader
- [1313th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday 7 June, 6.30 pm AEST, Gallery Room, State Library of NSW): *Making rights a reality — the need for a Human Rights Act for Australia*, Emeritus Professor Ros Croucher AM FAAL, President, Australian Human Rights Commission
- [Ideas@theHouse: June 2023](#), (Wednesday, 14 June 6.00 pm, Government House Sydney by formal invitation and subsequently on YouTube), *Topic: Importance of*

The Society's complete events program for the year is published in the [online Events Calendar](#), which is updated regularly.

NEWS

Council Elections 2023: announcement of results

At the Society's 156th Annual General Meeting, held on 5 April 2023, the results of the 2023 Council elections were announced.

The election was conducted by electronic ballot over a three-week period from noon on 13 March until noon on 3 April. Some 222 ballots were submitted by 664 eligible voters, corresponding to a return rate of 33%.



Procedural motions

The outcome of the ballot for the procedural motions was as follows:

- Approval of the minutes of the 155th Annual General Meeting (2022) — For: 177 votes; Against: 0 votes; Abstentions: 24
- Receipt of the 2022 Annual Report and Financial Statements — For: 199 votes; Against: 0 votes; Abstentions: 23
- Confirmation of Auditors for 2023 — For: 205 votes; Against: 1 vote; Abstentions: 16

Accordingly, all three procedural motions were declared by the Returning Officer, the Hon. John Dowd AO KC FRSN, as having passed.

Election of Secretary (two candidates)

The outcome of the election of the Secretary was:

- Donald Hector: 112 votes
- Bruce Ramage: 110 votes

Accordingly, the Returning Officer declared Donald Hector to be elected as Secretary of the Royal Society of NSW.

Since all other office-bearer and elected Council member vacancies received the same number of nominations as there were positions available, these nominees had been declared elected, without the need for a ballot, in advance of the election.

Council 2023–2024

The incoming Council for 2023–2024 took office immediately following the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Its composition is listed in the table below.

Patron	Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales
President	Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN (until April 2025)
Vice-President	Emeritus Professor Peter Shergold AC FRSN (until April 2025)
Secretary	Dr Donald Hector AM FRSN (until April 2025)

Treasurer	Mr Bhavin Raval MRSN (until April 2025)
Librarian	Emeritus Professor Stephen Garton AM FRSN (until April 2025)
Webmaster	Emeritus Professor Lindsay Botten FRSN (until April 2025)
	Professor Katherine Belov AO FRSN (until April 2025)
	Professor Sean Brawley FRSN (until April 2024)
	Professor Philip Gale FRSN (until April 2024)
Councillors	Ms Pamela Griffith OAM FRSN (until April 2024)
	Dr Davina Jackson FRSN (until April 2025)
	Emeritus Professor Robert Marks FRSN (until April 2024)
	Emeritus Professor Christina Slade FRSN (until April 2025)
	One member to be appointed by Council (TBA) (until April 2025)
Branches	
Hunter	Adjunct Professor Robert Whittaker AM FRSN (until April 2025)
Southern	
Highlands	Dr James Rowe FRSN (until April 2025)
Western NSW	Professor Mark Evans FRSN (until April 2024)

Just published: December 2022 issue of the JProcRSNSW

After a delay owing to production difficulties, the December 2022 issue of the *Journal & Proceedings* is now available online as the [Current Issue](#). The printed version will be mailed out shortly to subscribers in 2022.



With nine items on the Bicentenary celebrations, eighteen PhD Abstracts (including the first three from Sydney University), and six papers, it is the busiest issue edited by Robert Marks FRSN, (Editor, JProcRSNSW). A notable paper is Martin Green's acceptance speech given in Helsinki when he was awarded Finland's premier prize, the 2022 Millennium Technology Prize; he describes in detail the fifty-year tale of how he and the team developed the most efficient PERC solar cells that are now found on rooftops around the world. Newly elected Vice-President, Peter Shergold, and ANU VC, Brian Schmidt, have papers, Peter's on lessons from COVID, and Brian's on opportunities associated with the AUKUS agreement. Dean Rickles has a paper on the role of human observers (subjectivity) in our models of reality. There is also a paper on an exhibition based on the seventy-year-old book, *Australian Seashores*. The Proceedings lists the 2022 Society prize-winners, events in 2022, and gazetted Fellows in 2022.

Also, please remember that it is not too late to subscribe to the June and December 2023 issues of the journal via the [online shop](#).

Welcome to new members

The Royal Society of New South Wales welcomes the following new members to the Society's ranks, effective from 15 March 2023.

Fellows

- Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Anne Ashburn

- Professor Roy Gary Beran
- Dr Joseph John Brophy
- Professor Conal Stratford Condren
- Professor Marcel Eduard Dinger
- Mr Lionel Etheridge
- Associate Professor Kalinda Griffiths
- Professor Anthony John Mills
- Professor Bernard Alexander Pailthorpe
- Professor Prem Ramburuth
- Professor Maree Rose Teesson
- Professor Brian Uy
- Mr Robyn Williams



Members

- Dr Matthew Broome
- Dr Sam Lin
- Dr Elizabeth Killen

Associate Members

- Mr Shankar Dutt
- Mr Luke Martin Hall
- Miss Clara Chung Ming Liu
- Mr Thomas Mesaglio
- Miss Anyang Zhao

ARC appoints Society Fellow, Steven Weller, as an Executive Director

The Australian Research Council has recently announced (24 March) that Society Fellow Professor Steven Weller FRSN of the University of Newcastle has been appointed as the new Executive Director for the Engineering and Information Sciences. The Executive Directors oversee the grant allocation panels in their discipline portfolio, have operational and oversight roles in other granting programs, and provide strategic policy advice within the ARC.



To date, Steven Weller has been a Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Newcastle, with research interests in control theory and its applications in energy systems. Over the past decade, he has served in a range of management roles including Head of School, Associate Dean (Research), and Deputy Head of Faculty. Most recently, he has been the Director of the Science and Engineering Challenge (SEC) outreach program, the goal of which is to inspire young people to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in senior high school. The SEC is a cooperative venture between the University of Newcastle, 120 Rotary clubs, local communities and local businesses, governments, professional groups, and some 30 universities.

Steven has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW since 2020, a member of the Committee of the Hunter Branch of the Society since its inception, and has been active in the work of the Society's Program Committee, representing the Hunter Branch and moderating the Student Awards Presentations in recent years.

The Council of the Society congratulates Steven Weller on his appointment and wishes him well in this new phase of his career.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

EVENT NOTICES

RSNSW Online Lecture 2023-1

Artificial Intelligence myths debunked — how AI is transforming humanity for the global good

Professor Michael Blumenstein FACS

**Professor and Acting Dean
Faculty of Engineering & IT
University of Technology Sydney**



Date: Wednesday, 3 May 2023, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: [Zoom webinar](#)

Entry: No charge

All are welcome

[Please click here to join the webinar](#)

Summary: Michael Blumenstein will speak about the current trends in Artificial Intelligence (AI), both in academia and in business. In his talk, Michael will highlight a number of applications including some of the cutting-edge AI technologies developed at UTS. One such case study will be the research undertaken in collaboration with industry, which was translated into the AI solution: SharkSpotter© – the world's first technology that can be used to detect sharks from video captured by drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

Michael will demonstrate how AI can be used to enhance and even save people's lives, as well as transform businesses and the economy. Other applications that Michael will present, include CrocSpotter© – a technology for automatically detecting crocodiles in Northern Queensland. Further examples include AI technology for drone detection that has now been deployed in industry to enhance public safety. Michael will demonstrate how AI can be used to advance towards the next frontier of technological innovation. Further discussion will be dedicated to the recent trends with ChatGPT as well as the future of AI and possible directions for attaining the goal of conscious machines.

Michael Blumenstein is currently a Professor and the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and IT (FEIT) at UTS. Previously, he held the roles of Deputy Dean, and Associate Dean (Research Strategy and Management) in FEIT at UTS where he concluded his role as Head of the School of Software. He formerly served as the Head of the School of Information and Communication Technology at Griffith University, and earlier

as the Dean (Research) in the Science, Environment, Engineering, and Technology Group. Michael is a nationally and internationally recognised expert in the areas of automated Pattern Recognition and Artificial Intelligence, and his current research interests range from Marine Life and Shark Detection from Video Imagery, Document Analysis, Video-based/multi-lingual Text Detection, and Signature Verification. He has published over 300 papers in refereed books, conferences, and journals. His research also spans various projects applying Artificial Intelligence to the fields of Engineering, Environmental Science, Neurobiology, and Coastal Management. Michael has secured internal/nationally competitive research grants to undertake these projects with funds exceeding AU\$6.5 Million. Components of his research into the predictive assessment of beach conditions have been commercialised for use by local government agencies, coastal management authorities, and in commercial applications.

Hunter Branch Meeting 2023-2

“Invention, Innovation, Impact — the I’s have it!”

Laureate Professor Kevin Galvin FAA FTSE FIEAust

**Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling
Eco-efficient Beneficiation of Minerals**

**Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources
University of Newcastle**

ROYAL SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES
HUNTER BRANCH



ARC Centre of Excellence for
ENABLING ECO-EFFICIENT
BENEFICIATION OF MINERALS

Date: Thursday 11 May 2023, gather from 5.00 pm for 5.45 pm (AEST)

Registration: [Registration is required](#) by 5.00 pm on Tuesday 9 May 2023 through Membes. Max: 100 people

Venue: Hunter Room, Newcastle City Hall, 290 King St, Newcastle NSW 2300

Entry: Society members, \$15; Non-members, \$25; Students, \$5

Enquiries: Via [email to RSNSW Hunter Branch Secretary \(Prof. Philip Bolton\)](#).

Society Members, Fellows, and members of the public are welcome

Drinks will be available (cash/EFTPOS) from 5:00 pm until the commencement of the talk at 5:45 pm, and after the presentation.

The Hunter Branch of the Royal Society of New South Wales and the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-Efficient Beneficiation of Minerals are pleased to jointly host this public lecture in Newcastle.

Please register now

In this presentation, Laureate Professor Kevin Galvin will use the term *invention* as a higher-level concept, not necessarily predicated by a patent, to describe the enabler for creating a new platform, perhaps even a new paradigm. He will explore *innovation* as the process for delivering change within an existing or new paradigm, and *impact* as the added value arising from change. If there is no change (or use), there is no impact.

He will then explore the notion of the three “I”s in the context of universities, why we have universities, and examine the incremental nature of innovation versus transformational change, illustrated by his own experience in the context of mineral separations. He will reflect on the need to educate our engineers with the right brand of critical thinking. Finally, he will address the long-standing question concerning the measurement of research impact in universities, offering a “simple” way forward.

Kevin Galvin is the inventor of the Reflux Classifier used in the gravity separation of fine mineral particles. With over 240 installations around the world, the technology has been used to beneficiate iron ore, mineral sands, metallurgical coal, potash, chromite, lithium, and other base metal oxides. New innovative systems are emerging including the Reflux Flotation Cell and a novel agglomeration technology. Kevin Galvin is a Laureate Professor at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering and a previous recipient of numerous awards including the Ian Wark Medal, the ATSE Clunies Ross Award, and the Antoine Gaudin Award in mineral processing. He is the Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-Efficient Beneficiation of Minerals.



Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2023-4

Brief Encounters: Literary Travellers in Australia

Susannah Fullerton OAM FRSN

Author, Literary Lecturer, and Tour Leader



Date: Thursday, 18 May 2023, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: RSL Mittagong

All are welcome

Summary: Many Australians have no idea about the famous writers who came to this country in the 19th century and early twentieth century. What financial issues brought Mark Twain here, why did the world's best-selling novelist make her way here, and what did she see and do, what did Anthony Trollope write that so upset the locals, and how did HG Wells stir up a storm of controversy? What did Jack London see in Sydney that resulted in race riots in America? Why was Charles Darwin so disappointed when he arrived, why did Aussies want Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to drown, and how did DH Lawrence respond to the Australian bush?

Literary lecturer Susannah Fullerton OAM FRSN tells the fascinating stories of these famous writers, and others, who made the long journey to this side of the world. In her illustrated talk, she discusses the reasons for their visits, their reactions to this very different land, and explains what they wrote after their visits. In an age before documentaries and the internet, views of what Australia and its people could be like were shaped by what these authors wrote, so their visits were important in allowing others to

learn about Australia and Australians to learn about themselves. Come and discover these important, although brief, encounters.

President of Jane Austen Society of Australia, **Susannah Fullerton OAM FRSN** majored in English Literature at the University of Auckland. She then completed a postgraduate degree in Victorian fiction and prose at the University of Edinburgh. For over 25 years Susannah has been President of the Jane Austen Society of Australia. She has lectured extensively on Jane Austen in Australia and overseas and has published many articles about Jane Austen's works. She is the co-author of *Jane Austen – Antipodean Views* and published *Jane Austen and Crime* in 2004, and *Brief Encounters: Literary Travellers in Australia* (Picador) in 2009. Susannah's latest books are *A Dance with Jane Austen*, *Happily Ever After: Celebrating Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice*, and a memoir *Jane & I: A Tale of Austen Addiction*.

1313th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

Making rights a reality — the need for a Human Rights Act for Australia

Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM FAAL

**President
Australian Human Rights Commission**



Date: Wednesday, 7 June 2023, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: Gallery Room, State Library of NSW, Shakespeare Place, Sydney

Entry: Society members, \$10; Non-members, \$20; Students, \$5.

Registration: [Registration through Membes](#) is required before 2.00 pm on 7 June 2023

All are welcome

[Please click here to register](#)

Summary: This presentation advances the case for a Human Rights Act for Australia, reflecting on experiences during COVID and the difference a Human Rights Act may have made — and where it has helped in places where a human rights lens is legislated for decision and policy making.

Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM FRSA FACLM (Hon) FAAL TEP

commenced a seven-year term as President of the Australian Human Rights Commission on 30 July 2017. Prior to joining the Commission, Rosalind was President of the Australian Law Reform Commission (2009–2017) and Commissioner (2006–2009), where she led a number of significant law reform inquiries. She has lectured and published extensively, principally in the fields of equity, trusts, property, inheritance, legal history, and increasingly in public policy. In 2011 she was recognised as one of the 40 'inspirational alumni' of UNSW, where she gained her PhD. In 2014 Croucher was acknowledged for her contributions to public policy as one of Australia's '100 Women of Influence' in the Australian Financial Review and Westpac awards; and for her 'outstanding contribution to the legal profession' was awarded the Australian Women Lawyer's award. In 2015 she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for 'significant service to the law as an

academic, to legal reform and education, to professional development, and to the arts', and in 2016 Macquarie University conferred on her the title of Emeritus Professor.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

Ideas@theHouse: June 2023



Ideas@theHouse

presented by

**Her Excellency the Honourable
Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW**



**"Importance of scientific ideas and discovery to
Australia's future"**

**Dr Cathy Foley AO DistFRSN PSM FAA FTSE
Australia's Chief Scientist**

Date: Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 6.00 pm AEST

Venue: Government House Sydney (by formal invitation) with a YouTube recording thereafter

Entry: No charge

Registration: Information about registering for a formal invitation will follow

Summary: Science is humanity's superpower. Because of our ability to be curious, deduce, and experiment, we humans have been able to discover how the world works and then use this knowledge to extend our lives with improved health and ways to fight disease. We have worked out how to use materials in the earth and air to construct buildings the height of mountains and electronics with features the size of an atom. But in doing this, we have not been careful enough about the impacts on our environment, and we are now at a point where we must look to science for solutions to the climate crisis. Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley, will speak about the importance of scientific discovery to making Australia the place it is now, and how science and the humanities can contribute to a future for us all. She will also consider what we can learn from Australia's First Nations peoples about sustainability and care for country.

Dr Cathy Foiey AO DistFRSN PSM became Australia's ninth Chief Scientist in January 2021 after an extensive career at Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO, including as the agency's Chief Scientist.

Dr Foley is an internationally recognised physicist with major research achievements in superconductors and sensors which led to the development of the LANDTEM sensor system to locate valuable deposits of minerals deep underground.

Dr Foley's scientific excellence and influential leadership have been recognised with numerous awards and fellowships, including election to the Australian Academy of Science in 2020, and an Order of Australia for service to research science and to the

advancement of women in physics. She received the Australian Institute of Physics Medal for Outstanding Service to Physics in 2016. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering (2008), an honorary Fellow of the Australian Institute of Physics (2019), and a Distinguished Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW (2022).

Dr Foley is an inspiration to women in STEM across the globe and focused strongly on equality and diversity in the science sector.

REPORTS

Program Committee — Christina Slade FRSN, Committee Chair

In 2023 we have planned seven Ordinary General Meetings followed by lectures, and three other occasions at which there will be a lecture but no OGM. Six of these events will take place face-to-face while the others will be presented as webinars; all will be available on our [YouTube channel](#). We are trialling a cash bar in the State Library Friends Room, with its inimitable atmosphere of a Pall Mall Club, open from 5:30 pm on the evenings of the face-to-face meetings and lectures.



Recent Events

In the last Bulletin, the President wrote about our first event of the year which took place at the State Library, Major General (Retd) Fergus (Gus) McLachlan AO lectured on ‘Drones, Smart Munitions, and Cyberspace: the 21st Century Defence of Ukraine and its implications for Australia.’

The Student Award Presentations are an annual highlight for the Royal Society of NSW. The 2022 Jak Kelly Award winner was Shankar Dutt, a doctoral student at the Research School of Physics, Australian National University, who gave a presentation on ‘Sensing one molecule at a time: A pathway to personalized healthcare and early detection of Alzheimer’s and MS.’ Clara Liu Chung Ming, scholarship winner, is a PhD candidate in the School of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Her topic was: ‘A novel hope for heart failure patients using bioengineered heart tissues.’ Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death worldwide. She reported on new ways to 3D bioengineer human heart tissues using patient-derived stem cells. Thomas Mesaglio, scholarship winner, is a PhD candidate at UNSW Sydney working on Australian plants. His talk was titled ‘Say cheese-tree!; Exploring Australia’s vascular plant photographic record’. Thomas argued for the value of photographs for documenting difficult-to-collect taxa, such as tall trees or spiny plants, flower colour, and growth habit. Ms Anyang Zhao, scholarship winner and PhD Candidate at the Australian National University discussed ‘The molecular mechanism of *Listeria ivanovii*-induced inflammasome activation’. *Listeria ivanovii* is a pathogenic gram-positive bacterium that causes listeriosis, a type of gastroenteritis that can lead to abortion and sepsis in humans and animals.

On March 2, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW hosted Ideas@theHouse. Dr John Vallance FRSN FAHA, State Librarian of NSW, talked of his lifetime engagement with Greek philosophy. His elegant lecture “Aristotle on life and

thought in the sub-lunary sphere” was followed by questions led by Professor Duncan Iveson, University of Sydney.

The 156th Annual General Meeting and 1312th Ordinary General Meeting took place on Wednesday, 5 April at the State Library. Prof Dietmar Müller FAA FAGU gave the 2019 RSNSW Clarke Medal on the topic “Reconstructing ancient oceans, sea-level fluctuations, the deep carbon cycle, and biodiversity.” His fascinating talk took us back billions of years. The vivid reconstructions enabled by the EarthByte Group’s Virtual Earth Observatory showed now-vanished ocean basins. The digital maps that he presented track oceanic carbon reservoirs through time and demonstrate the five-fold increase in the carbon storage and transport capacity of the oceans since the breakup of the Pangea supercontinent 200 million years ago.

YouTube recordings of each of these events can be accessed from the [video recordings section](#) of this email.

Upcoming Events

On May 3, Professor Michael Blumenstein FACS Professor and Acting Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, University of Technology Sydney will discuss the topic “[Artificial Intelligence myths debunked — how AI is transforming humanity for the global good](#)” online with Professor Lewis Bizo of Charles Sturt University as discussant.

On the 7 June following the 1313th OGM Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM FAAL, President, Australian Human Rights Commission will give a lecture titled ‘[Making rights a reality — the need for a Human Rights Act for Australia.](#)’

Southern Highlands Branch — Anne Wood FRSN, Branch Chair

Presentation Report — 16 March 2023

The Kindness Revolution

Hugh Mackay AO FRSN FAPS
Honorary Professor, Research School of Psychology
Australian National University School

Hugh Mackay, a social psychologist who has had a 60-year career in social research, delivered the address at the March meeting of the Southern Highlands Branch of the Society. He is a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society and the Royal Society of NSW. He has been awarded honorary doctorates by Charles Sturt, Macquarie, NSW, Western Sydney, and Wollongong Universities. He was also appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2015

Mackay is renowned for his social research into the human condition, and on this occasion presented a wide-ranging lecture that emphasised the extraordinary changes which have occurred, and which are still occurring, in Australian society. One of his basic observations, from which flowed much of his presentation, was that in the last 100 years, the Australian population has increased by a factor of 5, yet the number of dwellings had increased by a factor of 10 over the same period.



He went on to detail what this astonishing discrepancy meant in our evolving societal trends.

Hugh started his analysis by looking at the last 30-40 years in Australia, describing this period as the most tumultuous, disruptive, dramatic period of social, cultural, economic, technological and demographic change, all of which have pushed us into a period of social fragmentation. He emphasised that Australia is not alone in this regard, as the same observations have been made in other Western democracies with which we tend to compare ourselves. He went on to discuss in detail what he has observed in our period of social fragmentation.

Some of the key social changes which Hugh detailed included the following:

- Our shrinking households. Our average household is now 2.5 people. The Australian Bureau of Statistics is now predicting a figure of 2.2 in the next decade. If we combine the number of 1-person households and the number of 2-person households, we have accounted for 54% of all households. In 10-15 years, one-third of all households will contain just one person.
- Loneliness is now considered as a disease...the no. 1 health issue overtaking obesity.
- Relationship breakdown. Between 35-40% of contemporary marriages now end in divorce.
- One million Australian children are living with just one of their parents. Each fortnight, half a million children move from the home of their custodial parent to the home of the non-custodial parent for an access visit.
- The Australian birth rate is now the lowest it has ever been in recorded history.
- Along with the falling birth rate is now found a huge increase in pet ownership. Australia now has a population of 25 million people and a pet population of 29 million.

To conclude, justice could never be done in reporting such an important lecture in this limited space. Let it be enough here to say that the 60-person audience experienced a beautifully presented lecture by a true professional in the field of analysis and interpretation of the human condition. Hugh noted that during recent catastrophes for our population such as unprecedented fires, floods and Covid 19, people seemed to show that they were now rediscovering in a meaningful way what it meant to be human, seeking out others in the same predicament to share adversity and offer comfort...a behaviour Hugh has termed "The Kindness Revolution".

Western NSW Branch — Nilima Mathai, Branch Secretary

Branch News and Events

Provocations

In conjunction with the Royal Society of NSW – Western Branch, the Provocations Public Lecture series will celebrate Charles Sturt research and will involve a 30-minute address, a facilitated 30-minute Q and A, reception, and drinks. All the events will also be streamed live.



Professor Sharynne McLeod delivered the opening lecture in this series on 20 April 2023 at Bathurst titled *Children should be seen AND heard: The importance of communication so children can thrive*. This will be followed by events in Bathurst, Canberra, Orange and Albury, with presentations by

Professors Ganna Pogrebna, Wayne Hudson, Allen Ross and Lee Baumgartner. The recording of the event will be made available on the Society's YouTube channel



Other News and Events

With the upcoming First Nations Voice referendum, the Western NSW Branch will partner with Charles Sturt University to host various thought leadership events to hear different perspectives on this critical matter. Recent and upcoming events are listed below.

Warangesda Festival

On 17–18 February 2023, Professor Stan Grant Jnr hosted a series of 'Yindymarra Talks' panels at the Warangesda Festival at Darlington Point – an event for which Charles Sturt was a partner. One of the panels was on the Voice and drew on various perspectives within the Wiradjuri community to explore the significance and potential impact of such a Voice.



An Evening with Stan Grant (10 May)

Professor Stan Grant Jr will launch his upcoming book, *The Queen is Dead* (HarperCollins), in Canberra on 10 May. The evening will consist of reflections and readings by Stan Grant and a conversation on the book between Stan and Yindymarra Research Fellow Jack Jacobs. For tickets, please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-stan-grant-tickets-538216438857>.

Lecture by Associate Professor Joanne Jamie, Wagga Wagga, July 2023

In July 2023, Associate Professor Joanne Jamie will lecture in Wagga Wagga on her long history of working with Indigenous groups, building aspirations and good educational outcomes for youth, and partnering with Elders to research bush medicines. Once a date has been confirmed, further details will be provided.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

VIDEOS

Recordings of Recent Events on YouTube

ROYAL SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES

Charles Sturt University

Western NSW Branch Meeting 2023-1
Thursday, 20 April 2023 at 6.00pm AEST
Venue: Charles Sturt University, Bathurst and live streaming

**Children should be seen AND heard:
the importance of communication so
children can thrive**

Professor Sharynne McLeod FRSN FASSA
Professor of Speech and Language Acquisition
Charles Sturt University






YouTube recording of the lecture delivered at the Society's Western NSW Branch 2023-1 meeting by Professor Sharynne McLeod FRSN FASSA of Charles Sturt University on the subject of *Children should be seen AND heard: the importance of communication so children can thrive*. An abstract of the talk and the biography of the presenter is available from the [online event notice](#).


ROYAL SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES

156th Annual General Meeting; 1312th Ordinary General Meeting & 2019 Clarke Lecture
Wednesday, 5 April 2023 at 6.00pm AEST
Venue: Gallery Room, Mitchell Building, State Library of NSW

**Reconstructing ancient oceans,
sea-level fluctuations, the deep carbon cycle,
and biodiversity**

Professor Dietmar Müller FAA FAGU
School of Geosciences
University of Sydney

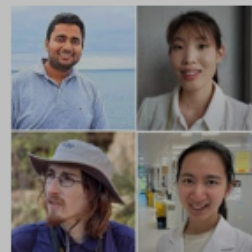




YouTube recording of the 1312th Ordinary General Meeting and 2019 Clarke Memorial Lecture held on 5 April 2023 on the subject of *Reconstructing ancient oceans, sea-level fluctuations, the deep carbon cycle, and biodiversity*, delivered by Professor Dietmar Müller FAA FAGU, Professor of Geophysics at the University of Sydney. An abstract of the talk and the biography of the presenter is available from the [online event notice](#).

RSNSW 2022 Student Award Presentations

Shankar Dutt (Jak Kelly Award), ANU
Clara Liu Chung Ming (UTS)
Thomas Mesaglio (Scholarship), UNSW Sydney
Anyang Zhao (Scholarship), ANU



YouTube recording of the 1311th Ordinary General Meeting and 2022 Student Award Presentation from 15 March 2022, featuring Shankar Dutt (ANU), winner of the 2022 Jak Kelly Award, and Clara Liu Chung Ming (UTS), Thomas Mesaglio (UNSW Sydney), and Anyang Zhao (ANU), each of whom were winners of RSNSW Scholarships for 2022. Information about the talks and the speakers is available from the [online event notice](#).

Ideas@theHouse

presented by

Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales

Thursday, 2 March 2023 at 6.30 pm AEDT
Live Streaming at Government House Sydney



Aristotle on life and thought
in the sub-lunary sphere

Dr John Vallance FRSN FAHA
State Librarian of NSW



YouTube recording of Ideas@theHouse held at Government House on 2 March 2023 in which Dr John Vallance FRSN FAHA, State Librarian of NSW, presented on the topic of *Aristotle on life and thought in the sub-lunary sphere*. An abstract of the talk and the biography of Dr Vallance is available from the [online event notice](#).

**Drones, Smart Munitions, and Cyberspace:
the 21st Century Defence Challenge and
its implications for Australia**

**Major General (Retd) Fergus (Gus) McLachlan AO
and
Colonel (Retd) Andrew Condon**



YouTube recording of the 1310th Ordinary General Meeting on 1 February 2023 on the subject of *Drones, Smart Munitions, and Cyberspace: the 21st Century Defence Challenge of Ukraine and its implications for Australia*, featuring Major General (Retd) Fergus (Gus) McLachlan AO and Colonel (Retd) Andrew Condon CSC. An abstract of the talk and the biographies of the presenters is available from the [online event notice](#).

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)



Edited by: [Lindsay Botten](#) FRSN, Webmaster, Royal Society of NSW

Copyright © 2023 Royal Society of New South Wales, All rights reserved.

ABN 76 470 896 415

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).