

ROYAL SOCIETY OF NSW

Council Elections 2020–21

Background

An election is required for the positions of Vice-Presidents and Honorary Librarian following the close of nominations at 5.00pm on Tuesday, 12 March 2020.

For the positions of Vice-President, for which there are three (3) vacancies, there were five (5) nominations. For the role of Honorary Librarian, there were two (2) nominations.

The nominees for these positions were written to requesting that they provide an optional short statement outlining how their expertise and experience fits them for these roles and will benefit the Society. Statements received by the close of business on Monday, 16 March will be posted en bloc by 9.00am on Tuesday, 17 March, while statements received thereafter will be posted as they are received. It is suggested that Members and Fellows who are intending to vote in the Council elections should re-check this page before lodging their vote.

On this page are statements from candidates for the positions of:

- Vice-Presidents
 - [Robert Clancy](#)
 - [John Hardie](#)
 - [Brynn Hibbert](#)
 - [Susan Pond](#)
 - [Judith Wheeldon](#)
- Honorary Librarian
 - [Ragbir Bhathal](#)
 - [John Hardie](#)

Statements from Candidates for the positions of Vice-Presidents

Robert Clancy

Thank you for considering this nomination. My background includes 50 years in academic medicine—Foundation Professor of Pathology, Medical School, University of Newcastle: only the world’s second degree that is based on problem-based curricula. I have provided leadership in clinical medicine, tertiary education, mucosal immunology research, and biotechnology; I continue work in each of these areas.

It is a privilege and pleasure to serve the Society, on Council, as a member of the Outreach and the Library and Assets Committees, and recently as Chair of the Events Committee. In these roles, I have contributed to:

- re-location of the Society’s Library to the State Library of NSW;
- establishment of a relationship with SMSA including a conjoint Lecture Series, now in its fourth year;
- conducted the successful international tour “History of Science”;
- written a History of Science in pre-World War II Australia, featuring the RSNSW contribution.

My objectives for the Events Committee are to improve the quality control of monthly presentations, to initiate “Thinking Thursdays” for congenial discussion and drinks, and to conduct a

History of Science Tour to the UK, culminating with a symposium in Edinburgh to celebrate the Society's 200th anniversary in 2021.

My reasons for nominating as a candidate for Vice-President are to:

- enable me to attain goals in a more efficient and effective manner as part of the decision-making Executive Committee;
- expand outcomes more widely through the Friends of the Library (and the Library network) and develop a model (with the new Precinct High School) to have input into schools;
- prosecute more effectively advice to the Society regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (as an experienced immunologist).

[Return to the top of page](#)

John Hardie

I have been involved with the Royal Society of NSW for almost a quarter of its existence. My unique and extensive knowledge of its workings and history is a valuable asset to the Society. I have been its longest serving President as well as Hon. Secretary, Bulletin Editor, Vice-President and Councillor. I am a Fellow of the Society and have been awarded the Royal Society Medal. I am a dedicated educationalist, a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and of the Geological Society of London.

As we approach the Society's bicentenary, I see its greatest priority as its financial viability in the long term. I will ensure that this is achieved by enhancing our relationship with government, enlarging our membership base and developing a philanthropy footprint. My role as President of the Royal Societies of Australia ensures that members benefit from our relationships with other Royal Societies and learned societies. I have extended the Society's reach through my efforts to create the Hunter Branch, and will continue this in other regions, especially New England. My work as Chair of the Library and Assets Committee continues as we develop our relationship with the State Library to maximise the value of our most important asset.

The Royal Society of NSW is on the cusp of great things. We have an opportunity to take a leadership role in intellectual discourse in NSW, but we need to tread carefully. As Vice-President I will strike a balance between tradition and innovation such that neither causes the Society to falter.

[Return to the top of page](#)

Brynn Hibbert

I gave a RSNSW OGM lecture to an audience of ten or so in 2008 and have been a Royal Society tragic ever since.

I have served as Chair of the Awards Committee, Council Member, Vice-President and President. I am presently Chair of the Fellows Assessment Committee. As President I presided over the modern flowering of the Society, taking Don Hector's vision of Fellowship and recruiting many friends and acquaintances, not just from UNSW. Recently I have helped Susan Pond write the Diversity and Inclusion Policy of the Society and look forward to seeing its fruits in the future.

The Enlightenment mission "to encourage ... Science, Art, Literature and Philosophy" has always resonated with my view of a thinking person's Society and, if elected, I look forward to supporting Ian Sloan and the new Council in their work to establish the RSNSW as a leader of serious thought and debate in the State.

[Return to the top of page](#)

Susan Pond

As we collectively seek the correct path through current challenges — drought, bushfires, the SARS-2 pandemic and the global economic contagion — the RSNSW has an important role to play. We must be at the forefront of marshalling and communicating knowledge, enriching public understanding of the issues we face, and devising solutions and opportunities for both the short and long term. As a Council Member during the last year, I have contributed actively to the Society by serving on the Executive and Fellowship Committees, convening the successful 2019 RSNSW and Four Academies Forum “Making SPACE for Australia” held in Government House, and developing and co-sponsoring the Diversity and Inclusion Policy approved by Council on 22 January 2020. I am excited about the opportunity to be elected as a Vice-President of the Society because I wish to contribute further to the intellectual life and advancement of NSW using my experience in leadership roles in business, academia and government, and in combining and working at the interfaces between disciplines. I currently chair the NSW Smart Sensing Network and am Non-Executive Director of several for-profit and not-for-profit organisations. As Vice-President, I will give priority to strengthening the Society’s ranks of Fellows and Members, harnessing the power of collaboration, shared vision, robust debate and communication technologies to achieve our goals, and building financial resilience ahead of the Society’s celebration of its 200th anniversary in 2021.

[Return to the top of page](#)

Judith Wheeldon

Since joining the Royal Society of NSW, I have been active as member of Council, Vice-President, Secretary and member of the Fellows Committee, Chair of Voice and Outreach Committee. Selected achievements: Establishing our relationship with the State Library, organising and improving the Annual Dinner (2020 will be my third), two SMSA lecture series, the Executive Officer appointment, supporting other Members and Fellows in activities they lead.

The Society’s prime purpose is promoting intellectual exchange and that depends greatly on our social interaction. I like people. Welcoming and thanking seem to be two of my strengths. You might know me from my occasional chairing of OGMs, SMSA lectures and two Annual Dinners or from the votes of thanks that I enjoy proposing. I hope I have added value to events, communicated my enthusiasm for the Royal Society and emphasised the importance and pleasure of our intellectual endeavour.

Returned as Vice-President, I will continue to work to improve the Society’s organisational processes, governance, communication systems and professionalism. For our voice to be heard we need quicker responses to events (bushfires, coronavirus, significant visitors to Australia), a higher public profile and a rich and varied program. Most of all, we need Members and Fellows active in the Society, enjoying participation.

This coming year leads to our 200th birthday celebrations. It is amazing that we are one of the oldest organisations in Australia. I want to help lay the foundation for another successful century for the Royal Society of NSW.

[Return to the top of page](#)

Statements from Candidates for the position of Honorary Librarian

Ragbir Bhathal

Dr Ragbir Bhathal has served as the Society's Librarian for a number of years and has the expertise to run and continue to develop the Library into a research library similar to libraries in significant scientific societies in the UK and the US. He started the program to get members of the Society to not only deposit books in the Library written by them but also started a program for members to deposit their biographies which will be collated into a Dictionary of RSNSW Biographies similar to the Australian Dictionary of Biography. He was responsible for organising the Library which was in a mess when it was housed at the Society's premises at Sydney University. With the assistance of a postgraduate student, he was mainly responsible (working on the weekends) for cataloguing the Society's entire collection at that location. He also arranged for the first time for professional valuers to not only value the collection but also to identify the most valuable items and those that the Society needed to restore. He was also a member of the team that was recently responsible for organising the present collection at the State Library.

[Return to the top of page](#)

John Hardie

The Royal Society Library is a unique historical resource. It captures the development of intellectual thought in NSW merely by virtue of its contents, which have been amassed over more than a century. I have been involved with the Royal Society of NSW since the early 1970s and remember the Society's library when it was housed in Science House before its separation into two collections.

My entire career has been dedicated to making knowledge and information as widely available as possible. For example, I have been a member of the NSW TAFE Knowledge Management Reference Group providing strategic advice to all TAFE Institutes.

I have been the Chair of the Society's Library and Assets Committee since 2016. In that time, and with their help and advice, I have overseen the successful relocation of half of our library from obscurity in boxes to resplendent display in the Volunteers Room at the State Library of NSW. I have managed a small team of volunteers, who are listing these 5,000 or so volumes, and have engaged a professional restorer to bring them back to life. I have also managed the day-to-day liaison between the Society and the State Library in relation to this ground-breaking project.

If elected, I will continue this work to ensure that in the very near future the Society once again has a functioning library for its members and the wider community. I will also rekindle our relationship with UNE to ensure that the other half of our library remains fully accessible.

[Return to the top of page](#)

16 March 2020