



The Royal Society of New South Wales

"for the encouragement of studies and investigations in Science Art Literature and Philosophy"

Minutes of the 1283rd Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of New South Wales held by ZOOM Webinar on Wednesday 3 June 2020 at 6.30PM.

There were 47 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance.

1. WELCOME

President, Emeritus Professor Ian Sloan AO FRSN presided at the meeting. He welcomed members and guests and gave an acknowledgement of country.

1.1 Minutes of the 1282nd Ordinary General Meeting held on 22 April 2020

The Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting, previously circulated, were approved.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERSHIP

As no valid objection was lodged within two weeks following the 1282nd Ordinary General Meeting, the election of the following new Members took effect from the date of that meeting held on 22 April. Certificates will be presented at the first opportunity at a face-to-face meeting.

2.1 Members

Mr Peter Eustace
Mr Christopher Ruskin
Miss Brittany Walker

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

If no valid objection is lodged by 6.30pm on 17 June 2020, the election of new Members and Fellows will take effect from the date of the meeting.

3.1 Fellows

Professor Kaarin Jane Ansley
Professor Leanne Rose Cutcher
The Honourable John Robert Arthur Dowd
Associate Professor Simon Paul de Graaf
Dr Davina Gainor Jackson
Professor Lisa Jennifer Kewley
Professor Eric Ronald Wing-Fei Knight
Laureate Professor Roger Smith
Adjunct Professor Peter Lyndon Tyree

3.2 Members and Associate Members

Mr Chad Bochan

4 REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

It was noted that the new Council had met by ZOOM Webinar on 20 May 2020. The President brought to members' attention the following matters.

4.1 Councillor appointments

The President advised that under Rule 12(h) the Council filled two Council vacancies. Emeritus Professor Robert Marks was elected as Honorary Secretary (Editorial). Emeritus Professor Christina Slade was also elected to Council. Professor Slade had also accepted the position of Chair of Council's Events Committee.

4.2 Appointment to Executive Committee

Professor Sloan advised that under Rule 11(c) Emeritus Professor Lindsay Botten had been appointed as a member of the Executive Committee.

4.3 Ideas@TheHouse

Professor Sloan advised that a very successful Ideas@TheHouse was held on Thursday 21 May when Emeritus Professor Robert Clancy AM FRSN gave the inaugural lecture entitled 'Ten': *the Mapping of Colonial Australia*. There were 130 participants who viewed the ZOOM webinar.

Members and Fellows of the Society, particularly those who were unable to view the live presentation were reminded that the recording of the Ideas@TheHouse event was now available on the Society's YouTube channel.

4.5 Society's website redevelopment

It was noted that Emeritus Professor Lindsay Botten, the Honorary Webmaster had been active in making improvements to the website. Members and Fellows were encouraged to take the opportunity to view the changes.

4.6 Hunter Branch

Professor Sloan advised that Council had agreed to postpone the Branch's first AGM until 2021. It was noted that the Branch is continuing its program of events by ZOOM.

5 THIS EVENING'S PRESENTATION

DRINKING FOR THREE: MOTHER, BABY AND SOCIETY

Distinguished Professor Elizabeth Elliott AM FRSN FAHMS The University of Sydney and Sydney Children's Hospital (Westmead)

Professor Elliott holds a Chair in Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Sydney and is Consultant Paediatrician at the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (Westmead). She holds a Practitioner Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. In 2019 she received the James Cook Medal for 2018 from the Royal Society of NSW – its highest honour – and was the first female amongst its 47 recipients at that time.

Professor Elliott has dedicated her career to advancing human rights, health and quality of life for ill and disadvantaged children in Australia and beyond, through education, research, clinical care and advocacy. For over 20 years, Professor Elliott has worked to improve the lives of children with FASD in Australia. She is regarded as pre-eminent in advocacy, research, policy and clinical care regarding

FASD and has an international reputation in the field. She is a member of the Australian Government's FASD Advisory Committee; Co-Director of the NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in FASD; Co-Director of the Care and Intervention for Children and Adolescents with Drug and Alcohol Problems (CICADA); and Head of the CICADA NSW FASD Assessment clinic.

A synopsis of the lecture is given below.

Australians are amongst the highest consumers of alcohol in the world, and Australia is renowned for its excellent wine. Australian national sporting teams are sponsored by the alcohol industry and advertising and promotion of alcohol is rife, including to children. Yet the costs of alcohol are immense. It is difficult to measure the full economic impact of alcohol on our health and mental health and our education, child protection and justice systems. It is impossible to measure the costs to individuals and society.

Alcohol has a particularly devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of society — children. The topic of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and the current state of play in Australia was discussed. FASD results from the brain injury to the unborn child that is caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Children with FASD have severe neurodevelopmental impairment, birth anomalies and learning and behavioural problems, which have lifelong consequences.

Over two decades there has been enormous progress in the recognition of FASD as a significant but preventable public health problem. Clinical practice, education, service development and policy have been guided by a national collaborative approach involving clinicians, researchers, parent support groups, Indigenous communities and NGOs — with government and NHMRC funding. Australia has a national action plan, advisory group, website, and disease register, training programs and specialist FASD assessment clinics, and research and clinical networks. There are innovative diagnostic techniques and access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). However, the future is prevention, which remains the biggest challenge: 60% of Australian women continue to drink during pregnancy and children are increasingly diagnosed with FASD. It is known what will minimise alcohol harms but face significant challenges to implementing these interventions was discussed.

There followed a question and answer session moderated by Vice-President Ms Judith Wheeldon.

6 VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSE

The vote of thanks to Distinguished Professor Elizabeth Elliott was given by Emeritus Scientia Professor Eugenie Lumbers.

Before closing the meeting at 8.15pm, Vice-President Ms Judith Wheeldon drew members' attention to three forthcoming events:

- The 2020 Annual Dinner to be held virtually on Saturday 27 June;
- The July Ordinary General Meeting to be held by webinar on Wednesday 8 July;
- The next Ideas@TheHouse to mark the 175th anniversary of Government House to be held by webinar on Tuesday 21 July.