

1317th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of NSW

Minutes

The 1317th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of NSW took place in the Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library of NSW on Wednesday, 8 November 2023 commencing at 6:30 pm. There were 28 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance in person. The meeting was streamed for those who could not attend in person.

1. WELCOME

The President, Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN presided at the meeting. She welcomed Members and guests and acknowledged country. She encouraged Members to consider nominating candidates who reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences across NSW for membership of the Society.

2. MINUTES OF THE 1316TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 1316th Ordinary General Meeting was reviewed. There were no matters arising.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

As the Council has not met since the 1315th OGM, there were no nominations for membership at this meeting.

4. CONFIRMATION OF FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP AND PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

No certificates were presented at this meeting.

5 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The President reported on the following matters.

At a meeting of the Council on Friday 3 November, there was unanimous agreement that it should be recommended to the membership that the Royal Society of NSW Collection (Collection) be donated to the State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW). The President reported that progressively over the last 25 years much archival and other material has been moved to the SLNSW for safekeeping. The collection is of great historical value and needs to be accessible to members of the Society and the public. A substantial part of the collection has already been placed on permanent loan with the SLNSW. A small part is currently stored at rooms provided by the University of Sydney. The University is about to redevelop the building and the Society has been asked to vacate the premises. The Society does not have the resources or the space to make the Collection available and it is not expected to have such resources in the foreseeable future. Upon receiving the donation, the SLNSW will undertake to catalogue it and make it available to members and the public

The President announced that a detailed Explanatory Memorandum will be circulated to the membership the day after this meeting and that an electronic poll of the members would be conducted commencing Friday 10 November and closing the day after the next OGM, Thursday 30 November to vote on the proposal.

The Librarian, Stephen Garton, Vice President, Peter Shergold, and Secretary, Donald Hector, spoke in favour of the proposal, emphasising the importance of moving the Collection to the

custodianship of the SLNSW. There was one question from a Member regarding the asset value. Two Members spoke, one volunteering to work on the collection and the other expressing strong support for the proposal.

6 QUESTIONS

There were no further questions from the floor.

7 2022 CLARKE MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Royal Society of NSW Clarke Medal honours Rev. William Branwhite Clarke, a geologist, and significant figure in the history of the Royal Society of NSW, serving for a decade as a highly influential Senior Vice-President of the Society (in the early years, the Governor of NSW was the President of the Society). The Medal was first awarded in 1878 "for meritorious contributions to Geology, Mineralogy and Natural History of Australasia". The first Clarke Memorial Lecture was delivered in 1903. Since 2018, the Clarke Medal and Lectureship have been conjoined.

"Caves as observatories of groundwater recharge"

Professor Andy Baker FRSN FAGU

School of Biological, Earth, and Environment Sciences, University of NSW

Much of the world relies on groundwater as a water resource, yet it is hard to know when and where rainfall actually replenishes our groundwater aquifers. Caves that are situated above the groundwater table are unique observatories of water transiting from the land surface to the aquifer. Professor Baker will show how networks of loggers deployed in Australian caves (and mines and tunnels) have helped understand when, where and how much rainfall is needed to replenish the groundwater.

Andy Baker is a Professor in the School of Biological, Earth, and Environmental Sciences at the University of NSW, Sydney. His research includes the investigation of the climate, soil and groundwater processes that affect the cave and other subsurface environments. He is a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the Royal Society of New South Wales. He was awarded the Royal Society of New South Wales Clarke Medal (Geology) and Lecture in 2022.

The lecture covered the extensive work by Prof Baker and his research group investigating the ingress into caves and other underground spaces to determine the rate of groundwater replenishment. This is invaluable work, particularly in the context of climate change and the impact on the environment and the economy.

There were numerous questions about the research program.

8 VOTE OF THANKS

The vote of thanks was given by Dr Elizabeth Deane.

9 CLOSE

The President closed the meeting at 8:00 pm.

The minutes were recorded by the Secretary, Dr Donald Hector AM FRSN.

Signed as a true record Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN President