



The Royal Society of New South Wales

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

Minutes of the 1284th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of New South Wales held by ZOOM Webinar on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 6.30PM.

There were approximately 69 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance.

1. WELCOME

The President, Emeritus Professor Ian Sloan AO FRSN presided at the meeting. He welcomed members and guests and gave an acknowledgement of country. He also referred to the Society's Diversity and Inclusion Policy that had been recently developed.

1.1 Minutes of the 1283rd Ordinary General Meeting held on 3 June 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 1283rd Ordinary General Meeting, the election of the following new Members took effect from the date of that meeting. It was noted that Certificates would be presented at the first opportunity at a face-to-face meeting.

2.1 Fellows

The President welcomed the following newly-elected Fellows and Member to the Society.

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

2.2 Members

Mr Chad Bochan

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

If no valid objection is lodged by 6.30pm on 22 July 2020, the election of new Members will take effect from the date of the meeting.

3.1 Members and Associate Members

Member

Mr Luke Pearce

4 REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The President advised that the July *Bulletin* had been published that afternoon. He brought to members' attention the following matters.

4.1 Annual Dinner 2020

The President referred to the 2020 Annual Dinner which had been held virtually on Saturday 27 June, the Society's 199th birthday. He said that there had been 100 guests with 135 subsequent views on YouTube of the Distinguished Fellow's Lecture by Professor Brian Schmidt AC FRS DistFRSN FAA on the topic *Evidence and Education in a Post-Truth, Post-COVID World*.

4.2 Revised committee structure and membership

The President advised that Council had established a new committee structure: Awards, Bicentennial, Business Continuity, Community Engagement, Events, Fellows and Members Assessment, Library and Assets, and Publishing.

He said that following expressions of interest, the Council has now finalised the membership of all committees.

4.3 Awards for 2020

Professor Sloan advised that nominations were now open for the Society's 2020 Awards. He said nominations closed on 30 September 2020. He urged members to nominate suitable candidates for all the Society's Awards.

5 THIS EVENING'S PRESENTATION

WHY ART MATTERS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE FRSN
Director, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

In 1999 Elizabeth Ann Macgregor took up the directorship of Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art. Committed to supporting artists and expanding the audience for art, she initiated a unique program of partnerships in Western Sydney. She successfully negotiated a \$53m building redevelopment which includes a National Centre for Creative Learning. Ms Macgregor's innovation and contribution to the arts has been recognised with the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award in 2008 and the Australia Business Arts Foundation Business Leadership Award. In 2011 she received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. In 2019 she was included in *Art Review's* International Power 100 list; she won the 'Arts & Culture Category' of the *Australian Financial Review* '100 Women of Influence Awards', and was awarded the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue's Patrons' Prize for Collaboration. She sits on the Foundation of the Sydney Swans and the Board of UNICEF Australia.

A synopsis of the lecture is given below.

The Royal Society of NSW has long emphasised science, but literature, arts and philosophy have always been categories of interest and responsibility. Today, neither the arts nor science can stand alone; each needs the other. Ms Macgregor raised ideas about the indispensability of the arts especially in a time in which it seems as if our survival depends only on science.

Museums and galleries around the world have had to close their doors, turning to digital programs to stay connected with their audiences. News is dominated by the health crisis and the consequent financial issues. Ms Macgregor explored the role museums and galleries can play in these unsettling times where social distancing is the norm and gave examples of what recent initiatives the MCA had taken in this regard. She outlined how artists, museums and art galleries can play a critical role as we face the challenges of a changed world post-crisis.

There followed a question and answer session moderated by Vice-President Dr Susan Pond.

6 VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSE

The vote of thanks was given to Ms Macgregor by Vice-President Ms Judith Wheeldon. Before closing the meeting at 7.47pm, Ms Wheeldon thanked the donors who had contributed to the recent fundraising campaign.