

1316th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of NSW

Minutes

The 1316th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of NSW took place in the Gallery Room, State Library of NSW on Wednesday, 4 October 2023 commencing at 6:30 pm. There were 60 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance.

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 1314TH AND 1315TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

Minutes of the 1314th and 1315th Ordinary General Meetings were reviewed. There were no matters arising.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

As the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee 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

The President presented Certificates to new Fellows and Members whose nominations were tabled at the 1315th OGM and who were present at this meeting.

FELLOWSHIP

Professor Ben Colagiuri
Andrew Thomas Condon
Associate Professor Amy Katherine Cain
Professor Julianne Schultz
Professor Si Ming Man
Professor Steven James Langford
Professor Ainsley Newson
Professor Christopher F Sharpley
Steven James Miller
Professor Vicki F Bitsika
Elaine Sadler
Rosalind Croucher
Catherine Greenhill
Alaina Ammit
Kim Lovegrove

MEMBERSHIP

Brian William Bell
Micheal Daniel Lynch
Selena Griffith
Robert Anton Fabian
Ed Matzenik
Tracy Victoria Ryan

Susan Bazzana
Dr Zamira Gibb
Dr Rachel Clare Fitzhardinge
Michael Hedger
Christopher Fellows
Dyone Bettega

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Lorraine Pountney
Luke Hall
Rebel Bailey
Benjamin Chidiac

5 REPORTS FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The President reported on the following matters.

The Council is undertaking a substantial consultation and master planning process to determine the future of the Society over the next decade. The initial survey to canvass membership views has been circulated and completed. With the support of eight NSW and ACT universities, the Council has appointed a strategic consultant to facilitate the planning process.

The President encouraged nominations for the Society's awards program. Nominations will close on 30 September.

The RSNSW and Five Academies Forum will be hosted by the Governor and Vice-Regal Patron of the Society at Government House, Sydney, on Thursday, 2 November 2023, 8:45 am to 5.00 pm and will be live-streamed. This year's theme, "Our 21st-century brain", enables exploration of recent progress in unravelling the workings of the brain and opportunities to use our emerging understanding to promote human wellbeing well beyond the 21st Century.

6 QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the floor.

7 OPEN LECTURE

"Australia's nuclear future: a new discourse for the 2040s"

Helen Cook
Principal, GNE Advisory
and
Dr Adi Paterson FRSN FTSE
Former Chief Executive Officer, ANSTO

The debate about nuclear power in Australia has been deeply divisive, with pro- and anti-nuclear lobbies failing to engage with each other. Helen Cook, author of an authoritative work on legal regulation of nuclear industries (The Law of Nuclear Energy) and Dr Adi Patterson, former CEO of ANSTO, brought new perspectives, arguing for a more nuanced understanding of the issues.

Helen Cook discussed the proactive role that nuclear law can play in addressing key challenges for global governance of nuclear power. She noted that 50 countries are currently considering or actively implementing new nuclear power programs, recognising the role that nuclear energy can play as a proven, clean, dispatchable and economical technology to improve energy supply security and mitigate climate change. Adi Paterson argued that the assessment of options for power generation should be technology-neutral. It is a mistake, he said, to focus only on renewables to achieve carbon zero by 2040. He noted that there is geopolitical pressure, specifically, in our region, to be engaged in nuclear industries.

The topic is a contentious one and stimulated much discussion.

About the Speakers

Helen Cook is the Principal of GNE Advisory Pty Ltd., a law practice dedicated to all aspects of the civil nuclear energy sector. Recognised by the International Atomic Energy Agency as a nuclear law expert, Helen has expertise advising on the establishment of legal and regulatory infrastructure for civilian nuclear power programs, as well as the negotiation of commercial contracts for new nuclear power plants, including procurement, construction and financing. She currently advises on three of the demonstration small modular reactor projects in the United States and Canada and two of the front-runner SMR projects in Europe. Helen advises governments, such as Egypt and Estonia, on their nuclear power programs and recently drafted a national nuclear law and nuclear liability law for the Philippines. She is a non-executive Director of Silex Systems Limited, an Australian-listed company commercialising laser enrichment technology, Global Laser Enrichment LLC in the US and is an Executive Committee member of the Australian Nuclear Association.

Dr Adi Paterson FRSN FTSE has a strong public science and senior management background, with extensive operational and strategic management expertise, specifically in nuclear programs and in the commercialisation of scientific research. He co-authored the post-Apartheid National R&D Strategy in South Africa and was Chief Operating Officer of the national Department of Science and Technology. From March 2009 to September 2020, Adi had strategic oversight and responsibility for ANSTO's multi-faceted portfolio of activities. He anchored a values-based program of positive change and growth. This leveraged, outcomes-based approach is focussed on the nexus of public science investment and practical innovation with positive impacts on health, industry, and the environment. He oversaw the integration of the Australian Synchrotron into ANSTO operations in 2016. Since leaving ANSTO, he has established a specialised consultancy company, Siyeva Consulting, that focuses on technology and energy futures.

8 VOTE OF THANKS

The vote of thanks was given by Dr Christina Slade.

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