

Greetings from around the world¹

Friday 24 June 2022 was an extraordinary milestone for the Society. Members and guests, numbering 274, before repairing to the University of Sydney's Great Hall, enjoyed pre-dinner drinks in the surroundings of the nearby Chau Chak Wing Museum, where a special exhibition of their holdings relating to the Society was on display. Also featured on two screens was a selection of birthday wishes from organisations and individuals from around the world.

The Society's archives have now been greatly enriched especially by birthday messages received. Of particular note is the message received from Sir David Attenborough:

May I send my warmest congratulations to the Royal Society of New South Wales on reaching the two hundredth anniversary of its foundation. No learned society in the world can ever have had the sudden privilege and responsibility of describing and investigating a whole new division of the plant and animal world; and none in my experience has been more generous in guiding visitors from overseas around the marvels of the continent about which it has become so authoritative. — *David Attenborough*

Below are the messages we received from organisations older than we are. We are privileged to be joining the 200 Club.

American Philosophical Society

As president of the American Philosophical Society, the oldest learned society in the United States (founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743), it is my distinct honor

and pleasure to welcome the Royal Society of New South Wales to the company of bi-centenarians.

In today's world, where evanescence rather than permanence so often seems the order of the day, reaching a 200th anniversary is no small accomplishment. Your history of two hundred years of contribution to human knowledge is to be celebrated — indeed, it is to be cherished.

I send greetings to your president, Dr. Susan M. Pond. May our two societies continue to thrive for centuries to come.

With my personal best wishes,

Linda Greenhouse
President

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

From one bi-centenarian to another, on behalf of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, I'd like to say congratulations on reaching this tremendous milestone and we share with you the enormous sigh of relief and proud sense of accomplishment and achievement.

It is an exclusive club, not only those of us who have reached two hundred years but also have had a positive impact shaping the state of New South Wales. Drawing on the who's who of society in the new colony we share a few common founders — among them Barron Field and Sir Thomas Brisbane, as well as a dedication to sharing knowledge and ideas, and enriching the lives of many. Whilst we have maintained a staunch dedication to safeguarding the agriculture of the state, you have done an outstanding

¹ This is based upon three pieces by Bruce Ramage (Hon. Sec.) in the Society's *Bulletins* of September, October, and November/December 2022.

job cultivating the enquiring hearts and minds of so many.

Mr Michael Millner
RAS President

The Royal Society of Edinburgh

Dear President,

On behalf of the Council and Fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh I have the pleasure of sending warm greetings on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Society of New South Wales.

With best wishes,
Professor Sir John Ball, PRSE FRS
President

Royal Irish Academy

Dear Dr Pond,

I write on behalf of the Council, and Members of the Royal Irish Academy to offer warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Royal Society of New South Wales as it celebrates its bicentenary. Your Royal Society has much to be proud of, and it is fitting that you should celebrate accordingly.

The Royal Irish Academy, established in 1785, is Ireland's leading body for the promotion of the humanities, social sciences, science and engineering. As an all-island and independent body, it promotes academic discourse and policy development and analysis.

Ireland has had a historic and mutually beneficial association with Australia. The Royal Irish Academy benefits from its associations, interactions and collaborations with sister academies and values this fraternity in an increasingly unstable world.

The Royal Irish Academy is delighted to acknowledge the achievements of the Royal Society of New South Wales and wishes the Royal Society continued success in the future.

Regrettably the Royal Irish Academy will be unable to be represented at your Bicentennial Dinner. Please enjoy this historic event.

Dr Mary Canning MRIA
President

The Royal Society

On behalf of the Royal Society of London, I write to congratulate the Royal Society of New South Wales on the occasion of your 200th anniversary. The links between our academies go back all the way through those years, and throughout that time we have both been fortunate to have some exceptionally talented Fellows in common, from those involved in the founding of the RSNSW through to national academy presidents in both our countries, Nobel Prize winners, and some of the leading scientists of the present day. From one Royal Society to another, we congratulate you once again on reaching this important milestone, and wish you every success for the future.

Best wishes
Sir Adrian Smith
President, Royal Society

Messages from other organisations

*Royal Society Te Apārangi of Aotearoa
New Zealand*

The Council of the Royal Society Te Apārangi of Aotearoa New Zealand passes on its heartfelt congratulations to the Royal Society of New South Wales on its bi-cen-

tenary. We wish you well on your quest to continue enriching lives through knowledge over the next 200 years to address the many new challenges and opportunities ahead.

We look forward to working in tandem with the RSNSW to explore, discover and share the use of this new knowledge to ensure a brighter future for all.

E kore e ngaro; he takere waka nui.

(We will never be lost; we are the hull of a great canoe)

Ngā mihi nui, nā

Brent Clothier FRSNZ

President, Royal Society Te Apārangi

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

Congratulations to the Royal Society on 200 years advancing knowledge and scholarship in the Sciences, Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia looks forward to continuing its strong and active association with the Society across a broad range of issues.

Professor Richard Holden FES FASSA
President

The Royal Society of Queensland

It is very easy for Queensland and New South Wales to set aside any traditional rivalry when celebrating the birth of The Royal Society of New South Wales. For it shares its early story with The Royal Society of Queensland.

When inviting Queensland to contribute a message, your President Dr Susan Pond wrote, 'In 1821, Sir Thomas Brisbane ... founded the Philosophical Society of Australia to which the Society traces its origins.' We have in common, much more

than the name Brisbane. Queensland was a part of New South Wales until 1859 and in that year The Philosophical Society of Queensland was founded, taking its name from the New South Wales parent, and continuing in unbroken succession the Enlightenment tradition of independent scholarly enquiry that has been the foundation of our two organisations since their origin. As the word 'philosophy' shifted its meaning over the years, the Queensland Society as with New South Wales changed its name and sought Royal patronage, which in itself was an acknowledgement of a scholarly tradition dating back to the foundation in 1660 of the Royal Society of London.

It is possible to envisage a day when the adjective 'Royal' no longer resonates with contemporary society, but I cannot envisage a day when we can dispense with the need for an institution dedicated to independent curiosity-led and evidence-led experimentation, discovery and analysis while importantly also recording local science history. As the proliferation of Internet sites conveying misinformation and disinformation attests, our wider society more than ever needs to respect knowledge and respect those who generate and disseminate it.

Your foundation is our foundation; for the first 38 years your history was our history; and your celebration of your origin is our celebration too. Congratulations and best wishes on achieving 200 years! May the Royal Society of New South Wales successfully navigate the next century effectively *enriching lives through knowledge.*

Dr Ross A. Hynes
President

CSIRO

Congratulations to the Royal Society of New South Wales on two centuries of knowledge and intellectual contributions for the betterment of all Australians.

For more than 100 years, CSIRO has proudly stood shoulder to shoulder with the Royal Society to help guide our nation to a better future. Our organisations are both driven by the transformative power of science and technology, and by a fierce dedication to Team Australia.

The role of science, knowledge, and collaborative innovation has never been more critical to unlocking a better future for everyone. On behalf of your National Science Agency, CSIRO, I want to thank you for your partnership, dedication and continued leadership in pursuit of that future.

Dr Larry Marshall
Chief Executive

Geological Society of Australia

The Geological Society of Australia would like to congratulate the Royal Society of New South Wales on its 200th Anniversary. The Royal Society is an important learned academic society that contributes to open debate on scientific issues of relevance to society with a multidisciplinary lens. It celebrates scientific achievements and provides a forum for open and honest debate, and brings together scientists from diverse employment and discipline backgrounds. The 200-year anniversary is a testament to the standing the society has in the New South Wales and Australian scientific community.

Professor Peter Betts
President

Royal Society of South Australia

On behalf of the Royal Society of South Australia, I sincerely congratulate the Royal Society of New South Wales to their Bicentenary and 200 years of achievements as a learned society in Australia. The RSNSW has been foundational for the advancement of knowledge in Australia and has to be applauded for its contributions to sciences and society at large. We wish you all the best to continue the vibrant, inspirational activities.

Professor Sabine Dittmann
President

NSW Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology

The Royal Society of New South Wales (RSNSW) brings together some of Australia's most influential leaders and scholars (including four Nobel laureates) to discuss the big issues, underpinned by the key values of evidence, diversity and inclusion.

Being able to celebrate 200 years is an incredible milestone and testament to the sustained excellence of the RSNSW and its ongoing contribution to the wellbeing of NSW, Australia and the world.

With the NSW Government having just launched its 20-year R&D Roadmap to boost our research and development capabilities, we could not ask for a better representation of our world-leading capacity to produce, share and apply knowledge than the RSNSW. Here's to the next 200 years.

The Hon. Alister Henskens SC MP
Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology
Minister for Skills and Training

NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer

The Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) celebrates this landmark year for the RSNSW. The RSNSW's mission to provide authentic and authoritative information across a diversity of sectors is more critical than ever as we face some of humanity's greatest challenges.

The RSNSW is an invaluable resource to the NSW Government, bringing together leaders in academia, business, government and the not-for-profit sector, and providing expertise in science, engineering and many other disciplines.

The NSW Government, through OCSE, is proud to sponsor the RSNSW and support its continued contribution to the enrichment of lives through knowledge and enquiry.

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte
NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer

Australian Academy of the Humanities

I write on behalf of the Council and Fellows of the Australian Academy of the Humanities to offer our warmest congratulations as you celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Royal Society of NSW.

This remarkable milestone reflects the enduring importance of the Society as a trusted and respected Australian institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. It also signifies an organisation that has successfully adapted to reflect the changing needs of society and the science and research endeavour.

We are particularly delighted to see an increasing number of leading humanities scholars among the Society's membership,

and to have played a role in supporting the rich and stimulating multidisciplinary forums on issues of national importance which have become a hallmark of the Society's work.

Once again, our congratulations on reaching this significant milestone.

Emeritus Professor Lesley Head FASSA
FAHA
President

The Royal Society of Canada

On behalf of all members of the Royal Society of Canada I would like to send our very best wishes to The Royal Society of New South Wales on this very special occasion. While not present in person we are with you in spirit.

We congratulate you for your contributions over the last 200 years and wish you every success in your future endeavours. There is no doubt that organisations such as the RSNSW will play an important role in addressing important societal issues as we move forward.

Professor Jeremy N. McNeil, CM, FRSC
President

The Royal Institution of Australia

On behalf of the Royal Institution of Australia, we extend to the Royal Society of NSW our congratulations on your milestone of 200 years of contribution to the promotion of philosophical and scientific discourse and discovery in Australia.

The Royal Institution of Great Britain was founded by Sir Joseph Banks in his home to promote science, particularly his discoveries in Australia and in July 1867

when you become the Royal Society of NSW, I believe we became kinsmen.

On this special occasion we celebrate your achievements and look forward to your future.

Peter W Yates AM
Chairman

Distinguished Fellows

Peter Baume AC

One learns wonderful things in the Royal Society of New South Wales, things that one would never otherwise consider learning. The people are a delight to know and are so diverse. May the third century be as rich and rewarding as the last two have been.

Robert Clark AO

As a multidisciplinary learned Society underpinned by the principles of a liberal democracy, RSNSW has over its 200-year history been a forum for the free exchange of ideas advancing a just, sustainable, innovative and secure Australian society. Whilst it has a long history, the Society actively looks to the future to address the pressing issues of the day and is a force for good in Australian life.

Barry Jones AC

Science has been central to the exploration and development of Australia, and Enlightenment values, observing, collecting, recording and interpreting data about flora, fauna and geology was a passionate commitment of Cook, Banks, Solander, Spöring, Parkinson, Baudin, Flinders and, later, Darwin and Hooker. Of course, there was a terrible downside: disease, Indigenous dispossession

and massacres, and introduction of inappropriate European farming techniques. And we have been very late to recognise the value of Indigenous science: agriculture, diet, navigation, medicine, water management, fire control.

For two hundred years the Royal Society of New South Wales, has played a vital role in research, dissemination and advocacy. In my period as Australia's Minister for Science (1983–90), I was passionate in trying to add new items to the political agenda — not always successfully — climate change, the ozone layer, preserving Antarctica and the Great Barrier Reef, transitioning to a post-carbon economy, the digital economy, emergence of the Third Age, the genetic revolution. Science, and even curiosity, seemed to fall off the political agenda for a decade, and research institutions were under threat.

Now, in my 90th year, what I projected in *Sleepers, Wake!* (1982) seems oddly prescient and I expect our research commitment will improve rapidly.

Always grateful for your support, I salute your achievement and wish you well for the next century (if we make it!).

Kurt Lambeck AC

I congratulate the Royal Society of New South Wales on reaching the distinguished age of 200 years. During these years it has gone through many forms and witnessed much of Australia's history, emerging all the stronger for at a time when knowledge is becoming increasingly fragmented between and within disciplines, yet its implications less well understood by the broad community and policy makers. Today, the RSNSW

through its diverse membership, comprises a major pool of expertise to play an important role in disseminating new knowledge with its consequences, notably at the interfaces of the sciences, arts and humanities, and to provide knowledge-based advice at the State level, and through working with similar national bodies, across state boundaries. I look forward to seeing the Society prosper in the years ahead to the benefit of our nation.

Eugenie Lumbers AM

I am very happy to be joining in this celebration the Royal Society of NSW. For 200 years from its beginnings in 1821 as The Philosophical Society of Australasia, it has promoted knowledge and enquiry into science, philosophy, the humanities and the arts. I am proud of the achievements of the RSNSW.

I believe that new regional branches of the RSNSW like the Hunter Branch can further educate and inform the broader public on how to survive the changing economic decline of the coal industry, embrace the ancient science and culture of our Indigenous communities and enjoy those rewards that come from thinking and doing and in the words of the RSNSW motto ‘*omnia quaerite*’ — question(ing) everything.

Sir Anthony Mason AC

The Bicentennial celebrations are a long history of outstanding achievement by the Society in implementing its vision through knowledge and enquiry.

I trust that the Society’s good work will continue well into the future.

George Paxinos AO

Science, which our Society champions, once was called to enrich human life. It rose to the task. It is now called to help human life survive what science enabled — the internal combustion engine, plastics, nuclear weapons, overpopulation. May our Society and science rise to the task again.

Sir Fraser Stoddart FRS

Greetings to the RSNSW on its 200th anniversary from one of its members on his 80th Birthday.

Jill Trehella

In these challenging times, it is vitally important to have organisations like the Royal Society of NSW dedicated to promoting what is possible to achieve through shared knowledge and understanding. On the occasion of this historic bicentennial year for the Society, I am pleased to send best wishes as we reflect on its proud history and look forward to a continuing positive influence in our community.

