

Editorial

Over the last year or so, the Society has reflected considerably on its role. We are determined to play a large part in the intellectual life of NSW through a range of initiatives, such as the Royal Society of NSW Annual Forum, raising the profile of the Society's very prestigious awards and presenting a range of stimulating, topical talks and discussions about issues that are important in contemporary Australian life. The *Journal and Proceedings* plays an important part in this. It provides a platform for argument and discussion across the breadth of the Society's interests – science, art, literature and philosophy.

To this end, we are fortunate in this issue to have as our leading article an argument for placing a large optical-infrared telescope in Antarctica. Australia has been very active in research in Antarctica and is a world-leader in astronomical research. A strong scientific research programme based in Antarctica, together with other co-ordinated and integrated activities, greatly strengthens Australia's claim to Antarctic territory. Building a telescope in Antarctica would not only help Australia maintain its leading position in astronomy but would be a clear demonstration of the importance of science policy in reinforcing Australia's geopolitical position.

Several other papers have been chosen to give breadth to the edition: radiation treatment of malignant melanoma; a newly-discovered photograph of W.B. Clarke, a towering figure of mid-19th century science in Australia and a vice-president of the Society; and the etymology of dragonfly names.

In this edition, we are reintroducing a "Proceedings" section. For some years, this has been relegated to the *Bulletin*. Information about meetings will still be published in the *Bulletin* but the formal record of the Society's activities will appear in the *Journal and Proceedings*. Of note in this edition of the *Proceedings* are records of the Royal Society of NSW Forum 2011 at which Barry Jones and David Malouf discussed belief and science and the Dirac Lecture, presented by Lord May. There are also two papers, one that demonstrates the effectiveness of the Society's programme in schools and universities and the other a paper written by one of the Society's 2011 Scholarship winners.

This is my last edition, having been elected president of the Society in April. I have enjoyed editing the last four editions of the *Journal* and would like to express my appreciation to the editorial board for their valuable insights, the anonymous reviewers who contribute greatly to the quality of the publication and, of course, the contributors. I am delighted that the editorship will be passing into very capable hands. Professor Michael Burton, of the Department of Astrophysics and Optics at the University of New South Wales, has agreed to take over as editor of the *Journal and Proceedings*. The Society is most fortunate to have someone of Michael's prominence editing this publication, one of the oldest in the Southern Hemisphere.

Donald Hector
Hon. Secretary (Editorial)