

## 1325<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW

### Minutes

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The 1325<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place by webinar on Wednesday, 4 September 2024, commencing at 6:30 pm.

- 1. Welcome and apologies**  
The President, Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN presided at the meeting. She welcomed Members and guests.
- 2. Minutes of the 1324<sup>th</sup> ordinary general meeting**  
Minutes of the 1324<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting will be reviewed at the next face-to-face meeting to be held on Wednesday 2 October at the State Library of NSW.
- 3. Confirmation of names of candidates for fellowship and membership**  
The Fellows and Members Assessment Committee meets between Council meetings and makes recommendations to Council for the election of Fellows and Members. These are circulated to Councillors prior to the Council meeting, with sufficient time for Councillors to assess the nominations. If no valid objections are received from Councillors, they are proposed to Members for consideration at the next OGM. The candidates are admitted to the Society with effect from this meeting, provided there is no valid objection received from the membership within two weeks.

At this meeting, the Council proposed the following candidates for admission to the Society:

#### **FELLOWSHIP**

##### ***Professor Natkunam Ketheesan***

*Laudation – Natkunam Ketheesan is an internationally distinguished researcher and educator in infectious diseases.*

##### ***Professor Matt Wand***

*Laudation – Matt Wand is internationally recognised for his contributions to statistics methodology, theory and computing.*

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

##### ***Dr Renee V Goreham***

##### ***Daniel Bruno Bonatti***

##### ***Samuel Tensingh***

##### ***Ryan William Daffurn***

##### ***Phillip Michael Nyssen***

##### ***Alan Christopher Wainwright***

#### **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP**

##### ***Robin Miles***

- 4. Appointment of a Distinguished Fellow of the Society – John Antony Bell AO OBE**  
At its meeting on 21 August 2024, the Council, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee and the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee, unanimously resolved to appoint John Antony Bell AO OBE a Distinguished Fellow of the Society.

**John Antony Bell AO OBE**, one of Australia's most acclaimed theatre personalities, has been instrumental in shaping Australian theatre during his lifetime. He is an award-winning actor, acclaimed director, risk-taking impresario, passionate educator, inspiring leader and unforgettable speaker. His contributions to the appreciation of the works of William Shakespeare has been pervasive and invigorating, while his many interpretations of roles have become performance benchmarks in Australian theatre. John's list of theatre credits include work for the Old Tote Theatre Company, all the major state theatre companies and five years with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Great Britain. As co-founder of the legendary Nimrod Theatre Company in Sydney, John presented many of Australia's premiere and landmark productions of Australian plays in the 70's and 80's, including David Williamson's *Travelling North*, *The Club*, *The Removalists* and Peter Kenna's *A Hard God*. John founded The Bell Shakespeare Company in 1990.

## 5. Reports from Council and committees of Council

The President reported that Council has continued to advance the five programs being delivered under the Society's 2024 – 2029 Master Plan. The plan is available in summary form on the Society's website. Members are encouraged to read it and to be in touch if willing to contribute to the work.

One important initiative of the *Member Engagement* program is the rewording of the criteria for election to Fellowship, as defined in Rule 10 of the Society's rules. After a lengthy consultation period, an amendment to Rule 10 was proposed to the members. An electronic poll was held and closed on Monday 3 September. The proposal was adopted with over 93% of votes cast being in favour of the proposal.

An initiative of the *Activities with Impact* program is the introduction of a new, exciting series of lunchtime activities that, over a period of 12 to 18 months, that will explore a highly complex topic of major importance to Australia today. The aim of the series is to explore the topic in depth and, ultimately, to identify ways to influence the broader discourse. The aim of the series is to provoke and to inspire action.

Aligned with this year's Royal Society of NSW Forum topic *Threats to democracy*, the first topic the lunchtime series will consider is *Inequality in Australia*.

The first luncheon will be on Tuesday 22 October at the Union University and Schools Club, Sydney.

## 6. Open lecture

**“HECS-HELP: History, effects, international comparisons, and the University Accord”**

**Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA**

Sir Roland Wilson Chair of Economics  
Research School of Economics  
Australian National University

Professor Chapman will examine the factors that led to the reintroduction of university fees in Australia in 1989, in the form of HECS. HECS was a departure from the typical student loans used worldwide at the time, because repayments depend wholly on a debtor's future income, while in other student loan systems debtors are required to repay their loans on the basis of time (like a bank loan). The income-contingent nature of HECS repayment was designed to provide insurance against loan repayment difficulties due to the exigencies of the labour market.

The discussion considered the consequences of the HECS in terms of the expansion of higher education places, including with respect to students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and the adoption of the same approach to university loans in around 10 other countries over the last 35 years. International higher education experiences were compared, and a commentary was offered on the recent University Accord HECS-HELP suggestions.

**About the speaker**

**Bruce Chapman** is an Emeritus Professor of Economics at the College of Business and Economics, Australian National University. He is an education and labour economist with a PhD from Yale University and is the author/editor of around 300 papers/chapters and several books including on: higher education financing; long-term unemployment; fertility; marital separation; the economics of Don Bradman; immigration; incomes policy; international experience with student loans; domestic violence; and the application of income-contingent loans to policy concerning drought, brain drain reparations, environmentally sustainable agricultural investments, the preservation of endangered species, criminal fines collection, extensions of paid parental leave, and R&D investments. He helped design the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989 and was an economic adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating, from 1994 to 1996. He likes cricket, bridge and roast potatoes.

Em. Prof Christina Slade moderated the discussion that followed the lecture.

The lecture is available on the Society's YouTube channel.

**7. VOTE OF THANKS**

The vote of thanks was given by Em. Prof Christina Slade.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**9. CLOSE**

The President closed the meeting at 7:55 pm.

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

Signed as a true record  
Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN  
President