

NOVEMBER 19 2024



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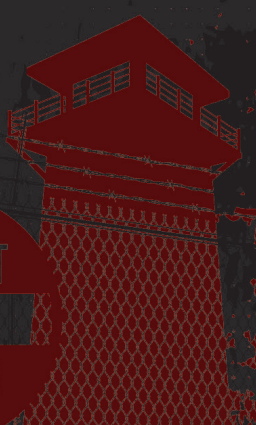
The Royal Society of New South Wales & Learned Academies Forum 2024

# THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

Thursday 14 November

9:00am–5:00pm AEDT

Government House Sydney  
In person, by invitation, and live-streaming



The Forum is held under the auspices of Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales. The Royal Society of New South Wales acknowledges the generous support of Her Excellency and the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.





Royal Society of NSW  
event information



Registration & tickets

The Royal Society of New South Wales & Learned Academies Forum 2024

# THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

## Thursday 14 November

### 9:00am–5:00pm AEDT

Government House Sydney: in person, by invitation, and live-streaming

**In 2024, the greatest number ever will have voted in 'democratic' elections, in Argentina, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the UK, the USA, and others.** At the same time, there have been deep questions about the success of democracies. As the Economist put it on February 14th:

*"This year's democracy index shows that only 43 of the more than 70 elections are expected to be fully free and fair ... The latest report shows that less than 8% of the world's population live in full democracies."*

Is democracy important in the twenty-first century and if so, why? From its Greek origins, through Roman republican models to the many and varied structures of contemporary states, democracy has mutated but survived. In the much-quoted phrase of Winston Churchill from 1947:

*'Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time ...'*

Democracy as a political framework has been influential in creating the global rules-based order that has dominated international affairs for half a century. Now the presuppositions of the rules-based order are in question and democracy itself is under threat. Attitudes to democracy and political power have changed and the nature and structures of political communities are in flux.

Pressure on that order comes from many directions. Global issues such as shifts in political power, the rise of economic inequity and the impact of climate change have reignited national divides and undercut commitment to democratic process. Within Australia, faith in politicians, political parties and the political process is reducing. What is a modern democracy, and how does a multicultural society such as Australia find common voices and policies across differences?

Technologies, from medical advances to artificial intelligence, undermine assumptions about individual freedom and choice. What does it mean to be able to choose a candidate or a government, when personal choice itself can be invisibly influenced? What is personal identity in the new world of biotech? And what can we do about the undermining of privacy—can regulation help? Is the new landscape of media undermining our democracy or simply altering its lineaments? Can we educate for democracy in the digital world? The Forum addresses these issues.

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## OPENING

9:00am-9:20am

Official opening

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC – Governor of New South Wales

Welcome & acknowledgements

Susan Pond AM FRSN FTSE FAHMS – President, Royal Society of New South Wales

## KEYNOTE

9:20am-10:30am

Chair

Emeritus Professor Christina Slade FRSA FRSN Chair, Forum & Program Committees, Royal Society of New South Wales

Keynote

**Professor Philip Pettit AC FASSA FAHA FAAAS**

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Australian National University & L.S. Rockefeller University Professor of Human Values, Princeton University

*DEMOCRACY: THE WHAT, THE WHY AND THE HOW –What is democracy? A popular system of control over government that guards, as in classical Athens and republican Rome, against any governing body or official being able to act as they will. Why is it attractive? To the extent to which it is successful, it will provide those who are disappointed in some government policy or law with a (defeasible) reason to regard its selection as just tough luck, not a sign that they or theirs are lacking in status. How it is to be organised? Not moncentrically, with an elected party or potentate enjoying a monopoly of authority and power: that allows autocracy, as we know. Rather polycentrically, with institutions to allow the election of domain-general legislators and administrators, the checking and balancing of those officials by relatively independent domain-specific authorities (judges, inspectors, auditors, statisticians, election commissioners etc), and the exposure of both to free and informed contestation by ordinary individuals and by citizen associations and assemblies.*

## MORNING TEA

10:30am-11:00am

## PANEL SESSION 1: Global challenges to democracy

11:00am-11:55am

'Global challenges to democracy' explores the impact of global political, economic and environmental challenges on democratic nations and governance.

Chair

Mr Peter Varghese AO – Chancellor, University of Queensland

Speakers

Emeritus Professor Hugh White AO FASSA – School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, Australian National University

Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark AO FASSA – School of Economics, University of Sydney

Professor Quentin Grafton FASSA – Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University

## PANEL SESSION 2: Challenges to Australian democracy

12:00pm-12:55pm

'Challenges to Australian democracy' focuses on Australian attitudes towards our democratic processes and attempts to strengthen our democracy.

Chair

Emeritus Professor Peter Shergold AC FASSA FRSN – Vice-President, Royal Society of New South Wales

Speakers

Ms Leila Smith – Chief Executive Officer, Aurora Foundation

Dr Jeni Whalan – First Assistant Secretary and Head, Strengthening Democracy Taskforce, Department of Home Affairs

Mr Nick Bryant – Author and former journalist

# THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

## LUNCH

1:00pm-2:00pm

## PANEL SESSION 3: Technological challenges to democracy

2:00pm-2:55pm

'Technological challenges to democracy' ranges from medical technology to artificial intelligence, asking whether they undermine assumptions of individual freedom and choice.

Chair	Professor Sally Cripps FRSN – Director, Technology, Human Technology Institute, University of Technology Sydney
Speakers	Professor Ed Santow FAAL – Director, Policy and Governance, Human Technology Institute, University of Technology Sydney Associate Professor Fatemeh Vafae – School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, UNSW Sydney Dr Darren Saunders – NSW Deputy Chief Scientist & Engineer

## PANEL SESSION 4: Challenges to public sphere: educating for democracy

3:00pm-3:55pm

'Challenges to the public sphere: educating for democracy' looks to the future—how do we protect privacy, undermine disinformation and educate the young for social media.

Chair	Emeritus Professor Christina Slade FRSA FRSN – Chair, Forum and Program Committees, Royal Society of New South Wales
Speakers	Ms Carly Kind – Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner Professor Cathy Lumby – Foundation Chair, Media and Communications, University of Sydney Professor Amanda Third – Co-Director, Young and Resilient Research Centre, Western Sydney University

## CLOSING SESSION: Panel Chair reports & open discussions

4:00pm-5:00pm

Chair	The Hon Mike Baird AO – Chief Executive Officer, Susan McKinnon Foundation
Panel Chairs	Mr Peter Varghese AO – Chancellor, University of Queensland Emeritus Professor Peter Shergold AC FASSA FRSN – Vice-President, Royal Society of New South Wales Professor Sally Cripps FRSN – Director, Technology, Human Technology Institute, University of Technology Sydney Emeritus Professor Christina Slade FRSA FRSN – Chair, Forum and Program Committees, Royal Society of New South Wales



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## OFFICIAL OPENING

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### Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of New South Wales



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC is the 39th Governor of New South Wales, commencing her five-year tenure on 2 May 2019. Prior to her appointment, Her Excellency enjoyed a long and distinguished law career spanning 43 years, during which time she served as a

role model for women in law at both the state and national level. Appointed Queen's Counsel in 1989, in 1993 she was made a judge of the Federal Court of Australia, the first woman to sit exclusively in that Court. In 1996, she achieved the distinction of being the first woman appointed to the New South Wales Court of Appeal and, subsequently, the first woman to be appointed as its President. She was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List on 26 January 2020 for "eminent service to the people of New South Wales, particularly through leadership roles in the judiciary, and as a mentor of young women lawyers".

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### Susan Pond AM FRSN FTSE FAHMS President, Royal Society of New South Wales



Susan Pond is a physician, scientist, and company director with deep expertise in biotechnology. She has a strong track record of creating impact by combining

disciplines and working at the intersections between them. Susan is non-executive director of two ASX listed biotechnology companies, the Trusted Autonomous Phenomics Australia, Sydney Quantum Systems for Defence CRC, Academy, and a member of the Queensland University of Technology Council.

Most recently, Susan was inaugural Chair of the NSW Smart Sensing Network and Director of Sydney Nano, a multidisciplinary initiative at The University of Sydney. She is Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Engineering at The University of Sydney. Susan has been President of the Royal Society of New South Wales since 2021.

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## KEYNOTE

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### CHAIR

### Christina Slade FRSN FRSA Chair, Forum and Program Committees, Royal Society of New South Wales



Christina Slade has served as a senior academic and administrator in Australia, Europe, the US and Mexico. She was Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Bath Spa

University, the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at the City University London and Macquarie University's Dean of Humanities. She was Professor of Media Theory with the University of Utrecht and interim Rector of Charles Sturt University.

Professor Slade serves on the UK based Board of QS rankings and the National Art School in NSW. While based in the UK she was Chair of University of Gibraltar's Academic Board, Trustee and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Trustee of The Royal High School Bath and the Holburne Museum, Director and Chair of the Education, Heritage and Culture Sector Table with the Iraq Britain Business Council. She is life patron of the Society of Philosophy for the Young.

Christina has a PhD in philosophy of language and logic from The Australian National University, a Diploma of Education from the University of New England and qualifications in Spanish, French and Arabic. She has led major European Union funded research grants, worked with policy in Westminster and Brussels and published widely.

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### SPEAKER

### Philip Pettit AC FASSA FAHA FAAAS Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Australian National University & L.S. Rockefeller University Professor of Human Values, Princeton University



Philip Pettit jointly holds a position as Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Australian National University and L.S. Rockefeller University Professor of

Human Values at Princeton University. He has been at the ANU under this joint appointment since 2013; he had been full-time there from 1983 to 2002, when he moved to Princeton.

He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 2017. He enjoys fellowship status in the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia (1987), the Australian Academy of Humanities (1988), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2009), the Royal Irish Academy (2010), the British Academy (2013), l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Paris (2019). He has been awarded honorary degrees by the National University of Ireland (Dublin), the University of Crete, Lund University, Université de Montreal, Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Athens, and the University of Buenos Aires.

The author of many books, he is best known for his elaboration of neo-republican philosophy, beginning with *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (1997). He gave the Locke lectures in Philosophy in Oxford in 2019, due to appear in 2025 as *When Minds Converse: A Social Genealogy of the Human Soul*.

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## PANEL SESSION 1: Global challenges to democracy

11:00am-11:55am

### Chair

**Peter Varghese AO**  
Chancellor, University of Queensland



Peter Varghese is Chancellor of The University of Queensland (UQ). Prior to this appointment, he served as Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2012-2016). Previous senior appointments included High Commissioner to India (2009-2012), High Commissioner to Malaysia (2000-2002), Director-General Office of National Assessments (2004-2009), and Senior Advisor (International) to the Prime Minister (2003-2004). Mr Varghese was the author of the India Economic Strategy to 2035 commissioned by the Australian Prime Minister submitted in July 2018.

### Panellist

**Hugh White AO FASSA**  
School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, Australian National University

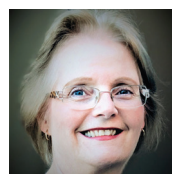


Hugh White is Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies at the Australian

National University in Canberra. He studies Australian foreign, strategic and defence policy, and regional and global strategic issues as they affect Australia. He has been an intelligence analyst, a journalist, a senior staffer to Australian Defence Minister Kim Beazley and Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and a senior official in the Australian Defence Department, where from 1995 to 2000 he was Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Intelligence. His recent major publications include *Without America: Australia's future in the New Asia* [2017], *How to defend Australia* [2019], and *Sleepwalk to War: Australia's unthinking alliance with America* [2022].

### Panellist

**Deborah Cobb-Clark AO FASSA**  
School of Economics, University of Sydney



Deborah Cobb-Clark is Professor and Deputy Head (Research) in the School of

Economics at the University of Sydney. She is Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families Over the Life Course; an Officer of the Order of Australia; an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia; and a Distinguished Fellow of the Economic Society of Australia. She is passionate about preventing poor children from becoming poor adults. Her research centres on building psychological concepts (locus of control, self-control, risk attitudes) into economic models of family decision-making. She studies the way that poverty affects the attention (cognitive capacity) parents have available; the role of depression, risk attitudes, and welfare receipt in risk-taking behaviour; the role of locus of control and self-control in human capital formation; and the link between parents' self-control and children's outcomes.

### Panellist

**Quentin Grafton FASSA**  
Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University



Quentin Grafton is Professor of Economics, Chairholder UNESCO Chair in Water

Economics and Transboundary Water Governance, and an Australian Laureate Fellow. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and a former President (2017-18) of the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society. He is the recipient of several awards for his water-related research including the Eureka Science Prize for Water Research and Innovation (one of Australia's science 'Oscars'), Distinguished Fellow of Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society, University of Waterloo Water Institute Royal Bank of Canada Distinguished Lecture, etc. He is included in the Top 20 economists in Australia (2023) as determined by the World's Best Economics and Finance Scientists and is ranked in the top quintile of the Top 100,000 World Scientists (all disciplines). He founded and is the Convenor of the Water Justice Hub and is the Executive Editor of the Global Water Forum.

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## PANEL SESSION 2: Challenges to Australian democracy

12:00pm-11:55am

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### Chair

**Peter Shergold AC FRSN FASSA**  
Vice-President, Royal Society of  
New South Wales



Peter Shergold was a senior leader in the Australian Public Service (APS) for two decades. From 1991 he headed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and from July 1994 he was Chief Executive Officer of Comcare. He was successively Australian Public Service Commissioner, Secretary of the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training, ending as Australia's most senior public servant, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister in Cabinet.

Since leaving the APS in 2008, he has been Chancellor of Western Sydney University, the Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement in NSW, chair of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, CEO and now Chair of the Centre for Social Impact and serves on the board of Australia for UNHCR. Emeritus Professor Shergold has undertaken a range of major reviews for the NSW, Western Australian, Victorian and Queensland state governments. He wrote a major report, *Learning from Failure*, which was handed to the Commonwealth government in 2015. He has also chaired reviews into Medicare Card security (2017); the implementation of the National Construction Code (2017-2018), Refugee Settlement (2019) and Senior Secondary Pathways for Students (2020).

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### Panellist

**Leila Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Aurora Foundation



Leila Smith is CEO of Aurora Education Foundation, an Indigenous organisation that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to realise their full education and employment potential. Leila is a Wiradjuri woman who holds a Masters of Public Policy from the University of Cambridge and has extensive experience in Aboriginal health and education sectors. She is the Chair of the American Australian Association Ltd and an Advisory Board Member for the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report.

Prior to Aurora, Leila was the Knowledge Translation Manager at the Lowitja Institute and held senior roles in consulting, policy and program delivery, data analysis and research at Nous Group, the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

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### Panellist

**Jeni Whalan**  
First Assistant Secretary and  
Head, Strengthening Democracy  
Taskforce, Department of  
Home Affairs



Jeni Whalan is First Assistant Secretary leading the Office of Community Cohesion and the Strengthening Democracy Taskforce in the Department of Home Affairs.

Previously, Jeni was Chief Strategy Officer at the Paul Ramsay Foundation, where she established and executed strategy for one of Australia's largest philanthropic organisations. In government, she has worked with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Defence, and the NSW Department of Education.

Jeni has held tenured academic positions at the University of Queensland and the University of New South Wales, fellowships and research affiliations at the University of Oxford and University of Sydney, and has worked with research institutions and think tanks in Australia and around the world, including as deputy chair of the board of the Centre for Policy Development.

Jeni holds a DPhil and MPhil in International Relations from the University of Oxford.

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### Panellist

**Nick Bryant**  
Author and former journalist



Nick Bryant During a career spanning almost thirty years, Nick Bryant established a global reputation as one of the BBC's finest foreign correspondents. He has been posted in Washington, South Asia, Australia and, most recently, New York. He has covered many of the biggest stories of our time. The attacks of September 11th. The war in Afghanistan. The Asian tsunami. The Black Saturday bushfires. The election of Barack Obama. The election of Donald Trump.

His writing has appeared in *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. He broadcasts regularly on the *BBC*, the *ABC* and Channel Ten's *The Project*.

Nick studied history at Cambridge, has a doctorate in American politics from Oxford, and was a visiting scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He now lives in Sydney with his wife and three children.

His last book, *When America Stopped Being Great: The History of the Present*, currently resides on Joe Biden's bookshelf in the Oval Office. His latest book is *The Forever War: America's Unending Conflict with Itself*.

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## PANEL SESSION 3: Technological challenges to democracy

2:00pm-2:55pm

### Chair

**Sally Cripps FRSN**  
Director, Technology, Human Technology Institute, University of Technology Sydney



Sally Cripps is an internationally recognised scholar and leader in

Bayesian Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). She is Director of Technology at the Human Technology Institute and a Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at the UTS. Sally has held a number of leadership positions in ML and AI. She was co-founder and co-director of the University of Sydney's Centre for Translation Data Science, she was founder and director of the ARC funded centre, Data Analytics for Resources and Environments (DARE). Most recently Sally was Research Director in CSIRO's Data61.

Sally's research focuses on the development of new methods in AI to address global challenges. She has applied these methods to a diverse range of fields including social disadvantage, mental health, and the environment. In recognition of her research Sally was awarded an ARC Future Fellowship and a Rutherford fellowship at the Alan Turing Institute in the UK.

### Panellist

**Edward Santow FAAL**  
Director, Policy and Governance, Human Technology Institute, University of Technology Sydney



Edward Santow is Director - Policy & Governance at the Human Technology

Institute, and Industry Professor - Responsible Technology at the University of Technology Sydney. Ed is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

Ed leads the Human Technology Institute with Prof Nicholas Davis and Prof Sally Cripps. Ed's focus areas include digital government, the future of AI regulation, AI assurance, facial recognition and digital identity.

Ed serves on the Australian Government's AI Expert Group, Government Service Delivery Advisory Board, National Quantum Advisory Committee and the NSW Government AI Review Committee. Ed serves on a number of charitable boards and committees, including CareerSeekers.

From 2016-2021, Ed was Australia's Human Rights Commissioner. Ed previously served as CEO of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre and was a Senior Lecturer at UNSW Law School, a research director at the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law, and a solicitor in private practice.

### Panellist

**Fatemeh Vafae**  
School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, UNSW Sydney



Fatemeh Vafae is the Deputy Director of the UNSW Data Science Hub and an Associate

Professor at the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences. She has established the Biomedical AI Laboratory at the UNSW Faculty of Science and leads a multi-institute, industry-aligned next-generation graduate program, Med-Tech.AI on AI-enabled medical technologies, from diagnostics to therapeutics. Dr Vafae is also the Founding Director of OmniOmics. AI Pty Ltd developing innovative AI solutions to accelerate personalised medicine and precision therapy. Recognised as one of the 'Top 10 Women in AI in APAC' by *AI Magazine* (2024), she also received the 2023 Women in AI Asia-Pacific Award in Health.

### Panellist

**Darren Saunders**  
NSW Deputy Chief Scientist and Engineer



Darren Saunders is a Eureka Prize winning scientist, with over 20 years'

academic and industrial experience in cancer biology and neuroscience in Australia and North America. He is the NSW Deputy Chief Scientist & Engineer and Adjunct Associate Professor in Medical Sciences at the University of Sydney. He has held senior roles in peak professional bodies, leading policy and regulatory reforms in science and technology. Darren is a public advocate for gender equality. He has worked with former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick and Co as a senior advisor and data expert on numerous workplace cultural reviews, examining the nature and prevalence of sexual harm, bullying, racism and other forms of systemic discrimination in a range of organisations in the mining, aviation, education, arts and law enforcement sectors. Darren is a regular commentator on television and radio. When not doing science, Darren is a committed thalassophile.



## PANEL SESSION 4: Challenges to the public sphere: educating for democracy

3:00pm-3:55pm

### Chair

**Christina Slade FRSN FRSA**  
Chair, Forum and Program  
Committees, Royal Society of New  
South Wales



Christina Slade has served as a senior academic and administrator in Australia,

Europe, the US and Mexico. She was Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Bath Spa University, the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at the City University London and Macquarie University's Dean of Humanities. She was Professor of Media Theory with the University of Utrecht and interim Rector of Charles Sturt University. Professor Slade serves on the UK based Board of QS rankings and the National Art School in NSW. While based in the UK she was Chair of University of Gibraltar's Academic Board, Trustee and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Trustee of The Royal High School Bath and the Holburne Museum, Director and Chair of the Education, Heritage and Culture Sector Table with the Iraq Britain Business Council. She is life patron of the Society of Philosophy for the Young.

Christina has a PhD in philosophy of language and logic from The Australian National University, a Diploma of Education from the University of New England and qualifications in Spanish, French and Arabic. She has led major European Union funded research grants, worked with policy in Westminster and Brussels and published widely.

### Panellist

**Carly Kind**  
Privacy Commissioner, Office  
of the Australian Information  
Commissioner



Carly Kind commenced as Australia's Privacy Commissioner in February

2024 for a 5-year term. As Privacy Commissioner, she regulates the handling of personal information by entities covered by the Australian Privacy Act 1988 and seeks to influence the development of legislation and advance privacy protections for Australians.

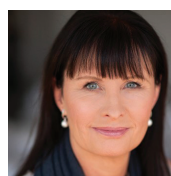
Ms Kind joined from the UK-based Ada Lovelace Institute, where she was the inaugural director. As a human rights lawyer and leading authority on the intersection of technology policy and human rights, she has advised industry, government and non-profit organisations on digital rights, artificial intelligence, privacy and data protection, and corporate accountability in the technology sphere.

She has worked with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, numerous UN bodies and a range of civil society organisations. She was formerly legal director of Privacy International, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting data rights and governance.

Ms Kind has a Masters of Science, International Relations (Hons) from the London School of Economics, a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice, and a Bachelor of Arts (International Relations) (Hons) and Bachelor of Laws from the University of Queensland.

### Panellist

**Catharine Lumby**  
Foundation Chair, Media and  
Communications, University  
of Sydney



Catharine Lumby is a Professor of Media at the University of Sydney where

she was founding Chair of the Media and Communications Department. She was also the founding Director of the Journalism and Media Research Centre at UNSW. Prior to entering academia, she worked for two decades as a print and TV journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *ABC* and *The Bulletin* magazine. She has written and co-authored ten books and numerous book chapters and journal articles. Her most recent book is *Frank Moorhouse: A Life*.

### Panellist

**Amanda Third**  
Co-Director, Young and Resilient  
Research Centre, Western Sydney  
University



Amanda Third is Professorial Research Fellow in the Institute for Culture & Society;

Co-Director of the Young and Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney University; and a Faculty Associate in the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University (2020-2023). An international expert in youth-centred, participatory research, Amanda's work investigates the intersections between children's and young people's technology practices and their mental health and wellbeing, focusing on marginalised groups and rights-based approaches. She has led child-centred projects to understand children's experiences of the digital age in over 80 countries, working with partners across corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors and children and young people themselves. She led the children's consultations for and co-authored the UNCRC General Comment 25 on Children's Rights in relation to the Digital Environment, as part of a team lead by Prof. Sonia Livingstone (LSE). She is a Program Co-Leader in the Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Societies; and lead author of *Our rights in a digital world: A snapshot of children's views from around the world* (5Rights Foundation, 2021); *Young and Online: Children's Perspectives on Life in the Digital Age* (UNICEF, 2017) and *Young People in Digital Society: Control/Shift* (Palgrave, 2019).



4:00pm-5:00pm

## CLOSING SESSION

### Panel Chair reports & open discussions

The Hon Mike Baird AO in discussion with the panel session chairs: Peter Varghese AO, Peter Shergold AC FRSN FASSA, Sally Cripps FRSN and Christina Slade FRSN FRSA.

#### The Hon Mike Baird AO

Chief Executive Officer,  
Susan McKinnon Foundation



Mike Baird is the CEO of the Susan McKinnon Foundation, working to improve

Australia's public administration, supporting effective political leadership, and strengthening the nation's democratic institutions. Prior to that he was CEO, HammondCare, an independent Christian charity providing health, palliative care, dementia, and aged care services. Mike has over 30 years' experience in banking and financial services (including senior roles at NAB, Deutsche Bank and HSBC), was former NSW Treasurer and served as the 44th Premier of NSW. Mike is passionate about family, sport and looking after community's most vulnerable. Mike is Chair, Cricket Australia and The McKinnon Institute, and sits on the Board of Future Generation and KPMG. He is an ambassador for Bear Cottage and Southern Youth Family Services.

## With gratitude

### Chair

#### Christina Slade FRSA FRSN



Christina Slade has served as a senior academic and administrator in Australia,

Europe, the US and Mexico. She was Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Bath Spa University, the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences at the City University London and Macquarie University's Dean of Humanities. She was Professor of Media Theory with the University of Utrecht and interim Rector of Charles Sturt University. Professor Slade serves on the UK based Board of QS rankings and the National Art School in NSW. While based in the UK she was Chair of University of Gibraltar's Academic Board, Trustee and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Trustee of The Royal High School Bath and the Holburne Museum, Director and Chair of the Education, Heritage and Culture Sector Table with the Iraq Britain Business Council. She is life patron of the Society of Philosophy for the Young.

Christina has a PhD in philosophy of language and logic from The Australian National University, a Diploma of Education from the University of New England and qualifications in Spanish, French and Arabic. She has led major European Union funded research grants, worked with policy in Westminster and Brussels and published widely.

### Secretary

#### Elizabeth Deane FRSN



Elizabeth Deane has had over 30 years' experience in the higher education

sector. Her experience spans roles in teaching, research and senior management positions including Foundation Head of a department; Head of School; Dean of Faculty and Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and Students. Elizabeth holds a PhD from the University of Sydney and was until her progression into senior management, an active, funded researcher and postgraduate student supervisor in the area of developmental immunology and disease. Elizabeth has also held a number of national and international competitive grants for research into learning, teaching and higher education. Since retiring in 2015 Elizabeth has continued her active engagement with the sector. She has undertaken a number of institutional reviews addressing such diverse areas as students support services, governance and IT provision as well as reviews for new applicant higher education private providers. She continues to be an international reviewer for the Scottish, New Zealand and PNG higher education quality assurance agencies. Elizabeth is actively engaged in supporting higher education private providers and is a member or chair of a number of academic and governance boards of existing and aspiring providers. She is also currently Chair of the WSU Human Research Ethics committee and an external reviewer for the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Gibraltar. At CIC, Elizabeth is a member of the Academic Board and the Teaching and Learning Committee.

### Webmaster

#### Lindsay Botten FRSN FOSA FAIP FAustMS



Lindsay Botten is an Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University (ANU)

and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), and presently serves on the Council of the Royal Society of NSW (RSNSW) and as its Webmaster. He was the foundation Director of National Computational Infrastructure (NCI) at ANU (2008-17) where he led the development of the Australia's highest performance and most highly integrated research supercomputing and data service, positioning NCI at the vanguard of international advanced computing.

Previously, he was Professor of Applied Mathematics at UTS, where he established a reputation as an international authority in theoretical optics and photonics and led the computational modelling team of the ARC Centre of Excellence, CUDOS.

He is active as a consultant in high-performance computing nationally, and in RSNSW where he leads the development of its information technology, audio-visual, and social media modernisation. He is a Fellow of the Optical Society of America, the Australian Institute of Physics, the Australian Mathematical Society, and the Royal Society of NSW.

The Royal Society of NSW expresses its gratitude to all members of the 2024 Annual Forum Planning Committee.

Committee member

Vince Di Pietro AM CSC FRSN



Vince Di Pietro is an independent consultant. Vince draws upon 40 years of service in the Royal Australian Navy specialising in aviation, flight training, professional military education, international diplomacy, risk management, certification, and safety. In addition to Command appointments, Vince served twice as a Director General, as a Naval Attache to the United States, and as Commander of the Fleet Air Arm. On his retirement, Vince was appointed Chief Executive of Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand until retiring from that position in April 2019. Vince settled permanently in the Shoalhaven. During and after the Currowan Bushfire, Vince was the Local Recovery Coordinator for the Shoalhaven City Council overseeing the recovery coordination of the damage sustained by 82% of the Shoalhaven's 4600 square kilometers. Having learned much during the fire emergency, Vince designed, coordinated, and implemented the Recovery into Resilience Project in the Shoalhaven. The Project was delivered on time and budget in October 2023 and is now fully operational at 26 Community Information Hubs powered by solar and battery and connected via satellite internet.

Committee member

Peter Shergold FRSN



Peter Shergold was a senior leader in the Australian Public Service (APS) for two decades. From 1991 he headed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and from July 1994 he was Chief Executive Officer of Comcare. He was successively Australian Public Service Commissioner, Secretary of the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training, ending as Australia's most senior public servant, Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister in Cabinet.

For an extended bio please see Panel Session 2.

Committee member

Robert Marks FRSN



Robert Marks graduated in 1968 as an engineer. After completing a Master's degree at Melbourne University, he won a CSIRO Overseas Studentship and studied at M.I.T. and Cambridge University before completing a Ph.D. in economics at Stanford. He was a foundation lecturer at the Australian Graduate School of Management and editor of the *Australian Journal of Management*. He was a pioneer in using computer simulations in economics (he won the Second M.I.T. Competitive Pricing computer tournament in 1987), and his research has been in strategic market interactions and decision-making under uncertainty, as well as in energy and environmental policy. Robert is the Editor of the *Journal & Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*.

Committee member

Graham Town FRSN CPEng SMIEEE FIEAust



Graham Town is an electrical engineer with eight years' experience in the Australian electronics industry (AWA Pty. Ltd.), and a distinguished record of over 30 years contributing to Australian engineering education and research. His primary professional achievements were establishment of Macquarie University's Bachelor of Engineering program, influential contributions to engineering education in Australia, and leadership of many competitively funded and industry sponsored research projects across diverse areas, including biomedical engineering, guided-wave optics and photonics, engineering education, waste-to-energy conversion, power electronics, and transport electrification.

Graham is an Emeritus Professor at Macquarie University, a Chartered Professional Engineer (Telecommunications, Electrical, Leadership), a Senior Member of the IEEE, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW.



Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences



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The Forum is held under the auspices of Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales. The Royal Society of New South Wales acknowledges the generous support of Her Excellency and the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.





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The Royal Society of New South Wales & Learned Academies Forum 2024

# THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

Thursday 14 November

9:00am–5:00pm AEDT

Government House Sydney  
In person, by invitation, and live-streaming



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