

1327th Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW

Minutes

The 1327th Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place by webinar on Wednesday, 6 November 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. An apology was received from Dr Donald Hector AM FRSN.

2. Minutes of the 1325th ordinary general meeting

Minutes of the 1325th Ordinary General Meeting will be reviewed at the next face-to-face meeting to be held on Wednesday 4 December 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

Ralph John Lancaster Evans

Laudation – Ralph Evans has given distinguished service to international trade and investment, corporate governance and business and venture capital endeavours.

Professor Bruce Graham Thom

Laudation – Bruce Thom has made a significant contribution to coastal science and engagement in environmental public policy.

Professor Iain Tyrrell Benson

Laudation – Iain Benson is an internationally recognised barrister, teacher and writer on legal philosophy.

Professor Xufeng Feng Huang

Laudation – Xufeng Huang has made a significant contribution to mental health, well-being and overall well-being in the community.

Professor Christopher Gerard Maher

Laudation – Christopher Maher is recognised internationally for his research discoveries, leadership and mentoring in the field of back pain.

Professor Susan Mary Bennett Morton

Laudation – Susan Morton has made a significant contribution to life course epidemiology.

Professor Ashish Sharma

Laudation – Ashish Sharma has made a significant contribution to hydrology especially in the areas of flood exposure and water security especially as they relate to climate change.

Professor Chung-Wei Christine Lin

Laudation – Chung-Wei Christine Lin has made a significant contribution to advancing the management of pain and musculoskeletal conditions.

Professor Christian Stewart MacGregor Turney

Laudation – Christine Turney is an internationally recognised earth scientist who has pioneered new forms of record capture for climate and environmental change.

Dr Paul Emerson McGillick

Laudation – Paul McGillick is a highly respected arts professional and arts critic, specialising in art and architecture and has had a significant impact over many years on the Australian arts community.

MEMBERSHIP

Dr Tanveer Hussain

Dr Abi Sudharsanam

Jessica Ann Ashton

The President noted that only just over 20% of nominations were females and highlighted the importance of improving the gender balance and overall diversity of the Society's membership.

4. Reports from Council and committees of Council

The President noted November is a busy month for the Society with meetings still to be held in Sydney and our Branches farther afield. They include the RSNSW and Learned Academies Forum to be held at Government House Sydney on Thursday 14 November 2024. This event will be held in person and live-streamed. Detailed information is available on the Society's website.

The final meeting in Sydney this year will start an hour early on Wednesday 4 December with a Christmas Party at 5 pm at the State Library of NSW. Please join us and bring your partners, colleagues and younger members from your networks. The 2024 winners of the Society's prestigious Awards will be announced. We will also hear from the 2023 winner of the Society's James Cook Medal, Scientia Professor Helen Christensen. Her topic will be *Social media and smartphones for youth: What's the story* is particularly relevant today.

5. Open lecture

“Australian Immigration Policy and the Federal Election”

**Dr Abul Rizvi PSM
Former Deputy Secretary
Australian Department of Immigration**

Towards the end stages of COVID, there was significant concern students, working holiday makers and others would not return quickly enough. Unprecedented changes were made to accelerate the return of these visa holders against the background of major labour shortages. That pressure continued for the new Labor Government, with the Opposition criticising Labor, for not moving quickly enough to boost immigration to address labour shortages.

But by the end of 2022, it was clear student visa applications were booming. In the first half of 2023, Labor Ministers insisted the Government had no role in managing net migration and that the surge in net migration was just a temporary catch-up after COVID. This was partly true but mainly false.

From mid-2023, the Government introduced a bewildering array of student visa policy changes to reign in net migration to a long-term target of 235,000 from a peak of 550,000 in 2022-23.

Despite offshore student applications having fallen significantly, the Government has now introduced student caps. These are being attacked on all fronts.

This is in the context of the Opposition demanding more be done to reduce net migration to 160,000 per annum. Immigration will be a key issue in the next Federal Election. Dr Rizvi explored how we might understand the two competing policies and what will be needed to deliver them.

About the speaker

Abul Rizvi is an economics, accounting and public policy graduate from the ANU and holds a PhD in immigration and population policy from Melbourne University. From 1998, Rizvi managed major growth in overseas students, skilled temporary migration, visitors and working holiday makers, including the development of pathways to permanent migration. Between 1996 and 2006, Rizvi was Chair of the Commonwealth/State Working Party on State-Specific and Regional Migration which gave state/territory governments a much greater role in immigration to their jurisdictions.

He was responsible for commissioning research on the demographic, economic and budgetary impact of immigration that was extensively used in the development of the 2002 and 2007 Intergenerational Reports. He was Deputy Secretary responsible for all aspects of immigration, humanitarian, citizenship and settlement policy from 2005.

Rizvi was awarded the Public Service Medal and the Centenary Medal for services to the development and implementation of Australian immigration policy. Rizvi is a frequent media commentator on population, immigration and its impact on Australia's economic and budget directions. He was invited to participate in the 2022 Jobs and Skill Summit and recently published a book in the 'In the National Interest' series titled *Population Shock*. Rizvi recently presented on immigration policy in a televised address to the National Press Club.

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

6. Vote of thanks

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

7. Other business

There was no other business.

8. Close

The President closed the meeting at 7:55 pm.

The minutes were recorded by the President.

Signed as a true record
Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN
President