

## 1328<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW

### Minutes

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The 1328<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place at 6:30 pm on Wednesday 4 December 2024 in the Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library of NSW, followed by an open lecture. There were 53 Members, Fellows and visitors in attendance. The meeting was recorded for those who could not attend in person. The Society's Christmas party was held immediately before the OGM.

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The President, Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN presided at the meeting. She welcomed Members and guests.

**2. MINUTES OF THE 1327<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes of the 1327<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting were reviewed and approved. There were no matters arising.

**3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP**

The Council has not met since the last OGM, so there were no candidates announced for Members' consideration at this meeting.

**4. CONFIRMATION OF FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP AND PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES**

The President presented certificates to new Fellows whose nominations were tabled at the previous OGM.

**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**

**5. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL**

The President announced the 2024 award winners. Detailed information about each of the awards and their recipients can be found on the Recent Winners page on the Society's website.

**RSNSW Career Excellence Awards**

James Cook Medal – Scientia Professor George Paxinos AO DistFRSN FAA FASSA FAHMS

Edgeworth David Medal – Professor Yansong Shen

RSNSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholars Medal – Professor Jason Sharples FRSN FTSE

Ida Browne Early Career Medal – Dr Xuan Li

**RSNSW Discipline Awards and Lectureships**

Pollock Award and Lectureship in the Physical Sciences and Mathematics – Professor Nalini Joshi AO FRSN FAA FAustMS

Poggendorff Award and Lecture in Agricultural and Environmental Science – Professor Alexander McBratney AO FAA

RSNSW Award in the Humanities, Philosophy, and Law – Scientia Professor Jane McAdam AO FASSA FAAL

Milner Interdisciplinary Award – Professor Katherine Boydell FASSA

**RSNSW Bicentennial Postgraduate Scholarships**

Mr Muyang Li Bailey (University of Sydney)

Mr Joel Sved (University of Sydney)

Ms Linqing Tian (UNSW Sydney)

**RSNSW Bicentennial Early Career Research and Service Citations**

Dr Fei Deng (UNSW Sydney)

Dr Jennifer Matthews (University of Technology Sydney)

Dr Cynthia Turnbull (Australian National University)

**Jak Kelly Award**

Mr David Sweeney (University of Sydney)

**RSNSW Service Awards**

RSNSW Medal – Emeritus Scientia Professor Eugenie Lumbers AM DistFRSN FAA

RSNSW Citation – Ms C. Hannah Hibbert

**6. OPEN LECTURE**

***Social media and smartphones for youth:  
What's the story?***

**Scientia Professor Helen Christensen AO FASSA FAHMS**

**Professor of Psychiatry and Mental Health, UNSW Sydney and  
Honorary Professorial Fellow, The Black Dog Institute**

Social media has been seen by the public and by some researchers as the root cause of rising mental health problems among young people. The issue, discussed widely in the media, almost unanimously concludes social media is harmful and must be curbed. Technological interventions have historically influenced social norms and societal structures, so it is crucial to take these concerns seriously. In this talk, I will discuss whether social media is the culprit responsible for rising levels of anxiety, depression and self-harm. I'll also suggest what sort of research we may now need to answer the question definitively, and what might be the range of alternative hypotheses as to the causes of rising youth distress.

***About the speaker***

**Scientia Professor Helen Christensen** is a Professor within the Discipline of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, a previous Board Director and Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute, a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia and of the Academy of Health and Medical Sciences.

She is a leading expert on using technology to deliver evidence-based interventions for the prevention and treatment of depression, anxiety, suicide, and self-harm. She has received awards for her work including the Innovation NSW Premier's Prize for Leadership in Innovation in 2017, the Roddy D Brickell Memorial Award from Columbia University in 2014, the ISRII Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019, and Suicide Prevention Lifetime Achievement Award. She was made an Officer of Australia for her pioneering work in internet interventions. She serves or has served on many government and scientific committees including the NHMRC Translation Committee, Digital Mental Health Advisory Group, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, and international collaborations. She has published more than 600 research papers, developed more than 15 apps, websites, digital phenotyping applications and research platforms, and led or co-led more than 50 randomised clinical trials.

Most recently, Professor Christensen was named the NSW Scientist of the Year for 2024 at this year's NSW Premier's Prizes for Science and Engineering.

**7. VOTE OF THANKS**

A vote of thanks was given by Em Prof Christina Slade FRSN.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**9. CLOSE**

The President closed the meeting at 7:50 pm.

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

Signed as a true record  
Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN  
President