



The Royal Society of New South Wales

"for the encouragement of studies and investigations in Science Art Literature and Philosophy"

Minutes of the 1285th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of New South Wales held by ZOOM Webinar on Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.30PM.

There were 37 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance.

1. WELCOME

The President, Emeritus Professor Ian Sloan AO FRSN presided at the meeting. He welcomed members and guests and gave an acknowledgement of country. He also referred to the Society's Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

1.1 Minutes of the 1284th Ordinary General Meeting held on 8 July 2020

The Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting, previously circulated, were approved.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERSHIP

As no valid objection was lodged within two weeks following the 1284th Ordinary General Meeting, the election of the following new Members took effect from the date of that meeting held on 8 July. Certificates will be presented at the first opportunity at a face-to-face meeting.

2.1 Members

The President welcomed the following newly-elected Member to the Society

Mr Luke Pearce

2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Members noted that the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee was scheduled to meet on 11 August to consider nominations.

3.1 Members and Associate Members

If no valid objection is lodged by 6.30pm on 19 July 2020, the election of new Members will take effect from the date of the meeting.

Members

Mr Daniel Coghlan
Dr Peter Hobbins

4 REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The Council met on 22 July. The President brought to members' attention the following matters.

4.1 Presentation of 2019 Awards

The President noted that the Society's Patron, Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales would present the 2019 Awards at a small ceremony at Government House on 13 August.

4.2 The Society's bicentenary

The President advised that planning was well underway for the celebrations to mark the Society's bicentenary in 2021. Although there was some uncertainty because of the pandemic it was hoped to mark this milestone in a variety of ways including an exhibition at the State Library of NSW, tours to the Sydney Observatory and Governor Brisbane's (the Society's first president) observatory at Parramatta, special themed lecture series and the Bicentennial Dinner in the Great Hall at the University of Sydney. The Bicentennial Committee was meeting regularly to plan the details. He stressed that he would welcome members' input about bicentennial activities and asked for ideas to be sent to him by email.

4.3 Formation of Fundraising Committee

It was noted that Council had established a Fundraising Committee and was developing a fundraising strategy.

4.4 National Science Week

The President advised that National Science Week in 2020 was being held virtually from 15 to 23 August. The Society is presenting two talks. On 18 August Professor Robert Clancy will talk about 'The Covid Curve in Context: or Back to the Future – something old and something new.' Further details at <https://www.scienceweek.net.au/event/royal-society-of-nsw-presentation-the-covid-curve-in-context-or-back-to-the-future-something-old-and-something-new/>

On 20 August Professor Brynn Hibbert will talk about 'The Periodic Table: a medley of haphazard facts falling into line and order' (C P Snow). Further details at <https://www.scienceweek.net.au/event/royal-society-of-nsw-presentation-the-periodic-table-a-medley-of-haphazard-facts-falling-into-line-and-order/>

4.5 Future events

The President said that the Events Committee had put together an exciting program of events for the remainder of 2020. The slides at the beginning of the meeting had provided some information on what was coming up. Further details were available on the Society's website.

5 THIS EVENING'S PRESENTATION

GROWING BLACK TALL POPPIES

Professor Peter Radoll, Professor of Information Technology and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), University of Canberra

Peter Radoll, a descendant of the Anaiwan people from the New England ranges area of Northern New South Wales is Director of the Ngunnawal Centre at the University of Canberra which provides support, training and study facilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

He has spent over ten years as a senior academic and leader in the higher education sector at the Australian National University, the University of Newcastle and the University of

Canberra. His passion and commitment to Indigenous Higher Education is also evident in the roles he has outside the University. He is a Director on the Board of the Smith Family, the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC), and a Member of the Advisory Group for the CSIRO Indigenous Girls' STEM Academy.

A synopsis of the talk is given below.

How do the contradictions of success intersect with race, higher education and Indigenous cultural values?

We are at a time that doing the right thing now seems more important than considering the long-term future of our community. Governments are trying to meet Indigenous employment targets by funnelling many of our potential best and brightest into government traineeships from Year 11, taking them away from the opportunity pipeline of future university study. The competition to attract these students to universities results in letting them know that they do not have to obtain the best grades at school as there are other pathways designed just for them; a subtle message that you do not have to excel. This can become a demotivating factor for Indigenous students who ideally would be better suited to a degree that requires a top ATAR score, and one that they are capable of achieving.

Are these structures supporting our success, or stopping us from reaching our full potential? As new terms, such as 'cyber feminism' enter our lexicon in the era of gender politics, within our universities, 75% of all professors are male, yet the majority of Indigenous university leaders are female. Female Indigenous university enrolments and completions outnumber Indigenous males two to one.

As we take on these challenges and complexities, we as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to capitalise on our ipseity. As a Nation, by all of us embracing Indigenous culture, as the whole of our Australian history and story, we do not lose or give away something that we hold close. Instead, we all gain so much more knowledge and become richer for the embrace.

Professor Radoll provided details of his personal journey and spoke broadly of the challenges in Aboriginal education. He gave examples of how the University of Canberra was addressing these challenges.

There followed a question and answer session moderated by Professor Elizabeth Deane, Secretary of the Events Committee.

6 VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSE

The vote of thanks was given to Professor Peter Radoll by Emeritus Professor Christina Slade, Chair of the Events Committee before closing the meeting at 7.54pm.