



THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

ENRICHING LIVES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE SINCE 1821

Minutes of the 1296th Ordinary General Meeting of The Royal Society of New South Wales held by ZOOM Webinar on Wednesday 4 August 2021 at 6.30PM.

There were 85 Members, Fellows and guests in attendance.

1. WELCOME

The President, Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN presided at the meeting. She welcomed members and guests and gave an acknowledgement of country. She also referred to the Society's Diversity and Inclusion Policy and asked that members consider nominating female candidates and those from diverse backgrounds for membership of the Society.

1.1 Minutes of the 1295th Ordinary General Meeting held on 7 July 2021

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 1295th Ordinary General Meeting, the election of the following new Members took effect from the date of that meeting held on 7 July 2021.

2.1 Fellows

Professor Roger William Byard
Professor Adelle Coster
Associate Professor Lena Joel Danaia
Professor Judith Margaret Dawes
Mr Jeremy Robin Eccles
Professor Susan Lesley Forster
Professor Geoffrey M. Gurr
Mr Yves Pol Hernot
Dr Carolyn Jane Hogg
Professor Annamarie Ruston Jagose
Associate Professor Morgan Joel Luck
Professor Francesco Marino
Professor Sharynne McLeod
Professor Seumas Roderick Miller
Dr John Gruffydd Luther Morris
Professor Mark Daniel Morrison
Emeritus Professor Donald Harold Napper
Professor Chiara Neto

Dr Ian James Oppermann
Dr Paul David Prenzler
Emeritus Professor Lesley Joy Rogers
Professor Pauline Mary Ross
Mr Robert Francis Ryan
Professor Jason John Sharples
Professor Glenda Anna Sluga
Ms Georgina Amanda Spilsbury
Dr Danny KY Wong

2.2 Members

Mr Stephen Berry Austin
Mr Robert Chadwick
Mr Bradley Spencer Hammond

3 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Fellows

It was noted that the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee was scheduled to meet on Tuesday 10 August. Recommendations emanating from that meeting would be considered at the September OGM.

3.2 Members

It was noted that if no valid objection is lodged within two weeks of this Ordinary General Meeting, that is, by 6.30pm on 18 August 2021, the election of the following new Members would take effect from the date of this meeting.

Ms Catherine Carter
Dr Rhea Friederike Cornley
Associate Professor Wei Deng
Professor Jennifer Louise Martin
Mr Trent Pohlmann
Mr James Tanna
Ms. Melinda Tursky

4 REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The President advised that the Council had agreed to establish a new branch of the Society in Western NSW with the support of Charles Sturt University. Dr Pond displayed a map of NSW which indicated the extensive area to be covered by the new branch. It was hoped to hold face-to-face meetings later in the year attended by residents of the area including staff from Charles Sturt University.

Dr Pond thanked Emeritus Professor Christina Slade, Mr John Hardie and Professor George Willis for their contribution to the Branch's establishment.

5 QUESTIONS

There were no questions sent to the President prior to the meeting.

THE INTIMATE HISTORY OF EVOLUTION: THE HUXLEYS 1825–1975

Professor Alison Bashford FRSN FAHA FRHistS FBA
Laureate Professor of History UNSW (Sydney)

Alison Bashford is Laureate Professor of History at the University of NSW (Sydney), and Director of the Laureate Centre for History & Population, and Honorary Fellow, Jesus College, Cambridge. Previously she was Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge and Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University. She is best known for her work on the modern history of population and human ecology, in two books, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics and Life on Earth* (Columbia 2014) and *The New Worlds of Thomas Robert Malthus* (Princeton, 2016) with Joyce E. Chaplin. She is currently completing *An Intimate History of Evolution: From Genesis to Genetics with a Scientific Dynasty, the Huxleys, 1825–1975*.

Alison Bashford is a Fellow of the British Academy and the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She was awarded the Royal Society of New South Wales History and Philosophy of Science Medal in 2020 and the Dan David Laureate Prize in 2021.

At *Life Magazine*'s 1947 photoshoot, Julian Huxley self-consciously arranged himself in front of a portrait of his grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley. In the foreground, a well-known mid-twentieth century science writer, zoologist, conservationist - that generation's David Attenborough. In the background, a mid-nineteenth century natural scientist – Darwin's most outspoken spokesman.

Between them, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895) and Julian Huxley (1887–1975) communicated to the world the great modern story of the theory of evolution by natural selection. Together, they were 'trustees of evolution', a phrase that Julian Huxley often used to describe all of humankind, but which Professor Bashford used to describe the Huxleys themselves.

Professor Bashford posed and addressed the following questions. What is yielded by considering these two particular Huxleys together? They were driven by the same momentous questions, but in different eras. What is the nature of time and how old is the Earth itself? What is the connection and distinction between human history and natural history? How are humans animals and how are we not? What is the deep past and the distant future of humankind? Can and should we actively seek to improve future generations? What might the planet look like 10,000 years hence? Through and with these high-powered Huxleys, she tracked the problems and wonders of the modern world that they themselves raised, postured, and pondered over lives that spanned 150 years.

There followed a question and answer session moderated by Emeritus Professor Robert Clancy who also gave the vote of thanks.

7 CLOSE

In closing the meeting, Dr Pond mentioned two forthcoming lunchtime events to be held on 25 August and 14 September entitled:

Our Energy Future: The Unrecognised Opportunity in Glasgow - In Two Acts
Part 1: Context and Castles
Part 2: Crushed Rocks

The talks would be given by Dr Saul Griffith FRSN and would include a conversation with Dr Adi Paterson FRSN.

The meeting closed at 7.59pm.