

## 1324<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW

### Minutes

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The 1324<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place in the Dixon Room, State Library of NSW, on Wednesday, 7 August 2024, commencing at 6:30 pm. There were 54 Members, Fellows and visitors in attendance. The meeting was recorded for those who could not attend in person.

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Price President, Dr Peter Shergold AC FRSN presided at the meeting. He welcomed Members and guests. The apology from the President was noted due to her international travel commitments.

**2. MINUTES OF THE 1323<sup>rd</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes of the 1323<sup>rd</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 are no candidates to be announced for Members' consideration at this meeting.

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

The Vice President presented a certificate to a new Fellows whose nomination was tabled at the previous OGM.

**FELLOWSHIP**

**Professor Gerd Schmalz**

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

The Vice President referred to the proposed changes to Rule 10 of the Society's rules regarding the criteria for Fellowship. He noted that several submissions had been received since the consultation period began and called for any questions or comments from the floor. The council would consider all submissions at its meeting on Wednesday 21 August, with the vote on the resolution to be commence on Thursday 22 August, closing on Monday 2 September with the results being announced at the OGM on Wednesday 4 September.

No questions or comments were received at the meeting.

**6. OPEN LECTURE**

**"Our Housing Crisis: Dissolving Barriers and Delivering Solutions"**

**Médy Hassan OAM FRSN (Facilitator)  
together with an expert panel**

**Founder and Managing Director  
Haus Holdings**

The housing crisis in Australia, including social and affordable housing, has reached a critical level, posing significant challenges for all. The soaring property prices, rapid population growth, and limited investment in social housing are key contributing factors to this crisis. Governments and social entrepreneurs have attempted to address issues such as comprehensive reviews of

housing policies, increased investment in social housing, sustainable urban development, and measures to curb speculative investment are crucial.

The discussion referred to the current situation and possible solutions and pathways to overcome such barriers. The diverse panel of speakers including investment and industry, gave interesting insights into the issues from the perspective of the NSW and Commonwealth housing authorities, the social and homeless sectors, and crisis accommodation and funds management and institutional investors.

The conversation was moderated by Medy Hassan and brought together diverse perspectives through an expert panel comprising:

- Wilhelm Harnisch, an economist and past National CEO of the Master Builders Association and Investment Committee Chair, who will provide an investment and industry delivery perspective;
- Adrian Harrington, a funds management and institutional investment specialist and past Chair of the National Housing and Finance Investment Corporation, now known as Housing Australia—an independent national housing authority that works with the private sector, community housing providers, and all levels of government to facilitate and deliver programs to help access social and affordable housing and or to buy a home;
- Rebecca Pinkstone, the inaugural Chief Executive of Homes NSW, a new division within the Department of Communities and Justice. Homes NSW is responsible for system stewardship across the affordable, social and homelessness sectors to ensure the delivery of more homes and better services for the community;
- Sue Cripps, the Assistant Director (Housing and Service Development) at the Women's Community Shelters, who will provide important insights into the impacts of the 'housing crisis' through examples of homelessness, innovation to create transitional housing options and crisis accommodation.

#### **Panellists**

**Médy Hassan OAM FRSN** is the Founder and Managing Director of Haus Holdings, co-founder of Vitae Capital, and Chairman of GenCap Wealth. His passion is applying commercial strategies to maximise improvements in financial, social, and environmental well-being. His companies are driven by his desire to challenge the 'reimagine paradigm' for current and future endeavours and specialises in social enterprise, equity, property, and venture markets. Médy is an expert in private equity, property, and the delivery of special purpose and complex infrastructure projects. His passion is collaborating to drive innovation, global excellence, sustainable and environmentally beneficial outcomes. He is a recognised national champion of diversity, inclusion and belonging. With 25 years of global and national experience working across all tiers of government, corporate institutions, and private investors, he has overseen \$3B of investments and transactions.

In 2021, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. He is a Member of the University of Canberra Council, a Fellow and a Member of the Council of the Royal Society of NSW, a Board Member of the Queensland Brain Institute, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Building, and an Adjunct Professor at multiple universities in Australia. In 2024, Médy was awarded the APAC CEO of the Year (Australia)—Social Enterprise.

**Wilhelm Harnisch** is an economist turned policy analyst with over 30 years of experience in the building and construction industry, both in the public and private sectors. One of his areas of expertise is housing. His expertise spans as a former economic forecaster, industry policy analyst, and non-executive director on property and investment boards, and as a non-executive director on not-for-profit boards. He is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Canberra.

**Adrian Harrington** has had 33 years of experience in funds management, real estate, government and the not-for-profit sectors across Australia, the UK and the US. He is currently a Senior Advisor to Lighthouse Infrastructure assisting them with their affordable housing investment strategy and execution. He is also Chair of Charter Hall Direct Property Management which oversees more than \$10bn in real estate funds, Board member of the ACT

Government's Suburban Land Agency, Chair of Inclusive Housing Australia's Specialist Disability Accommodation Investment Committee, NSW Chair of Housing All Australians and a member of the University of Canberra's Development and Planning Committee. Adrian is the former Chair of both the Federal Government's National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (now known as Housing Australia) and the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI).

**Rebecca Pinkstone** has two decades of experience in the housing sector, working in government and community housing. She is the inaugural Chief Executive of Homes NSW, a new division within the Department of Communities and Justice. Homes NSW is responsible for system stewardship across the affordable, social and homelessness sectors to ensure the delivery of more homes and better services for the community. Homes NSW also manages 96,000 public housing properties across NSW, providing a safe and secure home for 260,000 people.

**Sue Cripps** is an energetic, well-regarded and respected professional in the human services and housing sectors with outstanding leadership experience, having led numerous major organisations and programs, including being the founding CEO of Homelessness NSW. She has extensive experience and expertise in exploring and striving for solutions to homelessness and domestic and family violence, receiving a Churchill Fellowship to review international models that strengthen service integration and improve outcomes for the homeless in 2011. Sue is currently the Assistant Director of Housing and Service Development at Women's Community Shelters, a social franchise 'Hub and Spokes' model that brings together business and corporate sponsorship, philanthropic investment, Commonwealth and NSW State Government funding and local community fundraising to support the establishment and operation of several independent charitable shelters supported by a head office. Since 2018, Women's Community Shelters has been innovating to create transitional housing options utilising meanwhile use opportunities that seek to increase housing options whilst the current Australia wide housing crisis is being remedied.

**7. VOTE OF THANKS**

The vote of thanks was given by the Vice President.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**9. CLOSE**

The Vice President closed the meeting at 7:55 pm.

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

Signed as a true record  
Dr Peter Shergold AC FRSN  
President