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ROYAL
SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Bulletin 484

July 2024

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A message from the President

Dear <<First Name>> <<Last Name>>

July marks the opening of nominations for the Society's prestigious Awards for 2024. The window for nominations closes on 30 September. Full details and nomination forms are available on our website. They include four Career Excellence Awards – the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholars Medal, James Cook Medal, Edgeworth David Medal, and Ida Browne Early Career Medal – and four of the Society's 12 Discipline Awards that are offered on a three-yearly rotation. For 2024 the four will comprise two longstanding Awards - the Pollock Award in the Physical Sciences and Mathematics, and the Poggendorff Award in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – and two inaugural Awards – the Award in Humanities, Philosophy and Law, and the Milner Interdisciplinary Award.



The Milner Award honours the life and work of C.J. Milner (1912-1998), Professor of Applied Physics and Optometry at the University of New South Wales (1952-1978), and of his parents, S.R. Milner FRS (1875-1957) and W.E. Milner MSc (1874-1966), 1851 Exhibitioners at Bristol College, University of London. Council established this Award in 2023 to reflect the full scope of the Society's founding values with generous support from Dr Jessica Milner Davis FRSN.

Finally, and importantly, we will be offering three RSNSW Bicentennial Scholarships and three Early Career Research and Service Citations. At its meeting in May 2024, Council resolved that the RSNSW Bicentennial Scholarships will be awarded primarily based on an

academic paper that is published by a higher degree research student enrolled at a university in NSW or the ACT. There are many notable papers authored by postgraduate research students each year. The revised criteria will ensure the highest quality students are nominated and celebrated.

Recipients of the Career Excellence and Discipline Awards will receive their medals at the RSNSW Annual Dinner and Award Presentations on Friday, 7 March 2025. Please mark this date in your diary. Once again, the Dinner will be held in the Strangers' Room in Parliament House, 1 Macquarie Street Sydney. Professor Georgina Long AO FAHMS has accepted my invitation to be our after-dinner speaker. Professor Long is Co-Medical Director of Melanoma Institute Australia (MIA), and Chair of Melanoma Medical Oncology and Translational Research at MIA and Royal North Shore Hospital, University of Sydney. With her colleague, Professor Richard Scolyer AO, she is the 2024 Australian of the Year.

Regarding new members of the Society, we are still clearing the backlog of presentation of certificates created by the pandemic. With good uptake, we have been offering free registration to the Ordinary General Meetings in Sydney to any member who has not received their certificate. The gallery of images from the 5 June OGM available [here](#) shows the 13 presentations that I made that evening. We will be continuing this practice for new and longer-standing members who wish to attend. In November, I will be presenting certificates to members of the Western NSW Branch in Orange. Members can also request to have their certificate mailed to them by emailing our secretariat at royalsoc@royalsoc.org.au. Do note the [Gallery link](#) on our website includes the photographs from most of our events.

I look forward to seeing many of you either virtually or in person during July, including at the [online presentation](#) on 3 July from the UK by Professor Sir Michael Marmot on 'Social Justice and Health Equity' and at [Ideas@theHouse](#) on 18 July featuring Julie Inman-Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner. The [Southern Highlands](#) and [Hunter](#) Branches are also holding in-person meetings in July.

We work for the Society because we understand the need to enhance public discourse on a wide range of topics that are crucial to our future. Society members have excellent ideas to contribute. In that spirit, I look forward to hearing your ideas and suggested ways to bring them to fruition.

[Susan Pond AM FRSN FTSE FAHMS](#)

President, [Royal Society of NSW](#)

For your diary

Listed below are all future events for which complete descriptions are available.

The Society's annual events program is published in the [online Events Calendar](#), and is updated regularly. This calendar lists brief summaries of events for which complete descriptions are yet to become available.

- [1323rd Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday, 3 July, 6.30–8.00 pm AEST, Zoom Webinar), *Social Justice and Health Equity*, Professor Sir Michael Marmot CH FRCP FFPHM FMedSci FBA, Professor of Epidemiology and Director, UCL Institute of Health, University College London

- [Ideas@theHouse: July 2024](#) (Thursday, 18 July, 6.30–7.30 pm AEST, face-to-face (by invitation for members) and live streaming, open to all), *W x 3 — The World Wide Web (we weaved)*, Julie Inman Grant, eSafety Commissioner, Australian Government
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-6](#) (Thursday, 18 July, 6.30 pm AEST, RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room), *Space Race 2.0*, Dr Brad Tucker, Astronomer/Cosmologist, Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, University of Wollongong
- [Hunter Branch Meeting 2024-3](#) (Friday, 19 July, 5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm AEST start, University Conservatorium, Laman Street, Cooks Hill, Newcastle NSW 2302), *Are you what you eat? Discovering the science of personalised nutrition*, Laureate Professor Clare Collins AO, College of Health, Medicine, and Wellbeing, University of Newcastle
- [1324th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday, 7 August 2024, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm AEST, Metcalfe Theatre, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney), *Our Housing Crisis: Dissolving Barriers and Delivering Solutions*, Medy Hassan OAM FRSN (Facilitator of an expert panel), Chief Executive Officer, Haus Holdings
- [Western NSW Branch Meeting 2024-4](#) (Wednesday, 28 August, 5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm AEST start, CSU Riverina Playhouse, 8 Cross Street, Wagga Wagga, NSW, and live-streaming), *Adapting to change — invasive plants and pests take up the challenge*, Professor Leslie Weston FAA, Research Professor of Plant Biology, Gulbali Research Institute, Charles Sturt University
- [Ideas@theHouse: October 2024](#) (Thursday, 31 October, 6.30–7.30 pm AEDT, face-to-face (by invitation for members) and live streaming, open to all), *W x 3 — The Big Thaw: Who governs Antarctica's Ice*, Professor Tim Stephens FAAL, Professor of International Law, University of Sydney Law School

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News

Society welcomes new Members and Fellows: June 2024

The Royal Society of NSW warmly welcomes 10 new members to the Society's ranks, effective from 5 June 2024.

Fellows

Professor Eric Pui Fung Chow

Mr Warwick Giblin

Dr Julian Huppert

Professor Timothy Roberts

Professor Frances Rosamond

Professor Gerd Schmalz

Dr James Weaver

Biographical information about the new Fellows will be available on the [Fellows pages](#) of the website.

**New
Fellows &
Members**



Members

Associate Professor Ingvars Birznieks

Dr Mustafa Kassem

Mr David Reynolds

The Society trusts that all new Members and Fellows will benefit strongly from their membership and looks forward to their active participation in the activities and work of the Society.

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King's Birthday Honours 2024

The Society is delighted to learn of the awards to the following Society Fellows and Members who appear in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours List.

The following have been honoured as Officers of the Order of Australia (AO).

Emeritus Professor Suzanne Joan Hand AO FRSN, Emeritus Professor at UNSW Sydney, for distinguished service to palaeontology and zoology, particularly as a fossil bat and marsupial researcher, and to tertiary education.

Professor Thomas Maschmeyer AO FRSN FAA FTSE FMAE, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Sydney, for distinguished service to science as a researcher, innovator, and educator, and business through pioneering commercial technologies.

The following has been honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Professor Emerita Heather Goodall AM FRSN FASSA, Emeritus Professor at the University of Technology Sydney, for significant service to tertiary education, particularly social science, and to the Indigenous community.

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Society Vice-President announced as Chair of the new Australian Research Council Board

Society Vice-President, **Emeritus Professor Peter Shergold AC FRSN FASSA**, has been appointed as Chair of the new, independent Board of the Australian Research Council (ARC).

The new ARC Board, the implementation of which arises from recommendations from the independent review of the ARC Act 2001, led by Professor Margaret Shiel, AO (Vice-Chancellor of the Queensland University of Technology), will be responsible for the governance and accountability of the ARC with functions and powers under the ARC Amendment (Review Response) Act 2024 that include setting priorities, strategies, and policies for the ARC.



King's Birthday Honours



[The announcement](#) was made on 26 June 2024 by the Minister for Education, The Hon. Jason Clare MP, who commented on the politicisation of research funding by previous government Ministers and his promise to 'to end the days of Ministers using the ARC as a political plaything'.

The new ARC Board, instead of the Minister, will be responsible for the approval of most research grants within the National Competitive Grants Program, with the Minister being responsible for approving funding guidelines, subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The Minister retains the power to approve nationally significant investments, such as Centres of Excellence, and Industrial Transformation Training Centres and Research Hubs, that foster national research capability.

In making the announcement, Mr Clare noted that 'Peter Shergold has unparalleled leadership and expertise, having served as a Secretary in the Australian Public Service for two decades, including for the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Education, Science and Training and, more recently, as Chancellor of Western Sydney University.'

The Council of the Royal Society of NSW most warmly congratulates Professor Shergold on his appointment as Chair of the ARC Board and looks forward to positive outcomes for the research sector from its work.

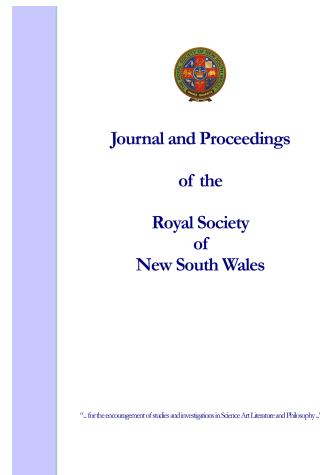
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June 2024 issue of the Journal is now available online

The June 2024 issue of the *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of NSW* will be [published online](#) on 28 June

The issue contains the contents of last November's Forum, "Our 21st Century Brain," (25 papers, presentations, and discussions), 2 papers, and 6 PhD Abstracts, as well as the 2024 Awards notices.

Robert Marks FRSN
Editor



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Events

1323rd Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

Social Justice and Health Equity

Professor Sir Michael Marmot
CH FRCP FFPHM FMedSci FBA

Professor of Epidemiology and

Director, UCL Institute of Health Equity University College London

Date: Wednesday, 3 July 2024, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: [Zoom Webinar](#)

Entry: No charge

All are welcome



[Please click here to join the
Zoom webinar on 3 July at 6.30 pm](#)

Summary: Taking action to reduce health inequalities is a matter of social justice. In developing strategies for tackling health inequalities we need to confront the social gradient in health not just the difference between the worst off and everybody else. There is clear evidence when we look across countries that national policies make a difference and that much can be done in cities, towns, and local areas. But policies and interventions must not be confined to the health care system; they need to address the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. The evidence shows that economic circumstances are important but are not the only drivers of health inequalities. Tackling the health gap will take action, based on sound evidence, across the whole of society.

Sir Michael Marmot has been Professor of Epidemiology at University College London since 1985 and is Director of the UCL Institute of Health Equity. He is the author of *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World* (Bloomsbury: 2015), and *Status Syndrome* (Bloomsbury: 2004). He is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2019–), and co-Director of the of the CUHK Institute of Health Equity. He is the recipient of 20 honorary doctorates. Marmot has led research groups on health inequalities for nearly 50 years. He chaired the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, WHO Regional Commissions, and reviews on tackling health inequality for UK governments. He is former President of the British Medical Association (2010–2011), and former President of the World Medical Association (2015). He is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences. In 2000 he was knighted by Her Majesty The Queen for services to epidemiology and the understanding of health inequalities. He was appointed a Companion of Honour for services to public health in the 2023 New Year Honours.

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Ideas@theHouse: July 2024

Ideas@theHouse

presented by

**Her Excellency the Honourable
Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW**



'W x 3' — The World Wide Web (we weaved)

Julie Inman Grant

**eSafety Commissioner
Australian Government**



Date: Thursday, 18 July 2024, 6.30 – 8.00 pm AEST

Venue: Face-to-face (by invitation for Society members) and [live streaming](#) from Government House Sydney

Registration: Registration is not required for the live stream.

Entry: No charge

All are welcome to the live stream

[Please click here to join the live stream on
Thursday, 18 July at 6.30 pm AEST](#)

Summary: Commissioner Inman Grant worked at the intersection of technology, policy, and social justice, before there was an Internet, in the US Congress, and then at Microsoft in Washington DC in the early 1990s. She fondly refers to this as, “technology policy ground zero” when the Internet was on the cusp and policymakers did not know how to grapple with this new phenomenon. After 22 years in the tech sector, this “poacher turned gamekeeper” became the first global online safety regulator. Arguably, policymakers and regulators are still working out how they reconcile the global Internet with national laws, fight the wealth, stealth, and power of the global technology sector, and effectively help keep their citizens safe online. She’ll take you on a journey of how she has navigated the albatross that technology has driven and pose questions about where we need to go tomorrow.

Julie Inman Grant is Australia’s eSafety Commissioner. In this role, Julie leads the world’s first government regulatory agency committed to keeping its citizens safer online.

Julie has extensive experience in the non-profit and government sectors and spent two decades working in senior public policy and safety roles in the tech industry at Microsoft, Twitter, and Adobe.

The Commissioner’s career began in Washington DC, working in the US Congress and the non-profit sector before taking on a role at Microsoft. Julie’s experience at Microsoft spanned 17 years, serving as one of the company’s first and longest-standing government relations professionals, ultimately in the role of Global Director for Safety & Privacy Policy and Outreach. At Twitter, she set up and drove the company’s policy, safety, and philanthropy programs across Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia, and drove APAC-wide Government Relations for Adobe.

As Commissioner, Julie served on the Australian MyGov User Audit Panel and the Independent Advisory Board of the Technology Policy Design Centre. She served as co-founder and inaugural chair of the [Global Online Safety Regulators Network](#) and is a long-serving Board Member of the [WePROTECT Global Alliance](#). The Commissioner also

serves on the World Economic Forum's [Global Coalition for Digital Safety](#) and on their Governance Steering Committee on Building and Defining the Metaverse. Under her leadership, eSafety has joined forces with the White House Gender Policy Council and the Government of Denmark on the [Global Partnership](#) for Action on Gender-Based Harassment and Abuse.

In 2021, Julie oversaw significant increases in the eSafety office's budget, increased staffing levels, and launched the global [Safety by Design](#) initiative. As Commissioner, she has led work to stand up novel and world-first regulatory regimes under the new *Online Safety Act 2021*, with implementation of a sweeping new set of reforms beginning on 23 January 2022. Commissioner Inman Grant was reappointed for a further 5-year term by the Australian Government in January 2022.

The Commissioner was recently named one of Australia's most influential women by the *Australian Financial Review* and a leading Australian in Foreign Affairs by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In 2020, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Apolitical appointed the Commissioner as one of the #Agile50, the world's most influential leaders revolutionising government.

More information can be found at www.esafety.gov.au.

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Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-6

Space Race 2.0

Dr Brad Tucker

**Astronomer/Cosmologist
Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics
Australian National University**



Date: Thursday, 18 July, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room

All are welcome

Summary: Space exploration is happening at a rapid pace. Missions, projects, and events that are now happening were not even on the radar a few years ago. From private space travel and Hollywood movies, to building satellites to detect fires and searching for life in the Solar System, we'll see what is happening in space. There are huge changes occurring with wide-ranging implications in law, policy, international relations, economics, and even the way we live. We'll see what role Australia is playing and what it means for us over the next decade.

Brad Tucker is an astrophysicist and cosmologist at the ANU Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Mt. Stromlo Observatory and the National Centre for the Public Awareness of Science, at the Australian National University.

Brad received Bachelor's degrees in Physics, Philosophy, and Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a PhD in Astrophysics and Cosmology from Mt. Stromlo Observatory at the ANU. He's leading programs using NASA's Kepler Space Telescope

and TESS to understand why and how stars blow up. He's also building a network of ultraviolet telescopes in the upper atmosphere, and a search to find Planet 9.

Brad frequently gives talks to school groups and the public about astronomy and has regular segments on various radio and TV stations. He has also developed a series of astronomy coins with the Royal Australian Mint, consulted on science fiction movies, and has been featured in TV specials. He is currently in the process of writing his first popular book and has developed an online astronomy course.

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Hunter Branch Meeting 2024-3

Are you what you eat? Discovering the science of personalised nutrition

Laureate Professor Clare Collins AO

**College of Health, Medicine, and Wellbeing
University of Newcastle**



Date: Friday, 19 July 2024, 5.30 pm (AEST) for a 6.00 pm Lecture start

Venue: University Conservatorium, Laman Street, Cooks Hills, Newcastle, NSW 2302

Registration: [Registration through Membes](#) is required by 5.00 pm on Thursday 18 July 2024. Max: 250 people

Entry: Society members, \$15; Non-members, \$25; Students, \$5

Enquiries: [Via email](#) to RSNSW Hunter Branch Secretary (Adj. Prof. Robert Whittaker)

Society Members, Fellows, and members of the public are welcome

Please register now

Summary: In this Royal Society of New South Wales Lecture, with the support of the University of Newcastle, Laureate Professor Clare Collins will bust common nutrition and diet myths about what to eat, to feel better and get better.

Rapid developments in nutrition research mean the ability to tailor individual dietary advice to a person's specific nutrient needs and individual genetics, is now on the horizon. Nutrition needs to change over time based on age, life stage, and health status. A greater understanding of the variation between people in terms of digestion and metabolism is central to developing this field of personalised nutrition. Against the backdrop of cutting-edge food and nutrition science, individuals make conscious and unconscious food choices multiple times a day. This has implications for their own and their family's health and wellbeing. External factors like advertising, marketing, time, money, and convenience all influence what people do, or do not, choose to put in their supermarket trolley.

We will finish with an "Ask Me Anything" about nutrition to give attendees a chance to have their questions answered.

Clare Collins AO is the Laureate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Newcastle (UON), and Co-Director of the Food and Nutrition Research Program at the

Hunter Medical Research Institute. As an internationally distinguished leader in nutrition and dietetics, her research performance places her in the top one per cent of most cited scientists globally.

Professor Collins was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia in 2023 for distinguished service to health research in nutrition and dietetics, scientific organisations, and science communication. In 2024 she was awarded the UON Alumni Medal for outstanding professional excellence. Her research has been supported by more than \$33 million in research funding, generating career outputs of more than 550 journal articles, and the supervision of more than 50 Research Higher Degree candidates. A trailblazer in her field, Professor Collins was ranked the highest female Investigator Grant in 2021 for her research in Personalised Nutrition and was awarded the National Health and Medical Research Council's Elizabeth Blackburn Award for Leadership in Clinical Medicine and Science.

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1324th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

Our Housing Crisis: Dissolving Barriers and Delivering Solutions

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

**Founder and Managing Director
Haus Holdings**



Date: Wednesday, 7 August June 2024, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: Metcalfe Theatre, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney

Entry: Members, \$10; Non-members, \$20; Students, \$0

Registration: Registration through Membes is required before 2.00 pm on 7 August (link to follow)

All are welcome

Business of the Meeting

The Agenda for the Ordinary General Meeting will be available on the [Meetings](#) page of the website prior to the meeting.

Summary:

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 evening's debate will provide an opportunity to identify possible solutions and pathways to overcome such barriers through the lens of a diverse panel of speakers including investment and industry, an insight into the independent housing authority, the social and homeless sectors, and crisis accommodation.

The debate, to be facilitated by Medy Hassan, will bring 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;
- a fourth speaker, to be confirmed, who will provide an intergenerational perspective, discussing crisis accommodation and its direct impact.

Panellists

Médy Hassan OAM 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, Medy 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 more than 32 years of experience in funds management, real estate, government and the not-for-profit sectors. He is currently a Senior Advisor to Lighthouse Infrastructure advising on their affordable housing investment strategy and execution, a member of the University of Canberra's Development and Planning Committee overseeing the implementation of their new campus masterplan, NSW Chair of Housing All Australians, and Chair of the Property Council of Australia's Innovation & Excellence Awards Judging Panel.



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). He has overseen real estate funds in Australia, the UK and the US and has held senior roles at Charter Hall, Folkestone, Mirvac, James Fielding Group, Deutsche Asset Management, and the Property Council of Australia.

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.



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Western NSW Branch Meeting 2024-4

Adapting to change — invasive plants and pests take up the challenge

Professor Leslie Weston FAA

**Research Professor of Plant Biology
Gulbali Research Institute
Charles Sturt University**



Date: Wednesday, 28 August 2024, 5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm start (AEST)

Venue: CSU Riverina Playhouse, 8 Cross Street, Wagga Wagga, NSW, and live-streaming

Registration: [through Humanitix](#) is required for both the face-to-face event and live-streaming

Entry: No charge

All are welcome

Please register now

Summary: Invasive plants and pests can adapt to new environments, some rapidly and others over considerable periods of time, resulting in behavioural changes over time. In the last 500 years, we have seen a rapidly increasing spread in the number of plants and other non-native organisms introduced around the world. These newcomers adapt to their environment through evolution by natural selection, such that changes occur in these non-native populations in contrast to those remaining behind. At a time when we are experiencing rapid environmental changes and selection pressures, understanding how organisms adapt to these changes is critical and is particularly important for land and property managers. Farming practices, including the adoption of conservation tillage systems, have led to the emergence of new and sometimes problematic weed and pest species. In addition, climate change across southern Australia has resulted in warmer temperatures and increasing frequency of droughts along with heavy precipitation events, which also impact the prevalence and range of invasive pests. Increasing summer precipitation, events have also seen the emergence of weeds, pathogens and other pests, making management of rights of way, croplands and forested regions more problematic. Our research has addressed the emergence, identification and invasion history of some of these weedy pests and studied the mechanisms used to enhance their invasion success. Successful weed invasion can have far-reaching impacts on human health, food security and management of important ecosystems, so prediction of risk and development of alternative management strategies for key weed species is also of increasing importance. This lecture will highlight some key examples from this region and highlight the need for improved knowledge of crop and weed ecology and physiology.

Leslie Weston's research focuses on chemical ecology and physiology with an emphasis on the generation of a deeper understanding of the plant and its rhizosphere and associated microbiome and how plant interactions with weeds, herbivores, and pests are mediated by evolutionary adaptation and production of defence metabolites or secondary products.

Research interests have included the development of a fundamental understanding of the localisation, biosynthesis, and regulation of secondary plant products including those in root exudates as sources of novel chemistry. Recently, 'omics' approaches have been applied to investigate plants and their complex interactions with other plants, grazing livestock, pests and soil microorganisms.

Applied research has focused on projects studying the invasion history and risks associated with invasive weeds in Australia and the development of alternative management strategies for weeds and pests, including the use of biocontrol agents and alternative management practices. Prof Weston and her team have recently investigated soil health and microbial diversity in the rhizosphere and the role of bioactive molecules in plant defence while exploring the chemistry of plants, algae and soil microbes using metabolomics.

In 2008 Leslie received the BioFirst Fellowship in Life Sciences which brought her to Australia from Cornell University. In May 2023, Leslie was elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and in May 2024 was nominated for the 2025 David Craig Medal in chemistry research offered by the AAS.

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Ideas@theHouse: October 2024

Ideas@theHouse

presented by

**Her Excellency the Honourable
Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW**



‘The Big Thaw: Who Governs Antarctica’s Ice?’

Professor Tim Stephens FAAL

**Professor of International Law
University of Sydney Law School**



Date: Thursday, 31 October 2024, 6.30 – 8.00 pm AEST

Venue: Face-to-face (by invitation for Society members) and live streaming (link to follow) from Government House Sydney

Registration: In September, Society members will receive an invitation to register for a face-to-face place. Registration will not be required for the live stream.

Entry: No charge

All are welcome to the live stream

Summary: Despite Antarctica’s isolation, humanity’s signature is inscribed deeply there, from the ozone hole etched in the southern sky to the cleaving of the ice shelves into the Southern Ocean. The Antarctic Treaty sought to quarantine Antarctica from the nuclear technologies that heralded the advent of the Anthropocene, and the Antarctic Treaty System is imbued with a romantic environmental ideal of Antarctica as a pristine wilderness that only needs to be left alone to be protected. But it is the global forces let loose by human hands, most notably climate change, that are now transforming Antarctica rather than any activities on the continent itself. What does all this mean for our imaginings of Antarctic governance? What might an Antarctic Treaty System that effectively understands and responds to the challenges of the climate crisis look like?

Dr Tim Stephens is a Professor of International Law at the University of Sydney Law School. He teaches and researches in public international law, with his published work focussing on the international law of the sea, international environmental law and international dispute settlement.

Tim is an author or editor of 11 books. His major publications include *The International Law of the Sea* (Hart/Bloomsbury, 2010, 2016, 2023) co-authored with Donald R Rothwell, and *International Courts and Environmental Protection* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

He has been appointed, on the nomination of the Australian Government, to the [List of Arbitrators under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty](#), and to the [List of Experts under the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation](#).

He served as President of the [Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law](#) from 2015 to 2019.

Tim holds a PhD in law from the University of Sydney, an MPhil in geography from the University of Cambridge, and BA and LLB degrees (both with Honours) from the University of Sydney. He is a [Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law](#).

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Branch and Committee Reports

Report from the Program Committee

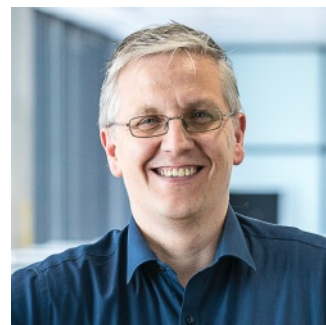
The Society provides an active program of events through its Hunter, Southern Highlands, and Western NSW branches, and in Sydney. The full program for the year can be found in the [website event calendar](#).

With events held recently by the branches reported on separately in this Bulletin, this section focuses on recent events held in Sydney.



Presentation report for the 1322nd Ordinary General Meeting, 5 June

In his Open Lecture at the 1322nd Ordinary General Meeting on 5 June 2024, Professor Pail Thordarson, Fellow of the RSNSW and leader in the field of complex chemistry took us into the world of '[RNA and me: from the origins of life and nanomedicine to building an RNA ecosystem](#)'. We are aware of its importance because of the efficacy of RNA vaccines for the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and the Nobel Prize awarded to Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier for their development of CRISPR-Cas9, a revolutionary gene-editing technology. Thordarson reviewed his own research on designing safe and effective delivery of RNA into cells without which the full potential of RNA therapeutics will not be realised.



He also addressed his work, along with that of many others, to take leading-edge research on RNA from the bench to the clinic in Australia. This ambition entails the creation of an entire ecosystem across the country. NSW is playing its part. Funding thus far includes \$15M for the NSW RNA Production and Research Network from NSW Health and five Universities. At a larger scale, the NSW RNA Pilot Facility will be built on Macquarie University grounds and become operational in 2026. Investment in this Facility includes \$96M from the NSW Government and additional funding from universities and companies. NSW is on track to develop Australia's first RNA animal vaccines for severe biosecurity threats. There is more to come as various initiatives across the country build capacity. With such capacity, RNA can be established as a therapeutic modality with broad relevance to both rare and common diseases.

If you missed the presentation, a recording is now [available on our YouTube channel](#).

Events planned for the remainder of 2024 in Sydney

The program of events for the Sydney branch of the Royal Society of NSW for the second half of 2024 is very full indeed. On 3 July Professor Sir Michael Marmot CH FRCP FFPHM FMed Sci FBA Professor of Epidemiology and Director, UCL Institute of Health Equity, University College London, will deliver an address following the 1323rd OGM on the topic of 'Social Justice and Health Equity'

On 18 July the Governor of NSW, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, will host the second Ideas@theHouse for 2024. This will be presented by Julie Inman Grant, the Australian Government eSafety Commissioner, who will talk on the topic of 'W x 3 — The World Wide Web (we weaved)'.

The face-to-face 1324th OGM on the 7 August will be followed by a panel convened by Medy Hassan on issues of housing supply.

On 4 September, the online 1325th OGM at 6:30 PM will be followed by an address by Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA, the architect in 1989 of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) through which higher education students paid fees through government loans were repaid through the taxation system. The scheme has been widely copied in the UK, Ghana, and New Zealand, and is now being considered in the United States.

Dr Anne Coote will launch her history of the Royal Society of NSW on 2 October at a face-to-face meeting at the State Library of NSW following the 1326th OGM.

On 31 October, the Governor will again host Ideas@theHouse, this time presented by Professor Tim Stephens FAAL, Professor of International Law at the University of Sydney on the topic 'The Big Thaw: Who Governs Antarctica's Ice?'.

On 6 November, Dr Abul Rizvi, former Deputy Secretary of the Department of Immigration and a noted commentator on net migration, will address the vexed issues of international student visas, in an online OGM.

Finally, on 4 December 4, following the OGM, Scientia Professor Helen Christensen AO FASSA FAHMS, winner of the 2023 Royal Society of NSW James Cook Medal, will address the Society.

Events for the Southern Highlands, Western NSW, and Hunter Branches are listed on the website.

Christina Slade FRSN, Chair, Program Committee and
Susan Pond AM FRSN, President

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Southern Highlands Branch Report

Presentation Report— 20 June 2024

**Getting technological advances into the clinic —
Things I wish I'd known 20 years ago**

Dist. Professor Gordon Wallace AO FAA FTSE



Director, Intelligent Polymer Research Institute University of Wollongong

This was a most unusual lecture. Gordon Wallace has published more than 1200 refereed journal publications which have attracted more than 72,000 citations with Scopus, has been listed as a co-inventor with more than 60 patents and was acknowledged in 2017 by patent attorney Nicola L. Maxwell, as one of Australia's most influential inventors. Despite these extraordinary ongoing achievements in science, Wallace decided to tell the story of his years in science from the point of view of someone who would change many things along his 30-40 year scientific pathway if only that were possible.



Gordon Wallace noted that at the start of his scientific career, it was not apparent to him how essential it was to work in a team of scientists to bring laboratory breakthroughs to fruition in a clinical setting. He went so far as to say that it is impossible for a scientist to bring to the world of medicine a significant finding, and have it implemented, unless that scientist is working in a multidisciplinary environment where all aspects of bringing new discoveries to a clinical setting are intermeshed over long periods of time. Aspects such as business management of the project, legal aspects pertaining to the situation under consideration, ethics, political aspects, community objections etc. must be handled in a concerted manner to enable the launch of a significant breakthrough in the clinic to the world in general. He commented that you must be able to bring together all the right people with the best facilities to see the project meet its full potential in the world clinic.

Wallace told of how the Wollongong University Innovation Campus, sited meters from a beautiful Australian beach, had been of huge advantage in recruiting young talent in a great range of disciplines to make the desired cluster of specialities possible at any one time. He is also working with 30 different countries at the moment, where his people are collaborating well to achieve the fulfilment in the clinic that these projects truly deserve.

Professor Gordon Wallace described a number of case studies to fully describe the obstacles he had faced along his journey – obstacles which he would never again face, given his multi-decade experience, learned along the way, about the huge support a multidisciplinary team focusing on the same project at the same time can bring. He told of his work on the bioengineered cornea, the 3D printing of capsules for islet cell transplantation as well as his studies on neural regeneration, and regeneration of cartilage and skin.

An insightful lecture for scientists of all ages.

Anne Wood FRSN
Chair, Southern Highlands Branch

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Western NSW Branch Report

Event Report

In conjunction with the Western NSW Branch of the Royal Society of New South Wales, Charles Sturt University is conducting its Provocations Public Lecture series that showcases and celebrates research at the University.

Forthcoming Events

The next event in the Provocations Public Lecture series, titled [Adapting to change – invasive plants and pests take up the challenge](#), will be delivered by **Professor Leslie Weston FAA** on Wednesday, 28 August at the CSU Riverina Playhouse at the Charles Sturt University Wagga Wagga Campus and will also be live streamed. Information about the presentation and the speaker are available from the preceding link and event notice in this issue of *The Bulletin*.



The remaining events for the year from the Western NSW Branch are:

- Topic: TBA, Professor Sarah O'Shea, Charles Sturt University, Dubbo Campus, Wednesday, 23 October 2024, 6.00–8.00 pm AEDT
- Rural and regional health, Professor Allen Ross, Charles Sturt University, Orange Campus, Wednesday, 5 November 2024, 6.00–8.00 pm AEDT

Nilima Mathai
Treasurer, Western NSW Branch

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The Society and Social Media

The Society's presence on social media platforms is growing strongly, particularly following the appointment of the Society's part-time Communications Officer. Our [Facebook page](#), [LinkedIn channel](#), [X/Twitter feed](#), and [YouTube channel](#) are engaging an increased following, and we continue to build our repository of events on YouTube. Our YouTube channel now has over 1,040 subscribers, while the 155 online videos (which now include nine well-received 'Shorts') have received over 128,000 views.

The social media icons at the end of this newsletter will take the reader to our pages on these platforms, from where you can follow, subscribe, and be notified of new content.

As a Society member, please consider subscribing to our social media channels to support the Society's outreach, and also please encourage your friends and colleagues to do so.

YouTube recordings of recent events

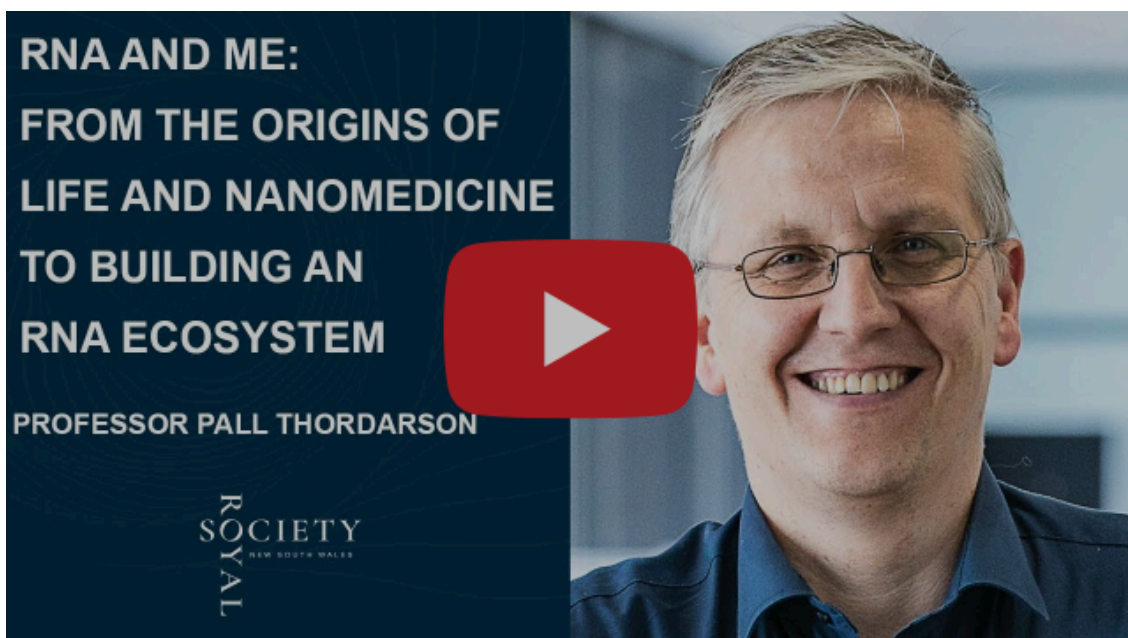
All online presentations and all face-to-face presentations held in Sydney and by the Hunter (since April 2024) and Western NSW Branch are recorded and uploaded to the

Society's YouTube channel. These can be accessed directly from our [YouTube](#) channel or the [Presentations](#) page of the RSNSW website.

For convenience, the video links below provide access to recordings from the most recent three months. We hope that these will be of interest to members.



This video titled "An Evening with Michael Kirby AC CMG FRSN", recorded at the Bathurst Campus of Charles Sturt University on 29 May 2024, has been kindly made available to the Royal Society of NSW for its YouTube Channel. In the talk, Dr Kirby, a former Justice of the High Court of Australia" addresses the question of "Requiring High Court Judges to retire at 70: a sensible referendum vote or a big mistake?".



YouTube recording of the presentation from the 1322nd Ordinary General Meeting (5 June 2024) on *RNA and me: from the origins of life and nanomedicine to building an RNA ecosystem* delivered by Professor Pall Thordarson FRSN, Director of the UNSW RNA Institute at UNSW Sydney. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).



YouTube recording of the presentation from the 1321st Ordinary General Meeting (1 May 2024) on *Brain Health Equity – a new frontier for healthy longevity* delivered by Scientia Professor Kaarin Anstey of UNSW Sydney. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).



YouTube recording of the presentation from the 1320th Ordinary General Meeting (1 May 2024) on *Brain health equity: a new frontier for healthy longevity* delivered by Scientia Professor Kaarin Anstey, Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Population Ageing at Neuroscience Australia, UNSW Sydney. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).



YouTube recording of the presentation from the Hunter Branch Lecture 2024-2 (11 April 2024) on the subject of *Conservation, Frogs, and Citizen Science* by Honorary Professor Michael Mahony AM of the University of Newcastle. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).



YouTube recording of the Ideas@theHouse lecture delivered at Government House Sydney on 6 March 2024 by renowned actor and director, John Bell AO OBE, Founder and former Artistic Director of Bell Shakespeare, on the topic of *Shakespeare on politics — what can we learn?* A summary of his presentation, and a brief biography of Dr Bell, are available from the [website event notice](#).

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Edited by: [Lindsay Botten](#) FRSN, Webmaster, Royal Society of New South Wales

Disclaimer: Positions expressed in this publication by authors of articles and event presenters do not necessarily reflect those of the Society.

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