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ROYAL
SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Bulletin 485

August 2024

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A message from the President

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

Society members received an email on 11 July 2024 headed 'Proposed change to Rule 10 of the Rules of the Royal Society of NSW'. It initiated a four-week consultation period about changes to the wording to ensure that the Society qualifies accomplished, highly-capable people from all disciplines and walks of life for election as Fellows of the Society.

The Council looks forward to receiving your comments before the consultation window closes on Wednesday, 7 August. Please send them to the [Society Secretary by email](#). If you did not receive the 11 July email, a [copy is available on Mailchimp](#) at this link.

Members can also discuss the proposed changes in person at the next Ordinary General Meeting of the Society in Sydney on Wednesday, 7 August. The [Open Lecture](#) that evening on the pressing issue of 'Our Housing Crisis: Dissolving Barriers and Delivering Solutions' is an added incentive to attend.

The Council will consider all comments regarding the proposed changes to Rule 10 at its meeting on Wednesday, 21 August 2024, following which a vote of the membership, to approve the recommended change, will be taken by electronic ballot. The ballot will open at noon on Thursday, 22 August 2024 and close at noon on Monday 2 September 2024. We look forward to your active participation in this consultation.



The proposed change to Rule 10 arises from Council's work during the past 12 months on the Society's 2024-2029 Master Plan. The work continues under the 'Member Engagement' work program. For ease of reference, a summary of the Plan and its five programs is now available on our [website](#).

The Future Fund is another of the five programs of the Master Plan. It will guard against future uncertainties in expected revenue and cover any future shortfall in the Society's ongoing operating expenses (including to cover the cost of an employee in the future). Once the corpus exceeds \$5 million (the Reserved Amount), the balance of the Future Fund will not fall below the Reserved Amount at any time.

Future Fund assets will be segregated in a separate bank account, which has now been opened. These will be reported on a standalone basis in the Financial Report and subject to audit.

The major challenge ahead is to build up the corpus in the Fund to the Reserved Amount. The Council is currently drafting the Policy to govern the Fund and sources of money that could be directed to it, including appropriations based on membership joining fees, surpluses, sponsorships and philanthropic donations, and bequests.

If any member of the Society wishes to add to the corpus and/or participate actively in the Future Fund program, please get in touch.

I now draw your attention to the [June 2024 issue](#) of the *Journal & Proceedings* of the Royal Society of New South Wales which is available online and well worth reading. On behalf of the Society, I congratulate Journal Editor Robert Marks for producing another first-class issue. Alongside individual papers, it includes the proceedings from the November 2023 Royal Society of New South Wales and Learned Academies Forum on 'Our 21st Century Brain'.

In his introductory column, Robert writes about refreshing the membership of the Editorial Board. If this is of interest to you, please get in touch.

Finally, do note that the Annual RSNSW Forum will be held in person at Government House Sydney on Thursday, 14 November 2024. Led by Council member Christina Slade, the 2024 RSNSW Forum Committee's planning is well underway. In this year of national elections in at least 64 countries, the Forum's theme of 'Threats to Democracy' is extremely relevant. Speakers will explore the range of forces placing democracies under threat, alongside measures to mitigate these.

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 information is yet to become available.

- [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, Chief Executive Officer, Haus Holdings and an expert panel comprising William Harnisch, Adrian Harrington, Rebecca Pinkstone, and Sue Cripps.
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-7](#) (Thursday, 15 August, 6.30 pm AEST, RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room), *Biodiversity, Bilbies, and Battling Extinction*, Professor Carolyn Hogg FRSN, Deputy Director, External Engagement, Sydney Environment Institute, University of Sydney
- [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
- [1325th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday, 4 September, 6.30–8.00 pm AEST, Zoom Webinar), *HECS-HELP: History, effects, international comparisons, and the University Accord*, Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA, Sir Roland Wilson Chair of Economics, Research School of Economics, Australian National University
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-8](#) (Thursday, 19 September, 6.30 pm AEST, RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room), *Secrets of Ageing with Resilience*, Scientia Professor Gordon Parker AO FASSA FAHMS, UNSW Sydney
- [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

RSNSW Awards 2024: Call for Nominations

Nominations for the 2024 Awards opened on 1 July and will close on 30 September 2024

In 2024, nominations are sought for the:

- [Career Excellence Medals](#)
 - RSNSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholars Medal
 - RSNSW James Cook Medal
 - RSNSW Edgeworth David Medal
 - RSNSW Ida Browne Early Career Medal
- [Discipline Awards and Lectureships](#)— Year B
 - RSNSW Pollock Award and Lectureship in the Physical Sciences and Mathematics
 - RSNSW Poggendorff Award and Lectureship in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
 - RSNSW Award in the Humanities, Philosophy, and Law
 - RSNSW Milner Interdisciplinary Award

**RSNSW
Awards
2024**



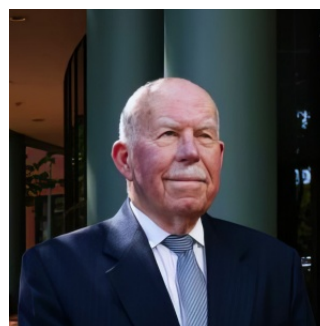
- [Scholarships, Early Career, and Student Awards](#)
 - RSNSW Bicentennial Postgraduate Scholarships (3)
 - RSNSW Bicentennial Early Career Research and Service Citations (3)
 - RSNSW Jak Kelly Postgraduate Award
- [Internal Awards](#)
 - RSNSW Medal
 - RSNSW Citations (up to 3)

Please consider nominating and seconding worthy candidates for these awards.

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Paul Jeans FRSN receives an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Newcastle

Mr Paul Jeans, a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW, was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of the University by the University of Newcastle at one of its July 2024 graduation ceremonies for outstanding service to the University and the Newcastle community. He served as the seventh Chancellor of the University of Newcastle for a decade, before stepping down in October 2023.



A Novocastrian, Mr Jeans graduated as a mechanical engineer from the Newcastle University College of UNSW. His career in industry included more than 40 years with BHP during which he served in numerous executive roles, including the formation of BHP Engineering, becoming its Chief Executive Officer, going on to become the CEO of three of BHP's steel divisions (including Newcastle and Port Kembla), and then serving as the CEO of BHP's iron ore and manganese businesses.

During his tenure as the Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, Mr Jeans provided leadership and direction for many of the institution's achievements and future investments, including the opening of start-of-the-art new facilities such as NUSpace and the Central Coast Clinical School.

Paul Jeans is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and the Royal Society of NSW. While Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, Mr Jeans played a prominent role in the establishment of the Hunter Branch of the Royal Society of NSW, serving as the inaugural chair of the Branch Committee for two years from 2019.

The Council of the Royal Society of NSW extends its sincere congratulations to Paul Jeans on this award and this recognition of his pre-eminent contributions to the University of Newcastle and the Hunter region.



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Events

1324th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

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

**Medy Hassan OAM FRSN (Facilitator)
Founder and Managing Director
Haus Holdings**



together with an expert panel

Date: Wednesday, 7 August 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

All are welcome

[Please click here to register](#)

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 chair of its Investment Committee, 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 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. He has worked as an 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 Officer 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 a number of 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.

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Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-7

Biodiversity, Bilbies, and Battling Extinction

Professor Carolyn Hogg FRSN

**Deputy Director, External Engagement
Sydney Environment Institute
University of Sydney**



Date: Thursday, 15 August 2024, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room

All are welcome

Summary: Biodiversity is all life on earth and is underpinned by three pillars: ecosystems, species, and genes. Human activity is changing our planet resulting in over one million species under threat of extinction. As the biodiversity crisis deepens, we are turning to technological solutions to meet the ever-increasing demands of humanity on the natural world.

Over the past decade, the development of genomic tools for conservation management has come forward in leaps and bounds. Once considered a “nice to have”, genetic data is fast becoming an essential item for managing threatened species. However, due to the complexity of the field, easily using this data for decision-making and monitoring remains beyond the reach of most managers and conservation biologists. In May 2020, Professor Hogg launched the Threatened Species Initiative, a program designed to generate genomic resources for Australia's threatened species and upskill the conservation community in genetic literacy and using new technologies for management actions.

In her talk, Professor Hogg will use case studies of the bilby and Tasmanian devil to highlight her systematic approach to integrating genomics into species recovery through large collaborations of different scientific disciplines, government agencies, conservation organisations, and ‘big tech’ companies. Because ultimately, it is not what we think, or what we know, but what we do that matters.

Carolyn Hogg is a conservation biologist who has been working with threatened species for over twenty-five years both in Australia and overseas. Carolyn is the Science Lead for the national Threatened Species Initiative, co-leader of the Australasian Wildlife Genomics Group at the University of Sydney, and Deputy Director of the Sydney Environment Institute. For the past 14 years, Carolyn has worked closely with government agencies and the conservation sector on how genomic technology can aid conservation efforts for some of Australia's most threatened species. In 2021, Carolyn became a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW. Through partnerships with her academic and conservation colleagues, Carolyn has developed better tools and technologies to integrate research data into real-time conservation management actions.

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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: [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. Professor 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 Academy of Science David Craig Medal in chemistry research.

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1325th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

HECS-HELP: History, effects, international comparisons, and the University Accord

Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA

**Sir Roland Wilson Chair of Economics
Research School of Economics
Australian National University**



Date: Wednesday, 4 September 2024, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: [Zoom Webinar](#)

Entry: No charge

All are welcome

Please click here to join the
Zoom webinar on 4 September at 6.30 pm

Business of the Meeting

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

Summary: The presentation will examine the factors that led to the reintroduction of university fees in Australia in 1989, in the form of HECS. HECS was a departure from the typical student loans used worldwide at the time, because repayments depend wholly on a debtor's future income, while in other student loan systems debtors are required to repay their loans on the basis of time (like a bank loan). The income-contingent nature of HECS repayment was designed to provide insurance against loan repayment difficulties due to the exigencies of the labour market.

The consequences of HECS in terms of the expansion of higher education places, including with respect to students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, will be explored, as will the adoption of the same approach to university loans in around 10 other countries over the last 35 years. International higher education experiences will be compared and contrasted, and commentary will be offered on the recent University Accord HECS-HELP suggestions.

Bruce Chapman is an Emeritus Professor of Economics at the College of Business and Economics at the Australian National University. He is an education and labour economist with a PhD from Yale University and is the author/editor of around 300 papers/chapters and several books including on: higher education financing; long-term unemployment; fertility; marital separation; the economics of Don Bradman; immigration; incomes policy; international experience with student loans; domestic violence; and the application of income-contingent loans to policy concerning drought, brain drain reparations, environmentally sustainable agricultural investments, the preservation of endangered species, criminal fines collection, extensions of paid parental leave, and R&D investments. He helped design the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989 and was an economic adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating, from 1994 to 1996. He likes cricket, bridge, and roast potatoes.

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Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-8

Secrets of Ageing with Resilience

Scientia Professor Gordon Parker AO FASSA FAHMS

**Professor of Psychiatry
UNSW Sydney**



Date: Thursday, 19 September, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room

All are welcome

Secrets of Ageing with Resilience

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.” – Winston Churchill

“Old age is not for sissies.” – Kathryn Hepburn

In our older years, our resilience is tested by the markers of ageing. We each can perform an ‘organ recital’ of medical problems (arthritis, sciatica, visual limitations). Our medical chart takes as many pages as our CV once did, and social hardships, the loss of our partner and loneliness, cluster about. Our previous life-defining roles have disappeared. We chant a litany of “I used to...” observations. And gradually our independence, and commonly our dignity begins to erode. To struggle against such stressors is part of the human condition. Psychologist, Erik Erikson termed older age as a stage marked either by integrity, where people age with grace; or despair, where the focus is on the losses and the burden of regret.

The word resilience comes from the Latin re-silere (“to spring back”). Resilience is viewed as an individual’s ability to bend but not break. As someone observed, it should be like a watch in that it is “able to take a licking and keep on ticking.” It is thought to have genetic underpinnings but there is a complex interaction with personality traits and environment, that fashions the robust

outlook, that is characteristic. The resilient individual, in current definitions, is described as having a positive sense of themselves, an ability to confront adversity and the capacity to find hope and meaning in life. With resilience comes strength and action; without it comes weakness and victimhood. Resilient people face realities with vigour, make meaning of hardship and improvise solutions. They more readily tap into hope, are more optimistic, and eschew negativity. Even when under pressure, they are distinguished by a continuing curiosity about life's events and changes. A key marker is that they "keep moving forward."

Gordon Parker AO is a Scientia Professor of Psychiatry at UNSW and was the Founder of the Black Dog Institute and its initial Executive Director, the Head of the School of Psychiatry at UNSW, the Director of the Division of Psychiatry at Prince of Wales Hospital, and the Area Director of Psychiatry in the South-Eastern Health area. His positions with the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists include serving as Editor of its Journal and initiating its Quality Assurance Committee. Positions with legal organisations include the NSW Guardianship Board and the NSW Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

In 2004 he received a Citation Laureate as the Australian Scientist most highly cited in 'Psychiatry/Psychology'. In 2018 he received the prestigious James Cook Medal from the Royal Society of New South Wales and was a finalist for the NSW Senior Australian of the Year. He was the recipient of the 2020 Australian Mental Health Prize. His research and clinical practice have focussed on mood disorders. His 25th book on a radical new therapy for bipolar disorder will be published in May 2025.

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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 AEDT

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.

ROYAL SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES
Program
Committee

Presentation report for the 1323rd Ordinary General Meeting, 3 July

On 3 July 2024, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, the Professor of Epidemiology and Director, UCL Institute of Health Equity, University College London, formerly a contemporary medical student at the University of Sydney with the President of the Society, talked of his decades of research on health inequities in the UK. Since he published the Marmot Report in 2010, he noted health

outcomes in the UK have worsened. He painted a picture of the increasing divide in health outcomes depending on social circumstances. His solution, based on a holistic approach to health, engaging the entire community, is now being trialled across the UK, in Coventry for instance. He was guardedly positive about the future. When asked about the vexed issues of Indigenous health, he noted that he was not an expert but that all the evidence is that the community itself must be engaged to improve health outcomes. If you missed the presentation, a recording is now [available on our YouTube channel](#).



Presentation report for Ideas@theHouse — 18 July 2024

At Government House Sydney, on the evening of 18 July 2024, the Society, in collaboration with Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, presented the second of this year's Ideas@theHouse, and the tenth in the Ideas@theHouse series. The speaker, Ms Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner, took the face-to-face and online audiences on a journey of the social and technical evolution of the World Wide Web in an engaging presentation titled '[W x 3 — The World Wide Web \(we weaved\)](#)'.



Her presentation began with the halcyon early days of a free and open Internet in which governments had no place in cyberspace, to today and what went wrong along the way, when amazing benefits come at enormous costs in the absence of regulation. She referred to 'bottom line' considerations leading tech giants to strive to be first-to-market, outweighing considerations that their products and services be 'safe' — often disregarding their own in-house rules that would inhibit the transmission of misinformation and disinformation, irrespective of the costs to individuals and humankind more broadly.

Ms Inman Grant spoke of the 'age of digital divineness' and the consequent threats to democratic ideas and institutions, urging that past mistakes should be learned from and that not only should safeguards be put in place but that governments should require the tech industry to ensure that their fundamental building blocks are safer by design. She noted that 2023 was a pivotal year that led numerous governments around the world to finally take notice, not only of the long-term existential threats posed by generative artificial intelligence but also of current online harms with which society is already grappling, by initiating the implementation of regulatory frameworks and the introduction of online regulators, such as Australia has had for some time. Society members who were not present at Government House, or who missed the livestream, will find this highly informative talk [on our YouTube channel](#).

Summary of future events in Sydney

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

On 6 November at the 1327th OGM, Dr Abul Rizvi, former Deputy Secretary of the Department of Immigration and a noted commentator on net migration, will address the Society on vexed issues of international student visas, in an online session.

The **Annual Forum** brings together the Royal Society of New South Wales and the learned academies of Australia at Government House on 14 November on the topic 'Threats to Democracy'. Among the participants, Professor Philip Pettit will join from Princeton, where the 2024 US election will just have taken place. In a panel dealing with global threats to democratic

governance Professor Hugh White of the Australian National University will address the global political situation, Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark will talk of the impact of inequity on democracy, and Professor Quentin Grafton on environmental challenges. The impact of technological change will be addressed by Professor Ed Santow, of biotechnology by Associate Professor Fatemah Vafee, and of medical technology by the Deputy Chief Scientist of NSW, Dr Darren Saunders. In a final session of the day, the new Privacy Commissioner Carly Kind joins Professors Cathy Lumby and Amanda Third to discuss privacy, media, and media education.

Finally, on 4 December, following the 1328th Ordinary General Meeting, Scientia Professor Helen Christensen AO FASSA FAHMS, winner of the Society's 2023 James Cook Medal will deliver the final face-to-face presentation for 2024.

All events at the Southern Highlands, Western NSW, and Hunter Branches are listed on the website.

Christina Slade FRSN and Lindsay Botten FRSN
Chair, Program Committee and Webmaster

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Hunter Branch Report

Presentation Report— 19 July 2024

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

Laureate Professor Clare Collins AO FRSN FAHMS

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

On Friday, 19 July, the Hunter community was treated to an engaging and informative presentation at the Royal Society of NSW Hunter Branch's third public lecture for 2024. The evening was held in the University's Conservatorium in the centre of Newcastle's CBD with support from the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

On this occasion, Laureate Professor Clare Collins AO explored the development and ways in which personalised nutrition can enhance the well-being of individuals and the community at large.

The evening commenced with a dynamic presentation by Professor Collins in which she revealed the clinical experiences that highlighted the need and motivation for research and development of strategies to implement personalised nutrition. This was supported by examples of the clinical challenges that prompted the scientific research that underpins and validates tools developed by Professor Collins and her team that are now readily available to help both the clinician and the public at large. Professor Collins explained how these tools have been developed to translate the Australian Dietary Guidelines into practical ways people can improve their nutrition and well-being. She demonstrated how these tools can identify an individual's nutritional circumstances and needs and, furthermore, how they can assist clinicians in supporting appropriate interventions and provide simple activities and behaviours individuals can use not only to improve

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Branch**



their personal health but how these can reduce the burden of chronic diseases in the community and their costs to the community.



Professor Collins was then joined on stage by Professor Tracy Burrows, Australian NHMRC Research Fellow and co-Director of the Food and Nutrition Research Program at the Hunter Medical Research Institute, who moderated a conversation with Professor Collins based on questions raised by the audience. This not only gave the audience an opportunity to seek clarification about matters raised by Professor Collins in her presentation but led to some practical and on occasion humorous discussion about the more personal and sometimes embarrassing consequences some foods have on us.

The evening concluded with the audience moving to the foyer of the Conservatorium for a social mixer. There was much interest in seeing and participating in a demonstration of the reflectance spectroscopy used by Professor Collins and her research team to investigate the relationship between skin colouration and dietary quality and variety.

The Committee of the Hunter Branch of the Royal Society of NSW wish to thank the University of Newcastle and the Food and Nutrition Research Program staff at the Hunter Medical Research Institute for their support in making the evening a success.

Philip Bolton
Former Secretary, Hunter Branch

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Southern Highlands Branch Report

Presentation Report— 18 July 2024

Space Race 2.0

Dr Brad Tucker

Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics

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Australian National University

Regrettably, the lecture scheduled for the evening of 18 July had to be cancelled due to Dr Tucker's illness. The Southern Highlands Branch hopes to reschedule his presentation at a later date.

Anne Wood FRSN
Chair, Southern Highlands Branch



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Western NSW Branch 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.



Presentation Report — 26 June 2024

The most recent presentation in this series was the talk from the CSU Orange Campus on 26 June 2024, delivered by Distinguished Professor Muhammad Shiddiky of the CSU Rural Health Research Institute on the topic [*Keeping plants and humans healthy: onsite molecular testing methods and devices for health and agriculture.*](#)

In his talk, Professor Shiddiky explored disease testing methods in healthcare and agriculture, and advancements in nanomaterials, nanofabrication technology, and bioelectronics, discussing how his research team has created practical molecular testing methods and devices for detecting cancer, agricultural biomarkers, and plant—and water-related diseases, making a significant impact in these fields.



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 almost 1,060 subscribers, while the 159 online videos (which include nine well-received 'Shorts') have received over 130,000 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 Branches 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.



YouTube recording of the presentation at the RSNSW Hunter Branch on Friday, 19 July titled *Are you what you eat? Discovering the science of personalised nutrition* delivered by Laureate Professor Clare Collins AO FRSN FAHMS 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 presentation from July's Ideas@theHouse (18 July 2024) titled *W x 3 — The World Wide Web (We Weaved)!* delivered by Ms Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner. 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 1323rd Ordinary General Meeting (3 July 2024) on *Social Justice and Health Equity* delivered by Professor Sir Michael Marmot CH FRCP FFPHM FMedSci FBA, Professor of Epidemiology and Director, UCL Institute of Health Equity, University College London. 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 Western NSW Branch Meeting 2024-3 (26 June 2024) on *Keeping plants and humans healthy: onsite molecular testing methods and devices for health and agriculture* delivered by Professor Muhammad Shiddiky of the Charles Sturt University Rural Health Research Institute. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).

AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL KIRBY:

Requiring High Court Judges
to retire at 70: a sensible
referendum vote
or a big mistake?



THE HON MICHAEL KIRBY AC CMG FRSN

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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?".

RNA AND ME: FROM THE ORIGINS OF LIFE AND NANOMEDICINE TO BUILDING AN RNA ECOSYSTEM



PROFESSOR PALL THORDARSON

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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](#).

BRAIN HEALTH EQUITY: A NEW FRONTIER FOR HEALTHY LONGEVITY

SCIENTIA PROFESSOR KAARIN

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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](#).

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

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