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ROYAL
SOCIETY
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Bulletin 487

October 2024

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A message from the President

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

I am delighted to announce that the Society's new website went live on 23 September 2024 thanks to the leadership of Council member and webmaster, Emeritus Professor Lindsay Botten. Lindsay, who became The Society's webmaster in 2019, has dedicated a prodigious amount of talent and time to reach this milestone.

A powerful asset for our members, the website will ensure that the Society remains contemporary, progressive and relevant for years to come as it continues to enrich lives through knowledge and inquiry.

On behalf of all members, I congratulate and thank Lindsay for his outstanding achievements.

I also thank the Government of New South Wales Research Attraction and Acceleration Program for providing funding for this project through the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte.

Our new website is modern, easy to use, mobile device friendly, optimised for search engines (Google and Bing) to improve our rankings, and built with templates and dynamic blocks that will make the task of maintaining a professional appearance easier with the passage of time.

I encourage all members to take the time to explore the website. We welcome feedback on whether you find that it is user-friendly and presents the information you need.

It is important to record some of the components required to build and design our new website. The design adheres to the Society's new style, developed in 2021–2022. The early specifications developed by Lindsay, in discussion with the web designer Ezerus, evolved over time via many



drafts and consultations with Ezerus, for which the Society was represented by Lindsay and our Communications Officer, Amanda Yeo. I pause here to acknowledge and express my appreciation as well to Amanda on behalf of the Society. Lindsay worked with Ezerus as it undertook the detailed implementation beginning in late 2023.

The new website preserves all legacy content from the old one, thus providing both a modern shopfront and an archive of the Society's output during the internet years from 2007 onwards. Consequently, it is a large site containing around 80 pages, more than 400 events and 700 posts, and a vast media library of images and documents.

Given the legacy and technical debt associated with a website around ten years old, together with multiple web standards and different storage formats, the migration task was complex, requiring purpose-built migrations scripts developed by Ezerus. The task of fixing remaining hard-coded legacy links, reformatting content, and updating the site's content that had 'aged' during the implementation period then required weeks of manual work by Lindsay following the initial handover.

The new site went live on the evening of 23 September 2024. Work continues to polish the site's content and appearance, and to remove remaining style inconsistencies. One of the further improvements planned for 2025 will provide a member intranet with user services. We thank Ezerus for its work on the site and hope that members will be pleased with this new face of the Royal Society of New South Wales.

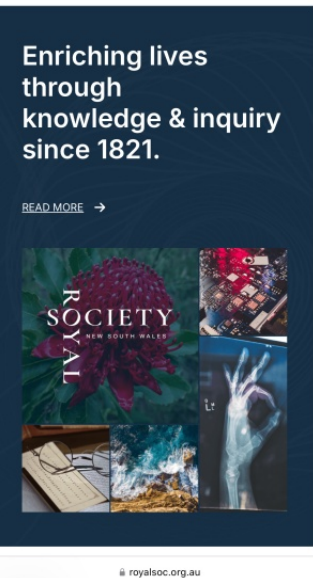
The Society will reach yet another important milestone on 2 October at our Ordinary General Meeting in the State Library of New South Wales when we launch *Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales* written over the past decade by historian and author Dr Anne Coote. Telling the story of the early history of the Society from 1821–1914, the book will be launched by State Librarian, Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon, after a celebratory video message from our patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales.

Anne Coote will then spend about 30 minutes on stage speaking about her book and be available later to engage in conversation and sign books that people wish to purchase that evening.

Dr Coote's history introduces many leaders of NSW intellectual life during the Regency, Victorian and Federation periods — men like aviation pioneer Lawrence Hargrave, whose box kites inspired the Wright brothers; Henry Chamberlain Russell, who led the Sydney Observatory and published the colony's first regular weather tables and reports about new stars and comets; Australian Museum curator Gerard Krefft, who collected and recorded local frogs, snakes and birds' eggs; Sydney University's first Dean of Science, Archibald Liversidge, geologist and Antarctic explorer, Sir Edgeworth David, and the government's Chief Railway Engineer, Henry Deane.

Women were excluded from learned societies during the 19th century, except for some mixed-gender social events, called 'conversaciones', which the RSNSW held in Sydney University's Great Hall. The front cover of Dr Coote's book shows a drawing of one of these events published by the Illustrated Sydney News, 25 October 1884.

If you are not planning to attend the launch in person, information about how to purchase a copy will become available on our website.



I acknowledge and thank John Hardie AM, former President and long-serving Council member, who commissioned Dr Coote to write this book a decade ago.

It would not have been published without the expertise and dedication of current Council member, Dr Davina Jackson, who led the editorial and publication processes.

I also pay tribute to graphic designer Virginia Buckingham who created the final design of the book. Virginia has been instrumental in the rebranding of the Society that began in 2020.

Finally, I recognise the financial support for this project from Create NSW's Cultural Grants Program, a devolved funding program administered by the Royal Australian Historical Society on behalf of the New South Wales Government.

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 updated regularly.

- [1326th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday, 2 October, 6.00 pm for 6.30–8.00 pm AEST, Metcalfe Theatre, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney), *Book Launch: The RSNSW origin story*, Dr Anne Coote, Historian and Author
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-9](#) (Thursday, 17 October, 6.30–7.30 pm AEDT, RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room), *The Chemistry of Social Anxiety*, Professor Michael Kassiou FRACI FRSC FAFMC FSRS, Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, University of Sydney
- [Lunchtime series: Provocations and Inspirations \(October 2024\)](#) (Tuesday, 22 October, 12.15 for 12.30 pm AEDT, Union University and Schools Club, 25 Bent Street, Sydney), *Inequality in Australia*, Dr Ken Henry AC, Chair Nature Finance Council, Former Secretary of the Treasury, and Former, Chair, National Australia Bank
- [Western NSW Branch Meeting 2024-5](#) (Wednesday, 23 October, 5.30 pm for a 6.00 pm AEDT start, CSU Dubbo Campus (Bldg 901, Room 121), 8 Tony McGrane Place, Dubbo, NSW, and live-streaming), *Equity within the Academy: Rethinking the 'why' of higher education*, Distinguished Professor Sarah O'Shea, Dean, Graduate Research, Charles Sturt University
- [Hunter Branch Meeting 2024-4](#) (Thursday, 24 October 2024, 5.30 for 6.00 pm AEDT, King Steet Room, NEX, Newcastle Exhibition and Convention Centre, 209 King Street, Newcastle West), *How can we afford the healthcare system of our dreams?* Professor Francesco Paolucci, Newcastle Business School University of Newcastle
- [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), *The Big Thaw: Who governs Antarctica's Ice*, Professor Tim Stephens FAAL, Professor of International Law, University of Sydney Law School

- [1327th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture](#) (Wednesday, 6 November, 6.30 pm AEDT, Zoom Webinar), *Net Migration and the Federal Election: contrasting the policies of the two major parties, how those policies may be delivered, and the implications*, Dr Abul Rizvi PSM, Former Deputy Secretary, Department of Immigration
- [RSNSW and Learned Academies Forum 2024](#) (Thursday, 14 November 9.00 am–5.00 pm AEDT, Government House Sydney (by invitation) and live streaming), *Threats to Democracy*
- [Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-10](#) (Thursday, 21 November, 6.30–7.30 pm AEDT, RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room), *Community Resilience and National Readiness*, Vince Di Pietro AM CSC FRSN, Independent Consultant and Former Commodore, Royal Australian Navy
- [Renaissance Revisited](#) — a 17-day tour organised by Academy Travel for RSNSW members led by Vince Di Pietro (28 April — 14 May 2025 visiting Venice, Padua, Modena, Florence, and Milan)

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News

Society Fellows amongst the winners at the 2024 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes

The Royal Society of New South Wales was delighted to learn that two of its Fellows, **Dr Jiao Jiao Li FRSN**, a biomedical engineer from the University of Technology Sydney, and **Professor Kate Jolliffe FRSN FAA**, a supramolecular and organic chemist from the University of Sydney, have been awarded Australian Museum Eureka Prizes for 2024 at a ceremony held in Sydney on the evening of Wednesday, 4 September.



The Council of the Society warmly congratulates both Dr Li and Professor Jolliffe on their achievements and on this recognition of their outstanding research.

Dr Jiao Jiao Li has won the 2024 Eureka Prize for Emerging Leader in Science. Dr Li is motivated by the belief that everyone is entitled to healthy ageing. She leads transdisciplinary research in regenerative medicine to find new treatments for bone and joint diseases, turning medical discoveries into new therapies for patients. She is also a leader and enabler in STEM engagement and career building for others, particularly under-represented groups.



Professor Kate Jolliffe has won the 2024 University of Technology Sydney Eureka Prize for Outstanding Mentor of Young Researchers. Professor Jolliffe's research and leadership have enhanced Australia's standing in the relatively young field of supramolecular chemistry. To help close the gender gap she supported the foundation of the international 'Women in Supramolecular Chemistry' network. Her committed mentorship has resulted in more than 150 researchers being appointed to senior academic and industry roles.



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Ballot Outcome: Change to Rule 10 for Fellowship Criteria

On Thursday, 11 July 2024, the Secretary of the Society, Dr Donald Hector, wrote to all Society members, eligible to vote in Society elections, to advise that the Council had resolved unanimously to propose to the membership a change to Rule 10 (Fellowship criteria) of the Society's Rules to reflect better its intention to qualify accomplished, highly capable people from all disciplines and walks of life for election as Fellows of the Society.

Following consultation with the membership, an electronic ballot was sent to all members, eligible to vote, on this Rule change (described in the [explanatory memorandum](#)), at noon on 22 August 2024.

This ballot closed on Monday, 2 September at noon and the RSNSW Election Coordinator made the following information about the outcome available on the website and to the Council.

At the close of voting, 202 votes had been submitted from 683 eligible voters, representing a return rate of 30%.

The results were:

Votes in favour of the Rule change	184 (93.40%)
Votes against the Rule change	13 (6.60%)
Abstentions	5

This change was adopted accordingly, effective from noon on 2 September 2024, and is recorded in the [updated Rules](#), available on the website.

RSNSW Election Coordinator
2 September 2024

RSNSW Ballot Outcome



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Events

1326th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

BOOK LAUNCH: The RSNSW origin story revealed by Dr Anne Coote

Date: Wednesday, 2 October, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm AEST

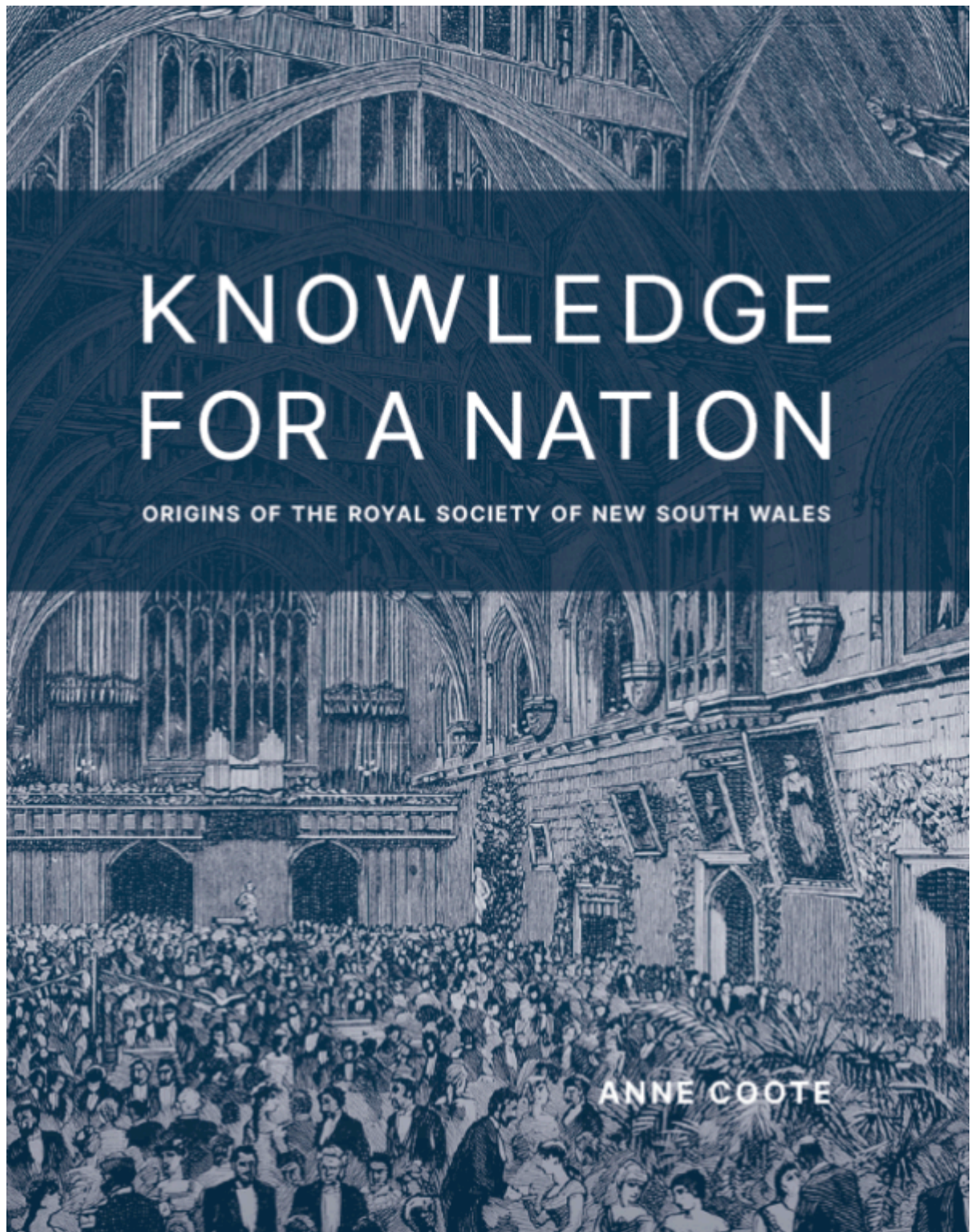
Venue: Metcalfe Theatre, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney

Entry: Members, \$10; Non-members, \$20; Students, \$0 plus an optional supper (\$60 pp) afterwards at Mordeo, Deutsche Bank Place (corner of Hunter and Philip Streets) — see below

Registration: [Registration](#) for the event is required by 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 1 October.

Registration for the optional supper closed on 25 September at 5.00 pm

All are welcome



[Please click here to register](#)

Business of the Meeting

The [Agenda](#) for the Ordinary General Meeting is available on the [Meetings](#) page of the website before the meeting.

About the Book:

Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales tells the early history of a learned society still active in the intellectual culture of twenty-first century Australia. The book begins with an account of Australia's first learned society, the Philosophical Society of Australasia (1821-1822), which is the Royal Society's enduring inspiration, if not its earliest incarnation. The Royal Society evolved from the Australian Philosophical Society (1850-1), through the

Philosophical Society of New South Wales, which was re-badged Royal in 1866. Successfully re-organised a decade later, the Royal Society reached the zenith of its influence on the development of a colonial science community in New South Wales. Hopes and disappointments, conflict and camaraderie, challenges and achievements are all part of this story which highlights the society's initiatives in the cause of science, its all-male membership, the women who nevertheless contributed, and the Society's glittering conversaciones. The book concludes in 1914, when a visit to Australia by the British Association for the Advancement of Science demonstrated international recognition for the colonial scientific community which the Royal Society had worked so long to help create.

About the Author

Historian Dr Anne Coote works in the areas of public history and cultural history, including the cultural history of science in colonial Australia. For many years, she held an adjunct position at the University of New England. More recently, as an associate of the Centre for Applied History at Macquarie University, she contributed to a research project investigating the history of shale-mining settlements in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. She has written entries for the *Dictionary of Sydney* and published academically on the influence of literate culture on popular perceptions of community and sovereignty in mid nineteenth-century New South Wales; popular science journalism; notable collectors of natural history specimens; the intersection of specimen collection with ideas about class; and the trade in specimens at a local and global level. Dr Coote is a graduate of the University of Sydney and the University of New England, Armidale.



Would you like supper with that?

The RSNSW's latest member survey shows that many of us are keen to return to socialising. After our lectures and panel debates at the State Library, some of us might enjoy sharing a convivial supper nearby. When the Library closes at 8.00 pm, let's wander a block downhill on Hunter Street to savour some hearty Italian share plates and a glass of Clare Valley riesling, Adelaide Hills shiraz, or beer.

Include this option in your booking (above) to reserve your RSNSW supper at Mordeo bistro and bar on Deutsche Bank Place (Hunter and Phillip streets) 8.00–9.45 pm, \$60pp (non-refundable).



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Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-9

The Chemistry of Social Anxiety

Professor Michael Kassiou FRACI FRSC FAFMC FSRS

Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and

Academic Director, Centre for Drug Discovery Innovation University of Sydney



Date: Thursday, 17 October, 6.30 – 7.30 pm AEDT

Venue: RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room

All are welcome

Summary: The brain is an incredibly complex organ, and when it doesn't function properly, it can cause various mental health challenges, including anxiety disorders. Recent research has shed light on how the brain controls social behaviour. This is exciting because it opens up new ways to help people who feel anxious or withdrawn in social situations.

Oxytocin (OT) is a hormone known for its involvement in social interactions and is considered a promising candidate for developing new treatments for severe mental health conditions. Often dubbed the 'love hormone' due to its influence on social bonding and relationships, oxytocin has various positive effects. It's important to note, however, that directly administering oxytocin may not be the most effective approach. Researchers are now focusing on creating new types of medications based on oxytocin that don't involve using the hormone itself. These treatments could provide better options for people dealing with social anxiety disorder and other related mental health conditions, offering hope for improved well-being.

Michael Kassiou is the Professor of Medicinal Chemistry and Academic Director of the Centre for Drug Discovery Innovation at the University of Sydney. He also serves as Sydney Node Leader of MedChem Australia and Academic Lead of the NSW Organoid Innovation Centre. With a focus on discovering small molecules for the study and treatment of brain disorders, he has authored more than 330 peer-reviewed publications and has been involved in several first-in-human studies. He has also founded spin-off companies, notably Kinosis Therapeutics. His contributions have been recognised through several awards such as the Australian Museum Eureka Award for Leadership in Science and Innovation in 2023, the HG Smith Memorial Medal in 2023, the RACI Applied Research Award in 2020 and the Adrien Albert Award for Excellence in Medicinal Chemistry and Chemical Biology in 2017. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI), a Fellow of the Asian Federation of Medicinal Chemistry (AFMC), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC) and a Fellow of the Society of Radiopharmaceutical Sciences (FSRS).

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Lunchtime series: Provocations and Inspirations (October 2024)

Inequality in Australia

Dr Ken Henry AC

Chair, Nature Finance Council
Former Secretary to the Australian Treasury
Former Chair, National Australia Bank



Date: Tuesday, 22 October 2024, 12.15 for 12.30 – 2.00 pm AEDT

Venue: Union University and Schools Club, 25 Bent Street, Sydney (corner, Bent & Philip Streets)

Registration: [Registration through Membes](#) is required by 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 16 October 2024. Max: 50 attendees

Dress: Smart business casual (jacket preferred)

Cost: \$60 (RSNSW members), \$70 (non-member guests)

**Please click here to register before
2.00 pm on Wednesday, 16 October**

This is the first in a new, exciting series of lunchtime activities that, over a period of 12 to 18 months, will explore a highly complex topic of major importance to Australia today. The aim of the series is to explore the topic in depth and, ultimately, to identify ways to influence the broader discourse. The series seeks to provoke and inspire action.

Aligned with this year's Royal Society of NSW Forum topic, *Threats to democracy*, the first in this lunchtime series will consider *Inequality in Australia*.

Inequality is one of the most contentious and complex issues that faces Australia today. It affects all of us in one way or another. It influences the political debate from many directions. It has many dimensions — income, wealth, ethnicity, religion, gender identity and where and when we were born to name but a few. Some in politics justify why some people receive more than others; others believe there should be a more equal distribution of society's resources. In the short term, the discourse often focuses on income and wealth and, indirectly, the implications for education, healthcare, aged care, and disability. But the long-term issues are just as important and encompass intergenerational equity — what will be the consequences of climate change? Should the very rich continue to accumulate wealth at a much faster rate than the very poor?

Dr Ken Henry is ideally qualified to lead a wide-ranging discussion on this highly complex, contentious topic.

Dr Ken Henry AC is Chair of the Nature Finance Council, the Australian Climate and Biodiversity Foundation, and Wildlife Recovery Australia, and a non-executive director of Accounting for Nature Ltd and the Digital Finance CRC.

He served as the Secretary to the Australian Treasury from 2001 to 2011. He chaired the Howard Government's tax review taskforce in 1997–98, the Rudd Government's tax review, published in 2010, and the Gillard Government's White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century (2011 and 2012). In 2022-23, he led the independent statutory review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act (NSW).

Dr Henry was the chair of the National Australia Bank from 2015 to 2019 (non-executive director from 2011 to 2019) and a non-executive director of the ASX and affiliated entities from 2012 to 2022. He is a Companion of the Order of Australia and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia, the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and the Australia New Zealand School of Government. He has a PhD in economics from the University of Canterbury and has been awarded honorary doctorates by the University of NSW and the Australian National University.

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Western NSW Branch Meeting 2024-5

**Equity within the Academy:
Rethinking the 'why' of higher education”**

Distinguished Professor Sarah O'Shea

Dean, Graduate Research
Charles Sturt University



Date: Wednesday, 23 October 2024, 5.30 pm for 6.00 – 7.00 pm AEST

Venue: CSU Dubbo Campus Bldg 901, Room 121, 8 Tony McGrane Place, Dubbo, 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

This meeting is a joint presentation of Charles Sturt University and the Western NSW Branch of the Royal Society of NSW

Summary: Globally, higher education is undergoing a period of significant change, including a collective drive to grow the numbers and diversity of students accessing tertiary institutions. Within Australia, this transformation has been foregrounded by the recent ‘whole of sector’ review led by Professor Mary O’Kane, which has led to critical debate about the role and purpose of our universities. The resulting Accord report rightly places equitable student participation front and centre in its deliberations, reminding us that attaining a ‘higher’ education should never be a choice demarcated by postcode, wealth, or family biography but rather, conceived as a universal human right. However, embedding ‘equity’ within our tertiary system is a complex undertaking requiring fundamental shifts in how universities are structured and organised. This Provocations talk critically interrogates these calls for ‘higher education equity’ relative not only to social and political factors, but also the ‘lived experience’ of university attendance for students from more diverse backgrounds. By questioning some of the assumed or taken-for-granted aspects of our tertiary education sector, this presentation will discuss how we might ‘reconsider’ the why or purpose of universities, particularly in the context of the current ambitious equity policy agenda.

Having spent nearly three decades teaching and researching in the higher education field, **Sarah O’Shea** is regarded as an expert in educational equity. Currently a Distinguished Professor and Dean at Charles Sturt University, Sarah’s research (undertaken within more than \$3.8 million in funding) advances understanding of how under-represented student cohorts enact success within the university, manage competing identities and negotiate aspirations for self and others. Sarah has also held numerous university leadership positions, which have directly informed changes across the Australian higher education sector. This work has been recognised via numerous awards and fellowships.

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Hunter Branch Meeting 2024-4

How can we afford the healthcare system of our dreams?

Professor Francesco Paolucci

Newcastle Business School

University of Newcastle

Date: Thursday, 24 October 2024, 5.30 pm (AEDT) for a 6.00 pm start
Venue: King Street Room, NEX, Newcastle Exhibition and Convention Centre, 309 King Street, Newcastle West, NSW 2302
Entry: Members, \$15; Non-members, \$25; Students, \$5
Registration: [Registration through Membes](#) is required by 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 23 October
Enquiries: [Via email](#) to the RSNSW Hunter Branch Secretary
Society Members, Fellows, and members of the public are welcome



Please register now

Summary: Australia's healthcare system is faced with a rapidly ageing society, increasing costs of medical treatment and rising fiscal pressure on governments. How can we afford the equitable and high quality healthcare we all desire in these circumstances?

Francesco Paolucci is the Professor in Health Economics in the Newcastle Business School at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and at the School of Economics, Management, and Statistics, University of Bologna in Italy.

A scholar and advisor, over the last decades he has published extensively in the areas of public polieconomics, and management with a particular focus on healthcare nationally and internationally. This has included one single-author book and five edited special issues in peer-reviewed journals, as well as over 110 academic peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and book reviews in a wide array of academic journals and presses, and in different languages. In 2016 he received a '40under40' Business News award in WA for his entrepreneurial and business leadership.

Professor Paolucci is a permanent member of the Risk Adjustment Network, which is the leading network in health insurance and financing research and advisory globally, and the country representative for Australia. With his RAN colleagues he has contributed to the publication of a book titled '[Risk Adjustment, Risk Sharing and Premium Regulation in Health Insurance Markets](#)' (2018 Elsevier).

Highlights of Professor Paolucci's career are listed in the [website event notice](#).

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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](#) from Government House Sydney

Registration: Registration for a place in the audience at Government House Sydney has now closed and members who have applied will receive their official invitation in early October. Registration for the live stream is not required.

Entry: No charge

All are welcome to the live stream

[Please click here to join the live stream on
Thursday, 31 October at 6.30 pm AEDT](#)

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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1327th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture

Net Migration and the Federal Election: contrasting the policies of the two major parties, how those policies may be delivered, and the implications

Dr Abul Rizvi PSM

**Former Deputy Secretary
Department of Immigration**



Date: Wednesday, 6 November 2024, 6.30 pm AEST

Venue: [Zoom Webinar](#)

Entry: No charge

All are welcome

Please click here to join the
Zoom webinar on 6 November 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: Towards the end stages of COVID, there was significant concern students, working holiday makers and others would not return quickly enough. Unprecedented changes were made to accelerate the return of these visa holders against the background of major labour shortages. That pressure continued for the new Labor Government, with the Opposition criticising Labor, for not moving quickly enough to boost immigration to address labour shortages.

But by the end of 2022, it was clear student visa applications were booming. In the first half of 2023, Labor Ministers insisted the Government had no role in managing net migration and that the surge in net migration was just a temporary catch-up after COVID. This was partly true but mainly false.

From mid-2023, the Government introduced a bewildering array of student visa policy changes to reign in net migration to a long-term target of 235,000 from a peak of 550,000 in 2022-23. Despite offshore student applications having fallen significantly, the Government has now introduced student caps. These are being attacked on all fronts.

This is in the context of the Opposition demanding more be done to reduce net migration to 160,000 per annum. Immigration will be a key issue in the next Federal Election. How are we to understand the two competing policies and what will be needed to deliver them?

Abul Rizvi is an economics, accounting and public policy graduate from the ANU and holds a PhD in immigration and population policy from the University of Melbourne. From 1998, Rizvi managed major growth in overseas students, skilled temporary migration, visitors and working holiday makers, including the development of pathways to permanent migration. Between 1996 and 2006, Rizvi was Chair of the Commonwealth/State Working Party on State-Specific and Regional Migration which gave state/territory governments a much greater role in immigration to their jurisdictions.

He was responsible for commissioning research on the demographic, economic and budgetary impact of immigration that was extensively used in the development of the 2002 and 2007 Intergenerational Reports. He was Deputy Secretary responsible for all aspects of immigration, humanitarian, citizenship and settlement policy from 2005.

Rizvi was awarded the Public Service Medal and the Centenary Medal for services to the development and implementation of Australian immigration policy. Rizvi is a frequent media commentator on population, immigration and its impact on Australia's economic and budget directions. He was invited to participate in the 2022 Jobs and Skill Summit and recently published a book in the 'In the National Interest' series titled 'Population Shock'. Rizvi recently presented on immigration policy in a televised address to the National Press Club.

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RSNSW and Learned Academies Forum 2024



THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

Date: Thursday, 14 November 2024, 8.30 for 9.00 am–5.00 pm AEDT

Venue: Government House Sydney: in person, by invitation, and live-streaming

Registration: Information to follow

Program: See the program schedule below

Entry: No charge

Summary

In 2024, the greatest number ever will have voted in 'democratic' elections, in Argentina, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the UK, the USA, and others. At the same time, there have been deep questions about the success of democracies. As the Economist put it on 14 February:

This year's [democracy index](#) shows that only 43 of the more than 70 elections are expected to be fully free and fair.... The latest report shows that less than 8% of the world's population live in full democracies.

Is democracy important in the twenty-first century and if so, why? From its Greek origins, through Roman republican models to the many and varied structures of contemporary states, democracy has mutated but survived. In the much-quoted phrase of Winston Churchill from 1947:

'Many forms of Government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that

democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time'

Democracy as a political framework has been influential in creating the global rules-based order that has dominated international affairs for half a century. Now the presuppositions of the rules-based order are in question and democracy itself is under threat. Attitudes to democracy and political power have changed and the nature and structures of political communities are in flux.

Pressure on that order comes from many directions. Global issues such as shifts in political power, the rise of economic inequity and the impact of climate change have reignited national divides and undercut commitment to democratic process. Within Australia, faith in politicians, political parties and the political process is reducing. What is a modern democracy, and how does a multicultural society such as Australia find common voices and policies across differences?

Technologies, from medical advances to artificial intelligence, undermine assumptions about individual freedom and choice. What does it mean to be able to choose a candidate or a government, when personal choice itself can be invisibly influenced? What is personal identity in the new world of biotech? And what can we do about the undermining of privacy— can regulation help? Is the new landscape of media undermining our democracy or simply altering its lineaments? Can we educate for democracy in the digital world? The Forum addresses these issues.

The Forum is held under the auspices of Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales. The Royal Society of New South Wales acknowledges the generous support of Her Excellency and the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.

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Southern Highlands Branch Meeting 2024-10

Community Resilience and National Readiness

Vince Di Pietro AM CSC FRSN

Independent Consultant and
Former Commodore, Royal Australian Navy



Date: Thursday, 21 November, 6.30–7.30 pm AEDT

Venue: RSL Mittagong, Carrington Room

All are welcome

Summary: A significant majority of Australia's national capability and capacity exists in its regional and rural areas. However, the small population numbers in rural and regional areas do not attract the returns on investment that motivate improvements in infrastructure, services, and amenities which affect directly community resilience. The 2019/2020 Black Summer bushfires devastated significant areas of land, destroyed much property in the Shoalhaven, and offered a worthwhile opportunity to investigate the essential dependence of national readiness on community resilience. Four years on, the psychological damage continues to be felt by many, while the emergency response and subsequent recovery exposed many shortcomings in our nation's capacity and capabilities. The concurrent emergency of early COVID-19 amplified the shortcomings beyond reasonable doubt. While much of the spotlight is afforded to the readiness possibilities offered by technology and equipment, the essential nature of national resilience needed to underpin

preparedness may be in need of closer understanding, analysis, and improvement. Whether discussing high-end military equipment, cyber-attacks on our docks, or regional childcare, are our assumptions correct? Are we investing in success or repeating previous experiences and expecting a different outcome?

Vince Di Pietro is an independent consultant. Vince draws upon 40 years of service in the Royal Australian Navy specialising in aviation, flight training, professional military education, international diplomacy, risk management, certification, and safety. In addition to Command appointments, Vince served twice as a Director-General, as a Naval Attache to the United States, and as Commander of the Fleet Air Arm. On his retirement from the Navy, Vince was appointed Chief Executive of Lockheed Martin Australia and New Zealand until retiring from that position in April 2019. After many moves in Australia and overseas, Vince settled permanently in the Shoalhaven. During and after the Currowan Bushfire, Vince was the Local Recovery Coordinator for the Shoalhaven City Council overseeing the recovery coordination of the damage sustained by 82% of the Shoalhaven's 4600 square kilometers. Having learned much during the fire emergency, Vince designed, coordinated, and implemented the Recovery into Resilience Project in the Shoalhaven. The Project was delivered on time and budget in October 2023 and is now fully operational at 26 Community Information Hubs powered by solar and battery and connected via satellite internet.

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Renaissance Revisited: 28 April – 14 May 2025



A 17-day tour for RSNWS members led by Vince Di Pietro and organised by Academy Travel

Dates: 28 April – 14 May 2025

Itinerary: Venice, Padua, Modena, Florence, and Milan

Cost: \$13,180 per person, twin share; \$3,440 single supplement

Brochure: [click here to access](#)

Further information and booking: [Academy Travel website](#)

Overview

The Renaissance was one of the most dynamic periods in Italy's history, a time when generous patronage fostered brilliance in art, architecture and scientific innovation. But this brilliance didn't begin, nor end, there and while the centuries that followed saw some darker times, Italy welcomed in the 20th century with a new burst of creativity.

This new 17-day tour, designed for members of the Royal Society of NSW, begins in Venice, then takes us to Padua, west to Modena and Florence, then north to Milan. As we go, we learn of the artists and powerful patrons who defined the Renaissance and whose legacy still illuminates these lovely cities. Complementing this historical journey, we explore contemporary achievements in automobile design and production, in fashion and in architecture where names such as Ferrari, Maserati, Armani, Prada and Renzo Piano have set a new standard.

Led by Vince Di Pietro, our tour takes us to the palaces, cathedrals, gardens and museums that exemplify the history of each city, often with special access to sites and collections. Tour manager Dr Eireann Marshall, raised in the Veneto, will provide commentary on the regions visited as we travel. Four-star hotels and select regional meals complete the experience.

Tour Leader

Vince Di Pietro AM CSC FRSN is an independent consultant. Vince draws upon 40 years of service in the Royal Australian Navy specialising in aviation, education and international diplomacy. Vince is currently a member of the RSNSW Council.

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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. 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 1325th Ordinary General Meeting and Open Lecture, 4 September

'Higher education costs', said Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA (of ANU), 'even if there is no charge'. When Whitlam introduced free higher education, he pointed out, the diversity of students studying at university scarcely shifted. In effect, all taxpayers supported a public good where most of the beneficiaries were middle class. The issue he confronted, when he proposed the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) to the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, The Hon. John Dawkins, was how to ensure that the government could pay to increase the number of student places and while encouraging lower-income students to participate.

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Committee



Professor Chapman's lecture, '[HECS-HELP: History, effect, international comparisons, and the University Accord](#),' was held online on 4 September, following the 1325th OGM, and is now [available on YouTube](#). He reports his engagement over thirty years developing the HECS policy with Government. His self-deprecating account of meetings with Dawkins and Taxation Office officials, both in Australia and across the world, is a hilarious saga of how policy change occurs. He charts the data punctiliously and shows how lower-income students have been great beneficiaries of the system. He argues that the income dependent repayment of loans is a model that should be considered for a variety of public goods. In commenting on the University Accord, he noted, perhaps tongue in cheek, that the model might even be used for research funding. We look forward to the article tracing the history in the Journal.

[Our next meeting](#), on 2 October, face-to-face at the State Library, is the launch of another longer history — that of the Royal Society of NSW itself, as recorded by Dr Anne Coote.

The focus of the Annual Forum to be held at Government House on 14 November 14th is '*Threats to Democracy*'. In a year in which, globally, a greater number than ever before have or will vote in democratic elections, the issues are much debated. The Forum will begin with an address by the Governor, followed by a philosophical framing of democracy given by Professor Philip Pettit of ANU and Princeton. Panels will deal with global and technological challenges to democracy, Australian attitudes to democracy, and education for democracy.

Christina Slade FRSN
Chair, Program Committee

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Southern Highlands Branch Report

Presentation Report— 19 September 2024

Secrets of Ageing with Resilience

Scientia Professor Gordon Parker AO FASSA FAHMS

**Professor of Psychiatry
UNSW Sydney**

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Southern
Highlands

Gordon Parker entered the Joadja-Nattai Room at the Mittagong RSL well in time for his 6.30 pm lecture. The theatre had been rapidly filling since doors opened at 6.00 pm. Staff had been requested the previous day to provide the maximum allowable number of seats for this space — that number was ninety. Much to the committee's relief, only one extra chair was needed!

The Southern Highlands Branch of the Society is not in a university town, the nearest universities being in Wollongong, Canberra, Sydney, and Western Sydney. When speakers accept an invitation to deliver a lecture at RSL Mittagong, they are committing to a long drive at peak hour to reach the venue and the same long drive home. The Southern Highlands Branch makes attendance for the speakers a little easier by offering pleasant accommodation for two persons at the adjoining Springs Resort.



Another feature of these Branch lectures is that ABC Radio Illawarra 97.3 is often enthusiastic about supporting our lectures by presenting a pre-recorded interview with the speaker on the morning of the lecture. This broadcast covers a wide area from the north of Canberra to the South of Sydney. Many in the audience had heard Gordon's interview earlier in the day and had come from far away.

Gordon Parker set the scene for his presentation on aging with resilience by quoting two famous people:

1. *If you are going through hell, keep going* — Winston Churchill
2. *Old age is not for sissies* — Kathryn Hepburn.

It was not long before he changed the pace of the lecture completely by throwing the floor open to questions. What a successful strategy for a large audience. Questions flowed readily to this wonderful psychiatrist and even a few tears were shed. People filed out to dinner looking forward to his next visit and to his new book, his twenty-fifth, scheduled for 2025 on the latest treatments for bipolar patients.

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 — 28 August 2024

The most recent presentation in this series was the talk from the CSU Wagga Wagga Campus on 28 August 2024, delivered by Professor Leslie Weston FAA, the Gulbali Research Professor of Plant Biology and Natural Products Chemistry at Charles Sturt University. She spoke on the topic of [Adapting to change — invasive plants and pests take up the challenge](#), during which she took the face-to-face and online audiences on a fascinating international tour of invasive species, their devastating impacts, and the tools and high-technology methods being developed to manage them.



Forthcoming Events

The next event in the Provocations Public Lecture series, titled [Equity within the Academy: Rethinking the 'why' of higher education](#), will be delivered by Professor Sarah O'Shea, Dean of the Graduate School at Charles Sturt University from the Dubbo Campus on Wednesday, 23 October 2024, 6.00—7.00 pm AEDT. Live streaming will be available, with registration required through the following [link](#).

The remaining event for the year from the Western NSW Branch is:

- Rural and regional health, Professor Allen Ross, Charles Sturt University, Orange Campus, Wednesday, 5 November 2024, 6.00–7.00 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 more than 1,090 subscribers, while the 166 online videos and 'shorts' have received almost 135,000 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.

HECS-HELP: HISTORY, EFFECTS, INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS, AND THE UNIVERSITY ACCORD

PROFESSOR BRUCE CHAPMAN

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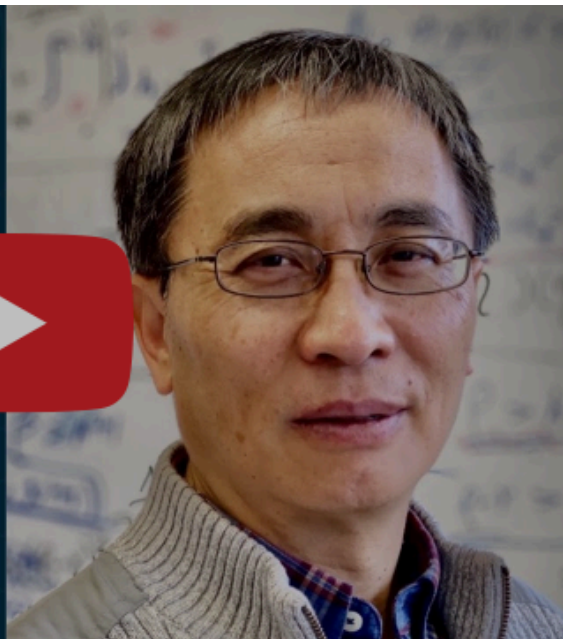


YouTube recording of the presentation from the 1325th Ordinary General Meeting (3 July 2024) on *HECS-HELP: History, effects, international comparisons, and the University Accord* delivered by Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman AO FASSA of the College of Business and Economics at the Australian National University. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).

MATHEMATICS FOR PROPAGATION AND THE SPREADING OF SPECIES

PROFESSOR YIHONG DU

ROYAL
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YouTube recording of the joint presentation of the University of New England (UNE) and the Royal Society of New South Wales from Armidale (3 September 2024) on *Mathematics for propagation and the spreading of species*, delivered by Professor Yihong Du FAA of the UNE School of Science and Technology. 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 2024-4 (28 August 2024) on *Adapting to change — invasive plants and pests take up the challenge* delivered by Professor Leslie Weston FAA, the Gulbali Research Professor of Plant Biology and Natural Products Chemistry at Charles Sturt University. 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 1324th Ordinary General Meeting (7 August 2024) on *Our Housing Crisis: Dissolving Barriers and Delivering Solutions* delivered by a panel convened by Medy Hassan OAM FRSN, Founder and Managing Director, Haus Holdings, and featuring Rebecca Pinkhouse, CEO of Homes NSW, Sue Cripps, Assistant Director at Women's Community Shelters, Wilhelm Harnisch, an economist and former national CEO of the Master Builders Association, and Adrian Harrington, a funds management and institutional investment specialist. A summary of the lecture, and a brief biography of the presenter, are available from the [online event notice](#).



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](#).

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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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