



The Cambridge Society of NSW

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2017
presented at the the Annual General Meeting
of the Cambridge Society of NSW held on Thursday 31 May 2018
at 6.00pm at the Union, Universities & Schools Club, 25 Bent Street, Sydney.

Welcome all members and guests to the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Cambridge Society of New South Wales.

The Society is a social association of Cambridge University alumni in New South Wales. We organise formal and informal social functions where members and their guests can meet fellow alumni, maintain and renew old friendships and make new ones, bonded together by their heritage of the world's finest academic and intellectual institution.

I am pleased to say that 2017 was filled with a very busy calendar of events, which included a series of visitors from the Mothership, including the Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

- We kicked off the year with a fascinating Thinking at Twilight talk entitled "A Fortunate Universe" by Dr Luke Barnes and Professor Geraint Lewis, alumni who are now well-regarded academics at Sydney University.
- This was followed by the first of three events in the year which featured distinguished guests from Cambridge. First, David Anthony at the law firm Corrs kindly hosted a Thinking at Twilight talk by Dame Athene Donald, Master of Churchill College on "The Scientist and Society".
- Sydney was then honoured to feature on the "Global Cambridge" tour with Professor Eilís Ferran, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Relations. The University hosted a seminar on Global Warming and a Reception at the Ivy. Many of us then went on to the Winter Feast where Professor Ferran joined us Guest Speaker.
- A visit from the Master of Trinity Hall, Reverend Dr Jeremy Morris, rounded off our Cambridge visitors. I wish I hadn't missed his talk on "College cats and Cambridge eccentricities."
- With the success of our 'Young Oxbridge' networking event the previous year, we doubled up and organised two 'Young Oxbridge' networking events for younger alumni – one of which included the Ivy League as well.
- Our final Thinking at Twilight featured Senator The Honourable George Brandis QC, who spoke about 'Populism and the Future of Liberal Democracy'. As you can expect with that topic, there was a lively Q&A discussion.
- On the sporting front, we had the Oxbridge croquet day early in the year (sadly we lost) and then the annual golf challenge with Oxford, in which I'm delighted to say

Chris Golis, Peter Buchen, James Balfour and Richard Lyon proudly once again retained the trophy for Cambridge.

- We ended the year with the traditional Christmas Drinks here at the Union Club.

2018 Events

Events for this year kicked off early this year with the first Thinking at Twilight in March with Prof Toby Walsh giving us the A-Z of AI.

This was followed in April with Dr William Foster visiting Sydney from Clare College talking about "The Joy of Insect Watching".

The next event will be a Young Professional networking evening on 4 July at a suitable venue (meaning a bar) in the City.

The Winter Feast will be on 22 August at our regular venue, the Royal Sydney. The Guest Speaker is Justice Michael Pembroke who will give a talk in his capacity not as a lawyer, but as a respected historian. Details to follow but I can assure you it is very topical and is sure to be a sell-out.

Financials

Accounts are available from the Administrator, Suzie Ruse. Paid up membership numbers in 2017 reached 142 members which is down by 9 from the previous year. We again finished the 2017 year in reasonable financial shape. At the beginning of the year the cash on hand was \$21,973.23. At the end of the year the cash balance decreased by just over \$1,000 to \$20,915.55, largely because of a 2016 invoice that was paid in 2017. All in all, I'm sure we'd all agree a satisfactory outcome for the year.

The financial principles of the Society are to break-even on functions and cover the fixed costs by Membership fees. The fixed costs are principally the stipend payable to the Administrator, details of which are in the accounts. For six years we managed to keep the annual fees at \$40 but had to increase by \$5 to \$45 in 2017. As we usually do, we are going to ask that the Committee have the right to increase fees for 2019 by \$5 to \$50. We probably will not need to implement another increase so soon, but the Committee believes it must continue to have the flexibility.

As I noted, the objective of the paid-up Membership fee is to cover the Society's fixed running costs. However, even though event attendance numbers are healthier than ever, paid-up Membership numbers have been relatively stagnant. To ensure Membership fees continue to cover our fixed costs, the Committee is considering abolishing from 2019 the separate category of "Non-Financial Member" which seems to be a historic anachronism. I will update the Society as and when the Committee reaches a decision on this. In the meantime, I'd be happy to discuss with anyone who has questions or suggestions about this possible change.

The Society is hugely reliant on and grateful for Suzie Ruse in her role of Administrator. My personal thanks and that of the Committee go to her for all the assistance she has given me and the Society in the last year.

Committee

Alistair Newmarch has agreed to continue as Treasurer and Alison Ross as Secretary. Chris Dawson wishes to remain as Vice-President and the Committee has asked me to continue as President.

The rest of the Committee comprises Julie-Anne Bosich, Rhiannon Chisholm, Rhys Goodey, Alex Palmer, Liza Rybak, Gautham Srinivas and Jonathan Negus. They have all indicated they wish to continue as Committee members.

I take this opportunity to thank all the Committee members and office bearers for their efforts during 2017, including the three members who decided to step down for personal or work reasons, Chandra Senaratne; Sasha Shevtsova – who has moved to Canberra - and of course Emma Brown - who is on a career break travelling the world and we hope will rejoin the Committee on her return.

We will be electing Office Bearers and Committee members shortly. In addition to the names mentioned, Jack Bartel has volunteered his services and I and the Committee are supportive of having another young alumnus on the Committee.

If anyone else wishes to stand you should be aware the Committee meets quarterly on the second Wednesday of the second month of each quarter at my house - mainly to enjoy good wine and cheese but also to plan events and deal with matters arising.

That will conclude the AGM and we will then introduce tonight's Thinking at Twilight speaker, our former President Chris Golis.

We now move to the formal proceedings of the AGM.