



The Cambridge Society of NSW

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Cambridge Society of NSW

President's Report 2018

Given by Amrit Bahra at the AGM, 13 June 2019

Welcome all members and guests to the 2019 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 2018 was filled with a very busy calendar of events.

- We kicked off the year with a thought-provoking Thinking at Twilight entitled "The A to Z of AI" by Professor Toby Walsh, an alumnus who is now at UNSW and one of the world's leading authorities on Artificial Intelligence and its implications for humanity.
- This was followed by a fascinating talk on "The Joy of Insect Watching" by a visitor from Cambridge, Dr William Foster, Emeritus Curator of Insects, University Museum of Zoology and Fellow of Clare College.
- Following last year's AGM, we were delighted to welcome a familiar friend, our past President Chris Golis talk about "Practical Emotional Intelligence - The Key to Career Success".
- At our key event of the year, the Winter Feast, we heard alumnus Michael Pembroke on the very topical subject of "Korea – how has this happened".
- The year was rounded off with a lively and entertaining talk to accompany Christmas drinks from alumnus Andy Morton, a director with Opera Australia, who shed light on what happens behind the scenes at opera productions.
- Our 'Young Oxbridge' networking events continued to thrive, with invitations extended to the Ivy League colleges. I'm happy to report our winning formula was shamelessly copied by Harvard - just like they did when naming their home town...
- On the sporting front against our Oxonian adversaries, we had the cricket match and croquet day early in the year, and then the annual golf challenge later in the year. Sadly we lost all three – and with that our 10 year winning streak in golf has come to an end. How gracious of us.

2019 Events

A quick recap on 2019 events.

Today will be the third event for this year. We kicked off in March, Thinking at Twilight with Professor Michael Johnson talking about his experiences at the Fred Hollows Foundation. Last month, a number of us had the pleasure of laughing along and then having a drink with Melbourne based alumnus Alice Fraser, who was performing at the Sydney Comedy Festival. Intelligent comedy in the best Cambridge tradition.

Next month we will welcome Dr André Cabrera Serrenho, another visitor from Cambridge, this time from the Department of Engineering, who will ask "How frugal do we need to become to mitigate climate change?" Hopefully he will then go on to answer the question.

The Winter Feast will be in early September at our regular venue, the Royal Sydney. I am delighted to announce the Guest Speaker will be fellow alumnus and newly elected MP for Wentworth, Dave Sharma. As you may know, Dave has been in the diplomatic corps for most of his career and his talk will draw on his experiences as a senior Australian diplomat in various international postings.

We've had a much improved record in the sporting arena this year so far, with Andrew Fulton and Martin Maynard winning the Oxbridge Croquet tournament at Cammeray in March, closely followed by Cambridge winning the Boat Race! We will look forward to another Oxbridge Golf day in October, organized by Chris Golis.

Financials

Accounts are available from the Administrator, Suzie Ruse. We had 124 paid up Members in 2018, which is down by 18 from the previous year. We again finished the 2018 year in reasonable financial shape. At the beginning of the year the cash on hand was \$20,915.55. At the end of the year the cash balance decreased by just over \$2393 to \$18,521, largely because event & admin expenses being higher than the income for events and subscriptions. 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 2020 by \$5 to \$50. We hopefully will not need to implement the increase, but the Committee believes it must continue to have the flexibility.

For the 2019 year the Committee decided to implement a couple of changes. The first change, which was foreshadowed last year, was to abolish the separate category of "Non-Financial Member", with a view to ensuring Membership fees continue to cover our fixed costs. The second change was suggested by some members, which is the introduction of a three year membership to reduce the burden of renewing membership annually.

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 Jonathan Negus 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, Alison Ross, Liza Rybak, Gautham Srinivas, plus our newer Committee members Jack Bartel, Eddy Goldsmith and Emily Baxter (who has rejoined the Committee after some time out). 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 2018, including Alex Palmer who is now working in the UK. We hope will Alex will rejoin the Committee on his return.

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.

We will be electing Office Bearers and Committee members shortly. That will conclude the AGM and Julie-Anne will then introduce tonight's Thinking at Twilight speaker, Tess Langfield.

We now move to the formal proceedings of the AGM.