



The Cambridge Society of NSW

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Cambridge Society of NSW President's Report 2019 Given by Amrit Bahra at the AGM, 30 April 2020

Welcome all Members to this year's virtual Annual General Meeting of the Cambridge Society of New South Wales. A most unusual format at a most unusual time. I hope all our Members and their families are keeping well.

Thank you for making the time to link into this AGM, which we are required to have by the rules of the Society as well as the NSW Office of Fair Trading. Normally of course the AGM would be part of another CamSoc event, however due to the COVID-19 situation we are unable to stage any events at this time. Indeed, the AGM was meant to take place in March alongside a Thinking at Twilight talk featuring marketing expert Caspar Wright, but we decided to cancel that event at short notice as the dark clouds of the crisis assembled.

The proceedings today will be as follows. First, I will read out the President's Report for 2019. We will then move to the formal proceedings of the AGM which will be adoption of the Accounts, followed by election of Office-bearers and other Committee members.

On to my Report for 2019, a year filled with a very busy calendar of events.

- We started off with a Thinking at Twilight on 7 March featuring Professor Michael Johnson AM, who described his personal involvement in helping build the Fred Hollows Foundation
- The 7th Oxbridge Croquet Tournament took place later in March. Congratulations to Martin Maynard and Andrew Fulton for doing Cambridge proud. The organiser of this event since its inception has moved out of Sydney so we would be glad to hear from any alumnus who would like to volunteer to continue this tradition.

- In May several Members and guests enjoyed a casual evening out at the Sydney Comedy Festival with an upcoming comedian, Melbourne based alumnus Alice Fraser.
- The AGM on 13 June was accompanied by a Thinking at Twilight with Tess Langfield, PhD student (Christ's College), visiting Cambridge scholar talk on her work on public health and drinking behavior.
- We hosted another Thinking at Twilight on 17 July with Dr André Cabrera Serrenho, who discussed “How frugal we need to become to mitigate climate change”. I would like to thank member Philippe Gilchrist for connecting us with Tess and André.
- The Winter Feast is usually an anticipated highlight of the year, and the 2019 event proved to be exactly that. The guest speaker was alumnus and Federal MP for Wentworth Dave Sharma MP who spoke on “Australia - Our Place in the World”. There was a full house with over 100 Members and their guests at the Royal Sydney Golf Club. Thank you to Jack Bartel for hosting Dave Sharma that evening.
- The 11th Annual Golf Match vs Oxford took place on Monday 4 November. Thanks to Chris Golis who has organised this every year.
- In November, CamSoc Members were invited by alumnus Dr Robin Fitzsimons to hear Nobel Laureate Sir Gregory Winter, former Master of Trinity College, give a talk at Sydney University
- The Christmas Thinking at Twilight featured Professor Michelle Baddeley on 'Copycats & Contrarians'. It was an entertaining evening with a great turnout.

Thank you to Chris Dawson, our Vice-President and member of the Union Club and The Royal Sydney Golf Club for facilitating access to these marvellous venues.

2020 planned events

The Committee was looking forward to sharing details of the events and speakers we had lined up for 2020, prior to the COVID-19 situation unfolding. While the overseas-based speakers could be postponed for a while, we plan to reinstate the roster of events featuring local speakers once restrictions are lifted and it is felt safe to proceed. So we can look forward to a Thinking at Twilight with Caspar Wright speaking on “The Trouble with Marketing” which was originally scheduled for March, as well as one with Ed Davis on “The ABC in Crisis: Implications for Australian Democracy” which was slated for June.

Let's hope we return to something resembling normality soon, so we can mingle again amongst like-minded alumni and listen to these and other interesting speakers.

Financials

Accounts are available from the Administrator, Suzie Ruse. We had 124 paid up Members in 2019, exactly the same as the previous year. We again finished the 2019 year in reasonable financial shape. At the beginning of the year the cash on hand was \$18,521.88. At the end of the year the cash balance increased to \$23,748.72, largely because we had 43 Members pay for the newly introduced 3 year subscription.

The financial principles of the Society are to break-even on functions (which we usually do) 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. The last increase we had in annual fees was in 2017 from \$40 to \$45. As we usually do, we are going to ask that the Committee have the right to increase fees for 2021 by \$5 to \$50. We hopefully will not need to implement the increase, but the Committee believes it must continue to have the flexibility.

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

I am pleased to say that in 2019 Emily Baxter rejoined the committee, and at this AGM we are proposing Moray Vincent be appointed as Treasurer. Thank you to Moray for offering to take up this role. We are sad to lose Alistair Newmarch, who has served for many years as Treasurer and Alison Ross, who has also decided to step down from the Committee. Alison has twice served as Secretary over the past 15 years or so, and of course is married to past-President Ian Ross. Alison and Ian continue to be active members of the Society which is good news. Our deepest gratitude to Alistair and Alison who have made a tremendous contribution to the Society over many years.

The rest of the Committee comprises Julie-Anne Bosich, Rhiannon Chisholm, Rhys Goodey, Liza Rybak, Gautham Srinivas, Jonathan Negus, Jack Bartel, Eddy Goldsmith and Emily Baxter. 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 2019

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. I hasten to add a caveat to the foregoing – “COVID restrictions allowing”.

We now move to the formal proceedings of the AGM.