

## **THE ANU EMERITUS FACULTY CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

As we began to emerge from the constraints of Covid restrictions, the ANU Emeritus Faculty was able, gradually, to resume activities. We held our monthly lectures, our Projects Symposium, our Annual Dinner and, after a two-year hiatus, our Emeritus Faculty Lecture. We were also able to hold monthly meetings of our Executive Committee and support a variety of other activities. In short, 2022 marked our emergence from Covid-19.

### **Launch of the *Life Celebrations* Volume**

Early in the year, on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, we were able to hold a belated launch of the volume, *Life Celebrations*, that we had prepared for last year's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This gave us an opportunity to remember the lives of some of the notable colleagues whose obituaries are recorded in this volume.

We had three speakers for this well-attended event at the main lecture theatre of the Sir Roland Wilson Building.

Elizabeth Minchin spoke about the lives of key members of the Classics Department: Doug Kelly, Colin Mayrhofer, Beryl Rawson and Dick Johnson. Colin Steele spoke about Ralph Elliott and Charles Ian Donaldson for whom he had contributed obituaries for the volume while Jill Waterhouse spoke about Leslie Melville, ANU's second Vice Chancellor and Donald Anthony Low, ANU's sixth Vice-Chancellor and his wife Isobel ('Belle') Low.

The discussion that followed brought back other memories of ANU's past and served as an ideal launch of our activities for 2022.

### **Lectures**

Craig Reynolds organized an excellent and varied array of lectures for the year, all of which could be held in person in the Molony Room. The list of these lectures is as follows:

2 March: Fyfe Bygrave, "Hillary and the Ascent of Everest."

6 April: Brad Pillans, "The National Rock Garden: Telling Stories about Australia."

4 May: Dorothy Horsfield, "Lies, Damned Lies and Geopolitics: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine."

1 June: James Batley, "What's going on in the Solomon Islands, and why?"

6 July: Steve Dovers, “Barriers to Climate Policy Reform: A 2021 ASSA Policy Analysis, Process and Report.”

5 Oct: Borge Bakken, “Crime and Control in China: The Myth of Harmony.”

2 Nov: Josephine Flood, “An up-date on Bogong moths and moth hunting in the Australian Alps.”

7 Dec: Fyfe Bygrave, “The Nobel and IgNoble Prizes 2022.”

## **Projects Symposium**

The annual Projects Symposium took place in the Molony Room on 13 July with seven speakers. The program was full, varied and interesting, giving rise to lively discussions. Coyote Catering provided an excellent sandwich and wrap lunch.

The topics of the day’s program were the following:

Fyfe Bygrave, “Calcium and its vital role in the beating heart.”

Patrick De Deckker, “Australia was much wetter and warmer than today some 8.2 to 5.5 millennia ago: lessons for future climatic predictions.”

Jenny Goldie, “Making Australian agriculture sustainable.”

Jill Waterhouse, “‘Did you know that you are placed on the same level as crooks and lunatics?’ How and why the residents of the Federal Capital Territory, including the great constitutional authority Sir Robert Garran, lost the right to vote, a situation that has not been fully rectified to this day.”

Larry Saha, “Who is a Populist in Today’s Politics?”

James J. Fox, “Legal and Illegal Indonesian Fishing Research.”

## **East Coast Project**

Brian Lees reports that after Bob Clements gave a review of past work, it was concluded that research on a Portuguese presence in Australia prior to Cook had probably run its course with the best evidence, as yet to be investigated, a ‘lead sinker’ from Fraser Island reportedly held in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Queensland that could be over 500 years old and whose isotope signature is consistent with having been mined in Europe. Brad Pillans is intending to visit Queensland University and Fraser Island where he will take core samples at the site where the lead sinker was found, examine its origin and determine its age.

## **National Rock Garden: A Rock from Gulaga (Mt Dromedary)**

Following Brad Pillans' talk in April and on the recommendation of the East Coast Project, the Emeritus Faculty made a contribution to bring a rock from Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) to represent the Southeast coast in the National Rock Garden.

Subject to permission of the traditional custodians, the Yuin people, a 5-6 tonne rock from Gulaga will be transported and added to the National Rock Garden. It is a rock with a shared European and First Nations history. Gulaga is scientifically important because it is the eroded remnant of a large volcano that was active during the early stages of continental rifting between Australia and what is now New Zealand around 90 million years ago. That rifting, which continued until around 50 million years ago (and then stopped) resulted in the formation of the Tasman Sea. Since that time, the Tasman Sea has effectively become part of the Australian tectonic plate which pushes against the Pacific tectonic plate on a boundary marked by the Alpine Fault in the South Island of New Zealand.

The rock will be cut and given a polished face plus a plaque. The contribution of the Emeritus Faculty will be acknowledged on the plaque and also on the National Rock Garden website.

## **Annual Emeritus Dinner**

Since University House, our usual venue, has remained closed, we again held our Annual Emeritus Dinner in a private dining room at the Commonwealth Club. Our dinner was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September this year and our guest speaker was Prame Chopra, a member of our Executive Committee. In the spirit of our *Life Celebrations* volume, he gave a talk entitled: "Memorable Lives: The life journeys of three remarkable ANU scientists: McDougall, Paterson and Barwick". Ian McDougall, Mervyn Silas Paterson and Richard Essex Barwick were notable colleagues whom Prame knew and with whom he worked. His talk was filled with many personal anecdotes and with a great deal about the accomplishments of these ANU scientists.

## **Open Forum on the 'Eye of the Storm'**

We circulated a copy of Dr Daniel Oakman's *Eye of the Storm: The Australian National University in the twenty-first century* among our members soon after it appeared. This document was part of Dr Oakman's historical documentation for the ANU's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Because of the interest among members, we held an open forum in the Molony Room at 5pm on Wednesday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of September to discuss the document and developments within the University.

To be able to continue our discussions, we have created a link to this document on our website.

## **Continuing Efforts to Document ANU's History**

We have continued to advance our documentation of ANU's history from a personal perspective. We have added new materials including Colin Brown's 'History of the ANU Indonesia Project' and a fascinating account by Geoff Smith of 'Serendipity in science – the Discovery of Calothrixin.' We are also in the process of creating links in our *Personal Histories* website to a set of autobiographical accounts by ANU Southeast Asian specialists recounting their research.

The Executive Committee provided a subvention to support the work on Jill Waterhouse's *The Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of the Australian National University*. This will be a major volume covering all of the ANU's Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors which the Emeritus Faculty is hoping to publish. Jill will present a lecture in the new year on the progress of her project.

## **Annual Emeritus Lecture**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, after a two-year interruption because of Covid, the Emeritus Faculty was able to hold its Annual Lecture. Our speaker was Peter Collignon, a Professor at ANU Medical School who is a distinguished infectious diseases physician and clinical microbiologist at ACT Pathology and Canberra Hospital. Appropriately, his lecture was:

### *Coronavirus (COVID-19)*

*Where were we? Where are we now? What do we need to learn so we do better in the future?*

His lecture was a wide-ranging, well-illustrated and authoritative account of the Covid pandemic and the course of its development both globally and locally. The abstract of his lecture gives some idea of the range of this lecture:

### Abstract

A novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, causes COVID-19. This virus spreads readily from person to person but almost entirely via infectious particles that deposit in the upper respiratory tract. They are inhaled or reach the respiratory tract via people's eyes. Larger particles (often called droplets) are the main way of spread – but not the only way.

Different interventions can be and have been used to decrease the risk and spread of COVID-19. Most of the principles underpinning these interventions relate to physical barriers, isolation plus physical and social distancing. The risk of transmission is markedly reduced when outdoors. Improved ventilation and access to outside air will be of ongoing importance.

Safe and very effective vaccines have become widely available and have been delivered extensively and successfully globally, especially to richer countries, less so to lower and middle-income countries. Effective antiviral therapies are now used in clinical practice.

Lockdowns, border closures and restrictions slowed the spread of the virus, but have also caused many adverse, unintended consequences. Disproportionality affected were the socially disadvantaged, especially children. Young adults and children have had the worst socio-economic consequences but perversely were at the lowest from the virus itself. What needs to be put in place now and in the future should be proportionate to levels of risk

Overall, we are in a much better position than in 2021. Vaccines, new antivirals, decreases in viral virulence and hybrid immunity has already put us in a much better position. We are likely to be in an even better position by early 2023.

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Professor Collignon's lecture was filmed and is available for viewing. A link to his lecture is available on the ANU Emeritus Faculty website under 'Events'. Unfortunately, the lecture was filmed without its introduction and without the pertinent questions and discussions that followed his talk.

### **Liaison and Mentoring Program with Wamburun Hall**

The Emeritus Faculty has established an academic mentoring program with Wamburun Hall, the ANU's newest residence. This program was initiated following discussions with Dr Tania M. Colwell, an Academic Fellow, Residences, Student & University Experience Portfolio and then carried forward by Clara Ho and Jasmine Delaney, the student leaders of academic programs at Wamburun Hall. Several of our members – Dorothy Horsfield, Elizabeth Truswell, Ian Keen and John Giacon – have taken part in Academic Panels at Wamburun and we are looking forward to a continuing relationship in the new year.

### ***Emeritus***

This year Peter Fuller has taken over the position of editor of *Emeritus* and has done a stunning job in producing an attractive and informative monthly newsletter. Assisted by Kevin Windle, Peter has kept us all informed of matters relevant to the Emeritus Faculty in a timely fashion. All of the ANU obituaries prepared by the Emeritus Faculty are published, as a formal record, in *Emeritus*.

### **Obituaries**

The following seventeen obituaries of ANU members were published by *Emeritus* during the year:

Peter Bailey

Brij Lal

Nigel Lendon

Leanne Armand (née Dansie)

Ian Mathews

Henry Nix

Geoff Hope  
Mike Gore  
Brendan Sargeant  
Harold Brookfield  
Robert (Bob) Crompton  
Geoffrey Brennan  
Peter Hill  
F.E.M.(Ted) Lilley  
James Jupp  
Richard Campbell  
Allan Hawke

Sadly, there are another fourteen obituaries currently in preparation.

### **New Members for 2022**

Our membership for 2022 is 283, 46 of whom are now aged over 85. Although we suffer the loss of some of our members each year, we continue to be joined by new members. Our new members for 2022 are:

Christine Allard  
Hans Bachor  
Aedeen Cremin  
Robert Cribb  
Stephen Dovers  
Gregory Fealy  
Anthony Foley  
Douglas Gray  
David Hawking  
Raghbendra Jha  
Pankaj Mohan  
Ramesh Sankaranarayana  
Gabriele Schmidt  
Russell Darroch

### **Special Thanks**

As Chair of the Emeritus Faculty, I want to thank all the members of our Executive Committee who have worked diligently through this year with me. My thanks go to: Robert Burne, Prame Chopra, Patrick De Deckker, Dorothy Horsfield, Ian Keen, Brian Lees, Jan O'Connor, Craig Reynolds, Larry Saha, Peter Scardoni and Ailsa Solley and to Verna Rosling whom we co-opted to join us on the Executive Committee. Special thanks to Dorothy Horsfield who left the Committee in mid-year and Craig Reynolds who will be leaving the Committee at the end of this year. I also want to thank Nicholas Fominas and Brian Harrold for their invaluable assistance with our computer systems, website maintenance and other internet activities

without which it would be impossible to reach our membership. We all acknowledge our debt to Peter Fuller for his efforts in putting together our monthly *Emeritus* and to Kevin Windle for his assistance in this important undertaking. In conclusion, my thanks to all of our members with best wishes for the coming year.

James J. Fox  
Chair, ANU Emeritus Faculty  
30 November 2022