

The Royal Society of Queensland
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31 October 2021

Members' Newsletter 2021 No. 13

Plenty of opportunities again this month for involvement. Society action statements are highlighted in yellow.

Annual General Meeting - Date Claimer

The AGM of the Society is proposed to be held on **Thursday 9 December in the late afternoon/early evening**. Secretary **James Hansen** has booked the Committee Room at the ground floor of the Brisbane City Library. This is suitable only for face to face meeting and there is a limit on the number of people allowed to attend.

Would those members who would like to attend please let the Secretary know so that the residual number of places can be advised in the next Newsletter.

Please mark this date in your diaries. The AGMs are traditionally friendly affairs with time to share stories and ideas with old friends and new acquaintances alike.

The team assessing the applications for the Research Fund will endeavour to complete their task in time to announce the winner(s) at the AGM.

Would any other member who would like to make a five minute presentation on their field of interest please let James Hansen know as soon as possible, by telephone 3263 2254 or secretary@royalsocietyqld.org. This need not require personal attendance as a slideshow could be loaded into the projector at the event without the presence of the author.

The room has been booked from 3 PM until 6 PM but the formal meeting will not extend over the whole three hours. A further announcement will be made as to the time in the next Newsletter.

Annual General Meeting – Nominations

By the Constitution, all positions on Council are vacated at the AGM. The current Councillors are:

Prof Angela Arthington
Dr Heather Douglas
Dr Geoff Edwards – Vice-President, Communications and Policy

Mr Andy Grodecki
Mr James Hansen – Secretary
Dr Ross Hynes – President
Adj Prof. Trevor Love
Mr Col Lynam – Editor, QSN Newsletter and Coordinator, Research Fund
Dr Joseph McDowall – Treasurer.

Nominations can be made from the floor at the AGM, but it would be helpful to know of proposals to nominate in advance. Would any member willing to serve on Council please let Secretary [James Hansen](#) know as soon as possible.

Members' Online Discussion - Carbon marketing

The next members' online Zoom discussion is scheduled for:

Tuesday 16 November, 4:30 p.m.-6:00 PM AEST.

The topic will be carbon marketing and the Queensland Government's Land Restoration Fund. Further details will follow. In the meantime, please mark this date in your diaries.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://uqz.zoom.us/j/85255743974>
Or iPhone one-tap (Australia Toll): +61280152088, 85255743974#
Or Telephone: +61 2 8015 2088 or 07 3185 3730
Meeting ID: **852 5574 3974**

First articles in 129 now online

The first batch of articles to appear in volume 129 of the annual *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland* have now been posted online: <https://www.royalsocietyqld.org/proceedings-129/>. Congratulations to the authors of the scientific articles, citations and the student abstracts published to date.

Although the act of uploading PDFs is almost costless, and our Honorary Editor is genuinely honorary, publishing the journal is still expensive because of typesetting and other associated costs. Other open access journals have shifted to an “authors' and in page charges” method of funding publication, but the Society has resisted the temptation as it wishes to remain a journal easy for Queensland scientists and students to access.

Annual report

The annual report of Council to the membership is now available. Members are encouraged to read it and perhaps use it to identify an initiative that the Society should take up in 2022.

Members' Online Discussion - Science quality

On 21 October, eight members (including five members of Council and one guest) participated in an interesting discussion about the recent advocacy for an Office of Science Quality Assurance by AgForce and other parties.

There was general support for the position taken publicly by the President that scientists should oppose the establishment of some bureaucratic entity that would pass judgement on scientific publications. It was suggested that the Society should join forces with the Queensland Chief Scientist to make representations to the Premier on the matter.

Discussion

In an earlier era, the Queensland Coordinator-General conducted land-use studies that had the effect of aggregating scientific knowledge and converting it to policy recommendations. That role has now been lost as the current Office of State Development is focused on project facilitation. Land-use planning has lost capacity since the abolition of the regional planning unit of the Department of Local Government Planning in 2012.

Science and indeed society generally needs mavericks. Even where contrary to the overwhelming opinion of other scientists we should defend the principle of academic freedom, for outlier expert opinions to be expressed.

Our public institutions have lost the generalists who could build bridges between disciplines, science, policy and practice.

The rundown of agricultural extension has also severely affected our capacity to translate science into practice and importantly, agriculture extension officers were eyes and ears of government and were able to feed information from rural communities into the central corridors.

In the early 2000s government seconded experienced officers to work with AgForce so that they could respond more adequately to government policy initiatives. It was said that AgForce needs a "thinker in residence".

Slow growing risks such as land disturbance at first thought to be due to recent sudden error, instead are years in the making, socially constructed through actions by groups of people unaware of worsening conditions progressively. This type of insight cannot be gained by the physical sciences alone and requires social science – to see the connections and interpret the relationships not only within organisations but between them and governments

Supporters of the Office of Science Quality Assurance make much of shortcomings in the conduct of scientific research, such as the lack of replication to confirm previous findings and the dependence of researchers upon grants which require them to tailor their applications and therefore their research into lines of enquiry likely to be viewed favourably by funding agencies. However, these ills can be traced to a shortfall of funds available for scientific research, onerous application

procedures to secure funds and perverse incentives built into the career structures of academics. The solutions to these ills lie in policy change.

The President summed up by observing that the real shortfall is not quality assurance of science, but quality assurance of policy and the effectiveness with which it is built into decisions; and they themselves then need quality assurance. It's the downstream end of science that needs validation.

Financial contacts

Regrettably Council has been singularly unsuccessful during the past year in identifying a commercial sponsor or philanthropic partner to enable the Society to build on its knowledge capacities to advance scientific knowledge and literacy. As a matter of priority, Council would like to identify members who have personal contacts in commerce, philanthropy or government who have influence over potential grant funds. The Council does not come empty-handed to negotiations with potential partners and sponsors. As a publisher of record and convenor of the Queensland Science Network, we have publishing, advocacy and knowledge coordination skills that can be harnessed into a joint venture.

Please contact Treasurer **Dr Joseph McDowall**, **Dr Peter Dart** or Secretary **James Hansen**.

Survey of members

Council at its meeting on 21 October resolved to survey the membership to gain a clearer understanding of such issues as:

- their expectations of membership;
- services they feel the Society should supply;
- whether there are any unfinished or potential manuscripts lying in drawers that could be brought into publication;
- willingness to act as a peer reviewer of other manuscripts in specified fields;
- preferred format for meetings;
- preference for online or face-to-face meetings;
- availability to volunteer for roles;
- willingness to contribute financially beyond membership fees;
- any other issue that members would like to raise.

We aim to distribute a survey instrument shortly via a special Newsletter. When it arrives, please open it and complete it. **Would any member like to volunteer to assist by following up with telephone calls?**

Roles going begging

The Vice-President, Communications and Policy **Dr Geoff Edwards** has been fulfilling the following roles and , if re-elected at the AGM, would like to phase out of them to release his time for other activities such as writing opinion pieces

and policy analysis, notably in preventative health. He is particularly keen to activate the dormant Queensland Policy Network, www.policyqld.org.au.

- Society Newsletter Editor – amalgamating and formatting notices and snippets from various sources about once a month;
- assembling snippets to be uploaded to the Society’s website;
- assembling snippets and event notices to be uploaded to the website of the Queensland Science Network;
- copyediting miscellaneous reports and articles (other than those destined for the annual *Proceedings*), on behalf of authors.

Information technology skills are not required for any of these roles, simply ability to manipulate text and photos in Word. Please contact [Geoff](#) if you’d like to discuss.

World Science Festival 2022

Advice has been received from Queensland Museum that the World Science Festival next year will include a City of Science component. The Society intends to apply to be one of the “activity providers” as we did a couple of years ago in a highly successful stall run under the banner of the Queensland Science Network by our Membership Coordinator **Tony Van Der Ark**.

Tony is willing to be involved this year, but does not wish to coordinate the activity. Would a member like to volunteer to pull the threads together of a Society/QSN presence at this thoroughly worthy event? Please contact the Secretary, **James Hansen** at secretary@royalsocietyqld.org.au.

Employment opportunities – marine science

Given the Society’s recent defence of the scientific consensus on the Great Barrier Reef, as outlined in the exchange with AgForce mentioned previously, our attention was drawn to an advertisement for a Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program Risk Management Coordinator from the Australian Institute of Marine Science - <https://www.seek.com.au/job/54610530> . Thanks to member **Dr Donnell Davis** for drawing this to our attention.

Education project

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority has publicised our Queensland Science Network educational resources in its “Learning Area News” page: <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/sciences/news>

Queensland Science Network resources

26 October 2021

Hosted by The Royal Society of Queensland, the Queensland Science Network (QSN) has created a collection of educational resources for students of Sciences subjects.

Many of these resources have been selected by QSN due to their relevance to the 2019 Sciences syllabuses. Visit the Queensland Science Network [website](#) to access the resources.

Final call for Sciences external assessment markers

Events by others

Fearsome, flying and forgotten - Australia's prehistoric pterosaurs

Pterosaurs were a successful and diverse group of reptiles – the very first back-boned animals to take a stab at powered flight. In 2011, a fossil was uncovered on Wanamara Country, near Richmond in north-west Queensland, and was revealed to be Australia's largest flying reptile – a pterosaur with an estimated seven-metre wingspan.

More recently, University of Queensland PhD candidate **Tim Richards**, from UQ's Dinosaur Lab in the School of Biological Sciences, led a research team that analysed a fossil of the creature's jaw. With its spear-like mouth and enormous wingspan, *Thapunngaka shawi* soared like a fearsome dragon above the ancient, vast inland sea once covering much of outback Queensland, and would have been the stuff of nightmares for unsuspecting dinosaurs below.

This month at BrisScience, hear how this discovery unveiled a new species and join Tim for a night of pterosaur tales.

Date:	Monday 8 November 2021
Time:	6.30-7.30pm (Doors open at 6pm)
Location:	The Edge , State Library of Queensland, Stanley Place, South Bank
Contact:	science.events@uq.edu.au

In compliance with the State Library of Queensland's COVID-19 event requirements, allocated seating will be required on all bookings. A small ticket fee of \$2.50 has been introduced to ensure your seat is secured.

Watch online

For those unable to join in person, a livestream option will be available. To watch the livestream, simply visit the [BrisScience website](#) at the time of the event and enter your details.

Tim Richards joined The University of Queensland's [Dinosaur Lab](#) in 2017. His PhD focusses on pterosaurs from western Queensland, Australia. The project, under the supervision of Dr Steve Salisbury, integrates taxonomy and comparative morphology analyses with the aim of deciphering the affinities of currently undescribed material and its implications for the evolution of Australian pterosaurs.

To find out more about our speaker, visit the [BrisScience website](#).

Ecocide Laws Australia

Free Webinar - Wednesday 24 November
@ 2pm-3.30pm AEST/Brisbane time

Join us for an important update from 'Ecocide Laws Australia', about the potential of creating ecocide laws in Australia.

About ecocide

Around the world, lawyers and environmentalists are advocating for the law of ecocide to be recognised in international law. In Australia, a group of lawyers, academic researchers and law students have created 'Ecocide Laws Australia', a working group auspiced by the Australian Earth Laws Alliance (AELA), which is exploring how ecocide laws might be drafted and implemented in Australia.

Featuring Dr Gwynn MacCarrick (UTAS), Dr Michelle Maloney (AELA), Professor Danielle Celermajer (USYD), Professor Anthony Burke (UNSW) and Professor Rob White, this webinar will provide an update about the key issues currently being addressed by the working group.

The group will also share insights into what a 'draft law' for ecocide could look like for a State jurisdiction in Australia.

<https://events.humanitix.com/ecocide-laws-australia>

Dryland salinity after the millennium drought

Online panel presentation



Dryland salinity was the greatest environmental problem confronting Australia twenty years ago. During the millennium drought, some of the rising water tables ceased to rise, and some began to fall. Dryland salinity no longer has the public profile that it did twenty years ago. But has dryland salinity ceased to be an important environmental issue? Have the water tables begun to rise once more? What is the prognosis for dryland salinity over the next 20 years? We have assembled a panel of leading salinity experts to discuss these issues. They will present updates on dryland salinity across Australia and discuss the status of the problem and prognosis for the future. This event will replace the Annual NCGRT/IAH Distinguished Lecture Series.

Date: Wednesday 3rd November 2021

Time: 12:30 - 1:00pm AWST, 3:00 - 4:00pm ACDT, 3:30 - 4:30pm AEDT

Speakers: Steve Barnett, SA; Richard George, WA; Allan Nicholson, NSW; Phil Dyson, Vic.

Sustainability Congress, South Africa

The Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress 2022 (SRI2022) will take place from June 20-24, 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa and online.

Hosted by the Future Africa Institute at the University of Pretoria, SRI2022 will build on the success of the first SRI Congress which took place in June this year and featured 700 speakers (including from our own Society as explained in a previous Newsletter) and 2,000 participants from 100 countries.

South Africa offers to provide an inspiring environment for this second edition of the SRI Congress.

<https://sri2022.org/>

Queensland Talks: Ignite Your Curiosity

0415 429723 | queenslandtalks@gmail.com
www.queenslandtalks.com | [@queenslandtalks](https://www.instagram.com/queenslandtalks)

Queensland Talks is establishing a calendar of knowledge-focused events. The Coordinator has invited the organisers of public knowledge-focused events to add queenslandtalks@gmail.com to their mailing lists, and to send links to info about events - preferably but not necessarily real, in-person ones open to the public. Queensland Talks won't guarantee publication and is working out the inclusion/exclusion criteria a bit as it goes.

The Coordinator, **Murray Hancock**, has suggested some phrases to use when advertising.:

- A free community service to help organisers of talks and discussion events increase attendance. These give some clue as to the scope of the initiative:
- The thinking person's local scene, a calendar of better ideas-based talks and discussions: mostly real, live, in-person events in SEQ
- Queensland Talks makes it easy for thinking people to find good talks to go to and helps event organisers build their audience.

UQ ChangeMakers: The future of farming

As we grapple with the twin challenges of a growing global population and a changing climate, we know farming will need to change. We need to produce more with less: less water, less energy, less land, and fewer emissions. We also need to find ways to build resilience against extreme weather events caused by climate change.

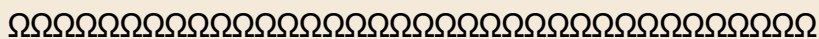
Join our ChangeMakers panel to hear from UQ alumni and experts on the challenges we're facing now and solutions as we look to the future. How do we achieve a carbon-neutral livestock sector? Could we transform crop protection with mRNA vaccines for plants? And how can we harness research and innovative technology to improve global food security?

Date: Thursday 11 November 2021

Time: 6 – 7.15pm Brisbane (AEST)

Online: Free (Webinar link will be provided upon registration)

[Register](#)



Best wishes to all members.

Ross Hynes

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