



# The Cambridge Society of NSW

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## President's Report to the 2014 Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2015

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The Cambridge Society of New South Wales is a social association of Cambridge University alumni in New South Wales. It achieves its aims through 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.

2014 continued this tradition. The major events of the year were as follows:

- The first Thinking at Twilight Seminar was held on Thursday 6 March 2014. Alumni gathered at the Union, Universities & Schools Club to hear Dr. Tony White, author of *Starlight*, speak about his experiences as a frontline doctor in Vietnam. STARLIGHT was the radio call sign for army doctors and medics.
- The second Thinking at Twilight Seminar was held on Thursday 10 April 2014. The speaker was Dr Robin Hesketh, Professor of Biochemistry at Cambridge and a Fellow of Selwyn College and author of three books. Dr Hesketh's talk was "*Demystifying Cancer*" and he provided an excellent introduction to this topic which touches us all. The audience first learnt that cancer is essentially cells behaving badly and by the end of the talk Dr Hesketh was explaining current ground breaking research occurring at Cambridge. Current expectations are that 1 in 3 females and 1 in 2 males will have some form of cancer in their lifetime.
- The AGM was held on Thursday 22 May 2014 in the Union, University and Schools Club Library followed by another Thinking at Twilight Talk given by Professor Alison Bashford, Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History speaking on *Bennelong and Malthus: The Unlikely Histories of Sydney and Cambridge*. Her talk opened with perhaps the best opening ever given at the UUSC by any speaker. She slowly turned to a bookshelf on her right pulled out what turned out to be a book she had written, signed it and then thanked the Club for buying it!! Alison's enthusiasm was infectious and the talk was fascinating.
- The Annual Winterfeast was again held at the Royal Sydney Golf Club on Thursday 31 July 2014. The Guest speaker was Cambridge alumnus LTGEN Angus Campbell who at the time was the head of Operation Sovereign Borders and which was brilliantly successful in totally stopping the boats arriving in Australia. The prior year under the Labor Government saw the coming of over 20,000 people and 300 boats. Currently Australia processes 200,000 immigrants a year and the General estimated there are around 5 million wanting to get to Australia. His best answer was to whether Afghanistan was a failure (he was in charge of the Australian army for its last 3 years). He said the Allies had built 7,000 km of paved road since the Taliban were ousted and currently there are 8 million kids in school of which 3 million are girls. However it is now up to the Afgans to decide what they want to happen to their country. General Angus Campbell has since been promoted to Chief of the Army.
- On the sporting front Oxford were able to field a team of four players for the sixth Annual Golf match at the Manly Golf Club on Monday 20 October. The match was drawn 2-2.
- The annual Cricket Match against Oxford was held on Sunday 30 November and again Cambridge was triumphant, this year winning by 26 runs.

- The Annual Christmas Drinks were again hosted by Chris Dawson at the Union, University and Schools Club on Wednesday 10 December 2012. In conjunction the Society hosted its fourth Thinking at Twilight Seminar. The speaker was Tim Beresford, Executive Director – Tourism, Investment, Education and Programmes Group for Austrade, and formerly the First Assistant Secretary Social Policy Division in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Tim gave a very enlightening talk on how Australia’s political masters operated and contrasted the differences between working at the highest levels in the private and public sectors.

## **Future Events**

This year has already seen two Thinking at Twilight events. The first was held on Thursday 26 February when Committee Member Chandra Senaratne spoke on *Reincarnation: Fact or Fiction?* The topic provoked considerable debate in the Q&A session.

The second was held on Thursday 26 March. The speaker was Professor David Yates, Warden of Robinson College and former global Chief Operating Officer (Managing Partner) of Baker & McKenzie. David’s topic was *What do clients want from their lawyers?* One unexpected message was that if a dispute goes to court, your lawyer has failed you and you should appoint a replacement.

Our major event of the year, the Annual Winterfeast is again being held at the Royal Sydney Golf Club on Wednesday, 2 September 2015. In keeping with the zeitgeist of reducing gender inequality we are fortunate to have as our speaker, Federal High Court Judge, Dr Melissa Perry QC. In 1988 she completed a Master of Laws and in 1995, was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy, both at the University of Cambridge, where she won the Yorke Prize for her doctorate in public international law. Dr Perry has been a frequent attendee of the Winter Feast and we welcome the opportunity to hear her speak. Her topic is not yet resolved but one suggestion is *"Is the glass ceiling tougher in the legal profession?"* The dress code will be Lounge Suit. The cost which includes dinner and drinks is \$130 for members and \$170 for guests.

The Annual Golf match versus Oxford is planned for Monday 9 November at Manly GC and the Annual Cricket Match is being planned for Sunday 29 November. Anyone wishing to attend or play should go to the website for details.

Finally Wednesday 2 December we will be having our annual Christmas Drinks at the Union, University and Schools Club with our final Thinking at Twilight. The guest speaker will be Professor John Snowdon (Clare) who will be speaking on *Too Much Mess” – with Christmas coming up are you a hoarder or do you purge your clutter?*

## **Financials**

Accounts are available from the Administrator, Suzie Ruse. Paid up membership numbers in 2014 reached 153 members. We again finished the 2014 year in reasonable financial shape. At the beginning of the year the cash on hand was \$20,747.63. At the end of the year the cash balance was \$21,076.15 an increase of \$328.52 which on the pink tin method of accounting is again good news.

The financial principles of the Society are to break-even on functions and cover the fixed costs by membership fees. For the last six years we have asked members to give the Committee the right to increase the annual fees \$5 to \$45. And each year the Committee has decided to keep the membership at \$40. Again we are going ask that in 2015 that the Committee have the right to increase fees for 2016 by \$5 to \$45. The Committee is not saying it will increase fees but it believes it must continue to have the flexibility.

On the administrative front, Suzie Ruse, continues to bring great energy and vigour to 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. Members should note that we are now annually indexing Suzie’s stipend for inflation.

### **Committee**

Alairstair Newmarch has agreed to continue as Treasurer and Jonathan Negus to continue 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 Amrit Bahra, Julie-Anne Bosich, Emma Brown, Rhiannon Chisholm, Rhys Goodey, Alison Ross, Dr Liza Rybak, and Chandra Senaratne. They have all indicated they wish to continue as Committee members. And may I take this opportunity to thank all the Committee members and office bearers for their efforts during 2014.

We will be electing Office Bearers and Committee members shortly. 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 in Mosman at my house and my somewhat depleted wine cellar.

At the end of this AGM Emma Brown will be introducing our tonight's Thinking at Twilight Speaker, Alumnus Simon Blackburn, head of Digital Practice at McKinsey, who will be speaking on *How the digital revolution is reshaping business and how Australian companies should respond*.