



Probus Club of Sydney

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Newsletter

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APRIL 2024

Issue 463

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APRIL 2

SOPHIE FARTHING

AI – Government Policy

MAY 7

MATT LANDOS

Of Fish and Men – Unintended consequences of pollution

ACTIVITIES

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gentlemen,

Thank you for electing me to serve as your President for the coming year. I look forward to continuing the superb work of John Carter in 2023 and previous presidents.

I would also like to pay tribute to those retiring from the committee after five years great contribution, namely Neil Martin (who served as 2022 President and previously as Speakers Coordinator) and David Brand (who entertained us so well as Activities Organiser)

Most of the committee have been re-elected to continue their excellent work done last year, providing experience and continuity. John Doherty is your new Vice President, bringing his wide experience and geniality to the role which includes welfare of our members, so he will welcome being informed about any member who is facing severe health challenges or other issues. We thank John for arranging such fascinating speakers last year. It is also a delight to welcome to the committee Geoff McWilliam to the important role of Speakers Coordinator. Geoff has already enthusiastically arranged speakers for many months ahead, to inform us on a wide range of interesting and stimulating topics.

We look forward to your participation in the meetings and events. Feel free to contact me or any committee member with any ideas to help us enhance even more the enjoyment of our club.

Best wishes,

Peter James

President

Note

To Register to attend the April meeting at the Union, University and Schools Club - [click here](#)

APRIL 2

Sophie Farthing

Head of Policy Lab, Human Technology Institute, UTS

AI – Government Policy



Prior to joining the Human Technology Lab at UTS Sophie was the Senior Policy Adviser to the Australian Human Rights Commissioner, leading the Human Rights and Technology Project at the Australian Human Rights Commission from 2017 to 2021.

Sophie has worked in legal policy roles at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in Sydney, at Liberty (National Council for Civil Liberties) in the United Kingdom and was appointed the Research Assistant to Baroness Hale of Richmond in the United Kingdom Supreme Court.

She has a Masters of Human Rights Law from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and bachelor's degrees in social work (Hons) and Law from the University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Artificial Intelligence is permeating Australian society. From social media algorithms to digital identities relying on facial verification technology, we are interacting with these technologies in increasingly personal ways. Both government and businesses face the challenge of using and governing AI in a way that minimises risk, while ensuring Australians reap the benefits of the innovation promise of AI technologies.

In 2024, the Australian government will join their counterparts the world over in considering how to approach the thorny problem of regulating AI. On the horizon is reform to Australia's privacy laws, oversight of automation used by government, voluntary standards for businesses, and hard-edged legal obligations to safeguard Australians from harm.

In this presentation, Sophie will define the salient issues and consider how governments are grappling with one of the most complex policy challenges of our time.

Geoff McWilliam

MARCH MEETING REPORT

The meeting was opened by President John Carter. He welcomed two guests, one of whom had just been approved as a club member at the foregoing committee meeting!

John Doherty reported on the speaker's programme for the next few months and announced that Geoff McWilliam will be running the programme from now on. Ted Brogan talked about the successful harbour cruise which was well attended. The next tour will be a visit to the Great Synagogue in Elizabeth Street on Elizabeth Street.(which is now booked out). On April 22 there will be a walking tour of the Royal Botanic Gardens. He advised that he is going to be assisted by Sean Wareing and Rod Hansen over the next year. For members' diaries the Christmas lunch will be held at the Royal Sydney Golf Club and the Winter lunch will be held on 23 July at the Killara Golf Club.

Inductions



Inductions (L-R): Chris Luget, Peter White, Gavin Barr, David Brand, President John Carter

Peter White

Peter White was introduced by Chris Luget before being inducted by President John. Peter is a 'multi-faceted' educationalist. He holds a BA in mathematics and economics from the University of New England and an MA in pure mathematics from UNSW and undertook subsequent studies at the University of Louvain in Belgium. He was the Principal of Gilroy College at Castle Hill, a secondary college with approximately 1400 students, from 1986 to 1999. He was also an Educational Area Administrator based in Parramatta with responsibilities for development and supervision of 12 secondary schools and senior colleges in North West Sydney.

His hobbies include music, walking, the Arts, community and racing. He is a widower with two children and four grandchildren. As a special note, he engaged in a one on one discussion about Catholic Education with Pope John Paul II in Rome!

Gavin Barr

David Brand introduced Gavin Barr. Gavin was born in Sydney in 1951. He attended Sydney Boys High and studied medicine at UNSW, graduating 1976. He gained his FRACP in gastroenterology in 1982 followed by two years of postgraduate work at the Radford Infirmary in Oxford. Returning to Sydney in 1984 he set up practice in Macquarie Street. He was a visiting medical officer at several major Sydney hospitals including the Mater and the Royal North Shore. He retired from practice in 2023.

Gavin is married to Margie and has three children with his first grandchild expected very soon. His hobbies include golf (with a low handicap!) cycling and travel.

42nd Annual General Meeting

President John then opened the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Club. Since members will receive a complete set of minutes of the meeting this report only briefly describes the event. He proposed that the minutes of the previous AGM be accepted (seconded by Peter James) and this was carried unanimously.

As the outgoing President, John reported on his year and outlined the notable achievements, most significantly the 100th birthday celebration for Jack Blackman! He thanked all of the outgoing committee members, especially Neil Martin and David Brand who were retiring from the committee.

Wayne Jones presented the Treasurer's report. He noted that the club is in a healthy financial position. He moved that the financial report be adopted and this was carried unanimously. He recommended a small increase in annual subscriptions to cover increased costs and this was accepted by the members.

The President announced that there were sufficient nominations for the Board and that an election was not required. The new management committee therefore consists of:

President	Peter James
Vice President	John Doherty
Immediate Past Pres	John Carter
Treasurer	Wayne Jones
Secretary	Chris Luget
Speakers	Geoff McWilliam
Activities	Ted Brogan
Systems Admin:	Tony Andrew
IT Systems	Bill Cheshire
Membership	Hugh Hopkins
Club Services	Rob Warburton
Newsletter	Adrian Pilton



The Incoming Committee



Outgoing President John then presented incoming President Peter James with the chain of Office. President Peter thanked the members for the honour and paid tribute to John Carter for an outstanding year.

GUEST SPEAKER

Ian Chesterman AM

President, Australian Olympic Committee

From Sydney to Paris to Brisbane and Beyond

Knowing his hectic schedule that has seen him spend 239 days travelling away from his home in Tasmania in the past year, we were honoured that Ian Chesterman was able to make time to inform us about the Australian and international Olympic scene, less than 5 months before the Paris Olympics.

He reflected on the great atmosphere of Sydney 2000 and the special initiatives that helped make it so successful, including wide use of volunteers that has been a feature at games since.



As Chef de Mission for our team in Tokyo, he paid tribute to the Japanese government and people for holding the games, which had to be postponed at huge cost, with Covid requiring mostly empty stands, depriving locals, international visitors and athletes of much of the wonderful colourful multinational atmosphere enjoyed normally at Olympic events and in the host city.

Earlier he had been Chef de Mission for Australia at 6 Winter Olympics and other roles, giving him considerable experience in the

complex organisation and issues involved with the Olympic movement, to ready him for his role as President of the AOC. He is driven by the Olympics being a celebration of the cream of young (and not so young) athletes from around the world pursuing their dream to be the best that they can be. The Olympic movement provides a structure to give opportunities for the young to pursue excellence, to make a better country, and make a better world, helping break down the barriers that divide countries and peoples. Athletes from 206 nations will compete in Paris, a truly global event, providing an example of how different cultures can live and compete side by side. So the IOC will permit athletes from Russia to compete in white tee-shirts under the IOC flag, but not the Russian flag, following that nation's sanction after drug sample cheating in Sochi.

Athletes, coaches, fans, and administrators are keenly looking forward to Paris, which will surely be a great venue. He anticipates our swimmers will perform very well, but also looks to success in a wide range of sports, helping springboard for when Brisbane is host in 2032.

New sports are added at the option of the host city. The IOC is trying to increase relevance to younger audience (eg surfing, skateboard, rock climbing in Tokyo), but reduce the overall number and hence the cost of running the games, so pressure is on some traditional sports to be dropped. Los Angeles 2028 has added Lacrosse, squash, flag football, cricket.

Brisbane 2032 rapidly approaches, with a new model of a "regional games", with 3 separate villages, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast. This model is now encouraged by the IOC as a means of reducing the cost to a host. Brisbane has contracted for 10,500 athletes, less than will be at Los Angeles, so some sports incl team sports will be cut.

Special issues also apply to the Winter Olympics, with sustainability and global warming exacerbating the pressures and costs. It seems possible that future hosts may be only a few rotating venues with reliable snow, rather than striving for new hosts, noting the world does not really need new ultra-costly facilities for ski jump and bobsleigh.

The AOC is independent of taxpayer grants, thanks to the nest egg arising from hosting the 2000 games. However, Ian spends a lot of time urging governments to invest in facilities that will encourage training and performance, and consequential success in future Olympics.

In his vote of thanks on behalf of members, Neil Martin especially gave credit for Ian's achievement since his appointment in having the Olympics off the sensationalist front pages and instead on the sporting back pages, as well as his great contribution to having Brisbane selected for 2032.

Peter James

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Future Activities

Monday 22 April An Insider's Tour of the Botanical Gardens

We have arranged a guided tour of the Royal Botanical Gardens. The tour will commence 11am at the Conservatorium Gates at the corner of Macquarie and Bridge Streets where we will meet our Guide for a one and a half hour walking tour of the Gardens.

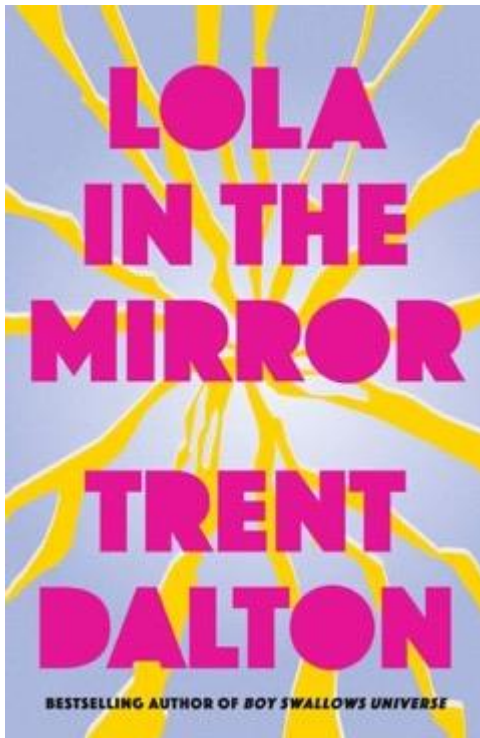
This will include a visit to plants and displays of seasonal interest, provide an overview of the Garden's unique history, feature plants the Garden's scientists are working on to better understand and conserve, and introduce some of the animals and insects that make the Gardens their home in the midst of a major City.

Lunch for those who wish to stay on after the tour will be available (at Members own expense) at the Farm Cove Eatery in the grounds of the Gardens, where the tour will finish. Appropriate footwear and clothing should be worn as some walking will be involved. Parking is normally available at commercial parking stations in Macquarie St. and strictly monitored timed parking in Mrs Macquarie's Rd. Public transport is recommended.

Cost is \$28.00 per person.

Ted Brogan

Lola In the Mirror by Trent Dalton (490 pages) – 2023– Fiction



For those who loved reading or seeing "Boy Swallows Universe", this is the book for you. From memory, a similar mixture of Brisbane, magic, violence, drugs and low life. To which Trent has added homelessness, flood and art. But the critics are divided and you may not like the mixture and the less than subtle dichotomy between goodies and baddies. I "swallowed" it, with reservations.

It is hard to put down, despite its length. Very creative, it would be ideal to take on a long flight – although you might find it hard to stop reading and thinking about when you reach your destination.

So it is more than an airport thriller, but less than a literary masterpiece. Well worth a try for anyone who enjoyed the earlier work.

David Castle

A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

The Pirate

A pirate walked into a bar and the bartender says : "I haven't seen you in a while. What happened? You look terrible."

"What do you mean?" says the Pirate, "I feel fine."

Bartender: "What about the wooden leg? You didn't have that before."

Pirate: "Well I was in a battle and I got hit by a canon ball. I'm fine now."

Bartender: "Well OK. But what about that hook. What happened to your hand?"

Pirate: "That was another battle. I boarded a ship and got into a sword fight. My hand was cut off. I got fitted with a hook. I'm fine, really..."

Bartender: "What about the eye patch?"

Pirate: "Oh, one day we were at sea and a flock of birds flew over. I looked up and one of them shit in my eye."

Bartender: "You're kidding. You lost an eye from bird shit?"

Pirate: "It was my first day with the hook."

Thoughts about getting older (From Frank Barr-David)

"To get back to my youth I would do anything in the world, except exercise, get up early, or be respectable." *Oscar Wilde*

"The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for." *Will Rogers*

"We must recognize that, as we grow older, we become like old cars – more and more repairs and replacements are necessary." *C.S. Lewis*

"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you are aboard there is nothing you can do about it." *Golda Meir*

"I'm so old that my blood type is discontinued." *Bill Dane*

"I don't plan to grow old gracefully. I plan to have face-lifts until my ears meet." *Rita Rudner*

"I'm at that age where my back goes out more than I do." *Phyllis Diller*

"Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up" *John Wagner*

"First you forget names, then you forget faces, then you forget to pull your zipper up, then you forget to pull your zipper down." *Leo Rosenberg*

"Old people shouldn't eat health foods. They need all the preservatives they can get." *Robert Orben*

"At age 20, we worry about what others think of us... at age 40, we don't care what they think of us... at age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all."

"As you get older three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two." *Sir Norman Wisdom*

"I was thinking about how people seem to read the bible a lot more as they get older, and then it dawned on me—they're cramming for their final exam." *George Carlin*

"By the time you're 80 years old you've learned everything. Then, you only have to remember it." *George Burns*

"You know you are getting old when everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt doesn't work." *Hy Gardner*

Creative Ponderosities (*From Wayne Jones*)

- Why do peanuts float in a regular coke and sink in a diet coke? Go ahead and try it.
- I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.
- How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?
- Why do you have to "put your two cents in" ... but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going?
- What disease did cured ham actually have?
- How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up like every two hours?
- If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?
- Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?
- Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
- Why is "bra" singular and "panties" plural?
- Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?
- If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of a coconut, why can't he fix a hole in a boat?
- If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?
- Why do the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?
- Why did you just try singing the two songs above?
- HOW DID THE MAN WHO MADE THE FIRST CLOCK KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS?

HOW TO CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

To contact any committee member [Click here](#)

Please use email where possible or telephone if you require urgent contact.