

## ANNUAL REPORT



Royal Society of Western Australia

2021 Annual Report

*The Royal Society of Western Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.*

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## **President's Letter**

Dear Members,

I am pleased to present the Royal Society of Western Australia's Annual Report for the financial year 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 including reports of event that occurred before the 2021 AGM.

The Society's activities have continued strongly throughout the year, and many opportunities are ahead.

As reported at the last Annual General Meeting, the Royal Society has received a very generous bequest from the late John Glover. This substantial financial contribution presents a tremendous opportunity to transform our organisation, and the Council has spent much time deliberating on the most appropriate usage of these funds. We look forward to making them available as a proposal to the 2021 Annual General Meeting that will allow the Society to support a range of programs in coming years.

Thank you to all Society members for their contributions and attendance through the 2020-2021 year.

Hans Lambers  
President

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### **About the Royal Society of Western Australia**

As the premier society of scientists in Western Australia, the Royal Society of Western Australia (RSWA) proudly fosters exchange among natural and physical scientists and promotes the natural sciences in all their aspects through publications, meetings, symposia, and special events.

Our peer-reviewed *Journal of the Royal Society of Western Australia* features original scientific research with an emphasis on local science. Broad in scope, it covers the natural and physical sciences, as well as anthropology and archaeology.

We also organise symposia and excursions on topics of current importance or interest, foster science in the community through special events and education, and maintain a publicly available library at the Western Australian Museum.

The Society was established in 1914 and is inspired by the Royal Society of London, the world's oldest scientific academy. The Patron of the Royal Society of Western Australia in 2021 was Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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## **The year in review**

During the financial year 2020-21, the RSWA continued its work in promoting and supporting the advancement of the natural sciences in Western Australia. Highlights during the 2020-21 year — including some which occurred after the end of the financial year, but before our 2021 Annual General Meeting — are detailed below.

## **Annual RSWA Symposium**

Held on Saturday, 15 May 2021 at the Indian Ocean Marine Research Centre (IOMRC) at UWA, this year's annual RSWA symposium explored the temporal and spatial patterns of the Swan Coastal Plain. The common theme was to illustrate the interplay between multiple disciplines in order to understand the background for the highly complex environmental mosaic characterising our unique region.

Speakers and topics included:

- Charmaine Thomas: Deep Geology – Beneath The Swan Coastal Plain
- John Bunting: Pleistocene Geology – The Ins And Outs Of The Swan Coastal Plain
- Malcolm McCulloch: Coral Records Of Global Sea Level High-Stands From The Swan Coastal Plain: Past, Present And Future
- Kari Pitts & Richard Clarke: Differentiation Of The Pleistocene Sands – Lessons From Forensic Soil Analysis
- Stephen D. Hopper, Margaret Byrne, David J. Coates & Siegy Krauss: Diversification And Natural Hybridization In Plants Of The Swan Coastal Plain Botanical Hot-Spot
- Graham Zemunik: Variation In Plant Communities Across The Dune Systems On The Swan Coastal Plain
- Kailah Thorn: Pleistocene Terrestrial Animal Communities And Extinctions
- Gary Kendrick, Renae Hovey & Elizabeth Sinclair: Changing Shelf Communities Over The Pleistocene And Under Current Climate Change
- Julie Trotter: Unveiling The Deep-Sea Environments Of The Perth Canyon
- Joe Dortch, Vanessa Corunna, Alan Hill & Carly Monks: From Scarp To Shore: Pre-European Aboriginal Occupation of The Swan Coastal Plain

The event was organised by Eckart Håkansson and attracted around 100 attendees from a broad range of scientific disciplines. It was a huge success, generating interesting discussion and debate, and providing valuable networking opportunities for attendees.

## **Inaugural John Glover Symposium**

Following a very generous bequest from the late John Glover to the RSWA, the Society's Council resolved during the 2020-21 year to establish an annual two-day symposium in his honour. This was held on Friday, 3 September and Saturday, 4 September 2021 at the University Club at UWA and this inaugural two-day John Glover Symposium explored the topic of the Southwest Biodiversity Hotspot.

Topics included:

- The break-up of Gondwana: formation and erosion of the Darling Scarp
- Plant nutrition: greatest diversity on the poorest soils, but with distinct exceptions
- Threats to biodiversity in the southwest

Organised by Hans Lambers, this truly multidisciplinary event was well attended and led to several new members joining the Society — many of them tertiary students.

The symposium was followed by a field trip to Lesueur National Park and the Jurien Bay chronosequence on Sunday, 5 September 2021.

## **Journal of the RSWA**

With an emphasis on local science, our annual journal publishes research papers, review articles, short notes and letters of relevance to Western Australian scientists (although the research does not always occur in WA). This year's publication was overseen by Editor-in-Chief Arthur Mory and associate editors David Haig, Adam Cross, Eckart Håkansson, Penny Wallace-Bell, and Jen McComb.

Over the 2020-21 financial year, 12 papers, 1 book review, 1 comment and John Glover's obituary were published in volume 103 (the most articles since volume 98 (2015)) and volume 104 saw 11 contributions of which 5 were full papers, 5 were short Research Notes—a category not used since 2012 in volume 95—and an obituary for Alex Bevan (WA Museum). As usual, they can be found on the Journal page of the [RSWA website](#).

On the RSWA website, there is a Guide for authors who are encouraged to submit articles for the Journal dealing with research in all aspects of the natural and physical sciences relevant to Western Australia. To assist with this process, since February 2018 the Society has subscribed to and been using Scholastica, an online journal management system.

## **John Glover Bequest**

As mentioned above, RSWA has received a very generous bequest after the death of John Glover, who was a long-standing member of RSWA, a great contributor to the natural sciences in Western Australia, as well as a friend to many in the Society.

This bequest has provided substantial financial resources to RSWA and will continue to do so on an annual basis – offers a tremendous opportunity to revamp the organisation. Accordingly, Council has spent many meetings on this topic during the year, and will present a proposal to members at the 2021 AGM.

## **Councillors**

Since elections at the last AGM in 2019, members who have served on Council have been:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| •President:                | Prof. Hans Lambers                       |
| •Immediate Past President: | Prof. David Haig                         |
| •Vice President:           | Prof. Kliti Grice                        |
| •General Secretary:        | Prof. Myra Keep / Ms. Penny Wallace-Bell |
| •Membership Secretary:     | Dr. Margaret Smith                       |
| •Treasurer:                | Dr. Peter Baillie                        |
| •Editor-in Chief:          | Dr. Arthur Mory                          |
| •Librarian:                | Ms Bobbie Bruce                          |
| •Councillor:               | Dr. Hugo Bekle                           |
| •Councillor:               | Dr. Giada Bufarale                       |
| •Councillor:               | Mr. Michael Tucak                        |
| •Councillor:               | Dr. Eckart Håkansson                     |
| •Councillor:               | Dr. Justin Parker                        |
| •Councillor:               | Ms. Penny Wallace-Bell                   |
| •Councillor:               | Mr Darren Hamley                         |

In accordance with clause 26 of the Constitution, Councillors will be up for re-election at the 2021 AGM.

## **Acknowledgements**

We thank the Board of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority for allowing the Society to hold meetings on the Kings Park premises under their jurisdiction and for providing support for Society activities. The Society is very thankful to our Librarian Bobbie Bruce and the Western Australian Museum who manage and house the Society's library, for storing a sizeable stock of additional copies of the Journal, for assisting the Museum of Victoria to digitise the Journals, for attending to enquiries, and for occasional mailing of publications when required. We continue to be very appreciative of the voluntary services of Dr Peter Williamson who very capably and promptly manages the Society's website. All members of Council are thanked for their voluntary contributions during the year, with particular thanks to the retiring members.