



The Royal Society of Victoria

Promoting science



PATRON: The Hon Alex Chernov AC QC
Governor of Victoria

PRESIDENT: Dr Bill Birch AM BSc (Hons) PhD

Headlines...

11 June: Q & A Panel discussion titled:

Nuclear Energy: Should it be Included in the Mix?

25 June: First **lunch-time** lecture at the Society with
Lead Scientist Leonie Walsh, titled:

Science in our World

**Phillip Law Postdoctoral Award for the Physical
Sciences 2015 applications close on 30th June 2015.**

**Young Scientist Research Prize applications open 1st
June, close 15th July 2015**

Advance notice...

9 July: Evening lecture with Professor Brian Oldfield
titled:

High Satiety: Why is it So Hard to Lose Weight?

June 2015 Newsletter

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June Meetings

NUCLEAR ENERGY: SHOULD IT BE INCLUDED IN THE MIX?

The first June meeting will be held on **Thursday, 11th June 2015 at 7.00 pm.**



Q&A Panel: Assoc Prof Martin Sevier, Dr Gavin Mudd, Dr Jim Green, Dr Graeme Weber

Chair: Professor Douglas McFarlane

Join the Royal Society of Victoria as we confront the contentious issue of nuclear energy - the science and the politics - with an expert panel and **audience Q & A session.**

Highly contested as a safe, clean alternative to fossil fuels, nuclear power has seen its share of controversy and tragedy over the past half century with severe disasters at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, along with a vigorous anti-nuclear lobby driven by the alarming proliferation of nuclear weapons across the globe. Harmful waste plutonium requires safe storage for up to 100,000 years, while perennial concerns for the weaponisation of nuclear fuels and waste abound. These factors raise serious questions for the long-term safety of nuclear power for many in the global community, particularly in unstable geological, climactic and political zones.

However, advancement in contemporary production technologies, reactor design and new capacities for reprocessing spent fuels leads many proponents to assert nuclear energy as a safe, clean energy option capable of replacing fossil fuel sources. Current standards and technologies for the use of uranium as a fuel, the reusage and storage of waste plutonium, and the relative safety of 3rd generation power plants commend the system for broader adoption to many in research, industry and government sectors. Meanwhile, "blue sky" thinking around the use of alternative fuels such as thorium is presented as a compelling alternative to the uranium cycle, with higher abundance on Earth, superior physical and nuclear fuel properties, reduced nuclear waste output and far lower potential for weaponisation.

Join a panel of experts, theorists, opponents and proponents to explore the current status of the science, the geopolitical landscape and the ethics of nuclear energy production through a robust discussion with the audience.

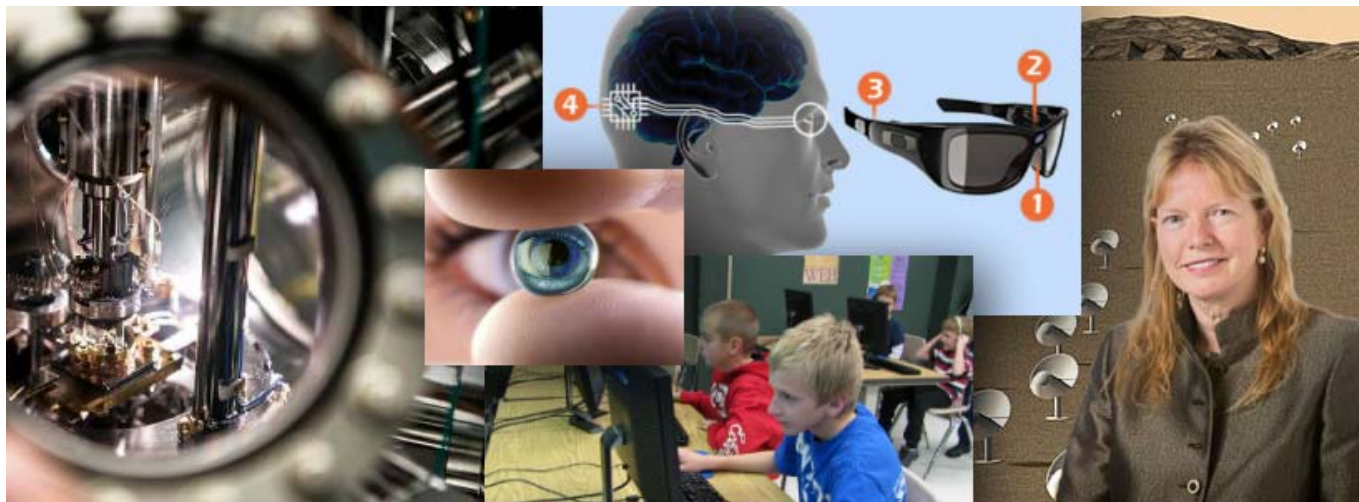
We seek to structure the session as much as possible. Members are reminded to **submit their questions for the panel in advance** to help us cover the considerable ground involved in this debate: please forward your questions to Mike Flattley at ed@sciencevictoria.org.au



Book online now at <http://ow.ly/Nt3Tv> or contact the RSV office to secure your place: 9663 5259, rsv@sciencevictoria.org.au. Our lectures are free with an optional gold coin donation to our science programs.

SCIENCE IN OUR WORLD: VICTORIA'S LEAD SCIENTIST

The second June meeting will be held on **Thursday, 25th June at 12.15 pm**, as a **lunch-time meeting**. Members and guests are welcome to join us for lunch in the Burke & Wills Room after the lecture at 1:15 pm (**bookings essential**). See details below.



Speaker: Ms Leonie Walsh

Lead Scientist, Government of Victoria

We all want to maintain a comfortable standard of living, have access to good healthcare and leave the country in good condition for future generations. It is well accepted that to accomplish these goals we will be dependent upon science and technology and a strong innovation system to underpin economic growth, address societal challenges and maintain global competitiveness.

We have some challenges in achieving these goals including:

- Improving collaboration between industry, academia and the rest of the world to maximize our access to ideas, new technologies and ways to deliver them;
- Developing a skilled workforce for the future, and;
- Balancing applied and discovery research, funding both and managing expectations of their impact.

As the Lead Scientist for the Victorian Government, Leonie Walsh must balance her activities between being an independent voice for the scientific community and a trusted, credible advisor to government to help support policy development. Ms Walsh will touch on some of these challenges, providing some examples of progress and some key plans for the future of science in our society.

About Leonie Walsh:

Ms Walsh has more than 25 years of technology leadership and product development experience with multi-national companies such as Visy, Henkel and Dow Chemical.

She is the honorary President of the Australasian Industrial Research group and a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. Ms Walsh is Victoria's representative on the Forum of Australian Chief Scientists.



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The Phillip Law Postdoctoral Award for the Physical Sciences



Applications opened on 1 May for the Phillip Law Award, and will **close on 30 June 2015**.

This award was made possible by a generous bequest to the Society from the estate of the late Dr Phillip Garth Law AC. The award, and associated prize of \$3000, is for excellence in scientific research by an **early career researcher** and is open to suitably qualified postdoctoral candidates in the Physical Sciences, which include Astronomy, Astrophysics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, all branches of Engineering, and related sciences.

The prize winner will be required to deliver a 45 minute address on their research to Royal Society of Victoria members and their guests on Thursday 22nd October 2015 at 7pm at the Society's Hall. The successful nominee will have the opportunity to submit an article for peer review and publication in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria within 6 months of accepting the award.

Full details on eligibility and making a submission are available online at the Society's website: <http://ow.ly/Nt5jC> will take you straight there.

Please encourage the promising early career scientists in your networks to make a submission.

VALE

Council extends condolences to the family of Ian Russell Young.

Nominations for RSV Membership

Nominations for membership of the Society have been received on behalf of:

Dr **Robyn ARIANRHOD**, PhD, Adjunct Research Fellow

Dr **Kevin ORRMAN-ROSSITER**, Research Innovation & Commercialisation, University of Melbourne

Dr **Patricia Arlene Vickers RICH**, Geologist/Palaeontologist

David ZUCCARO, BSc, GradDipEd, GradDipCompSci

Unless Members request a ballot, they will be considered for election at the Council meeting on 11th June and if elected, will be announced at the Ordinary Meeting of the Royal Society of Victoria held that evening.

Recently elected members who have not yet signed the Society's membership book nor received their certificate are invited to attend the 11th June meeting to be formally welcomed as members.

Call for Donations and Support for the Royal Society of Victoria

Council thanks all Members who have continued to support the Society; particularly those who have renewed their membership for the 2015 year promptly.

The year we seek to extend our capacities to promote the sciences and care for our rich heritage as a foundational institution in Victoria. Council recently moved to rename our Sciences Fund as the **RSV Science Foundation** to reflect its status as a gift fund and accommodate the breadth of activity to which our supporters seek to contribute.

As tax time looms ahead, we would like to call for members' support for the following programs:

CoderDojo: Victorian Network



Building on the successful pilot based at Wooranna Park Primary School in Dandenong North, the Society seeks to establish a state network of Dojos, champions and volunteers. The pilot has generated considerable enthusiasm across many metropolitan and regional areas, all of whom require some assistance in starting up local activities and sustaining the energies of volunteers.

With government recognizing the importance of IT literacy to the current and future workforce of Australian industry and research, the timing is right to seek support for scaling this grass-roots, community-based approach to STEM engagement. **The RSV seeks to raise \$40k** to fund a state coordinator and Dojo startup costs over the next six months. **Your contribution to the RSV Science Outreach Fund would be very gratefully received.**

The Royal Society of Victoria Hall, Caretaker's Cottage and Grounds

Our heritage facilities are a testament to our rich history and a resource to share with aspiring scientists, teachers, technologists and supporters for years to come. Council wishes to gratefully acknowledge the recent pledges of support from members **Diane Lightfoot** and **Ben Wadham** this year to upgrade equipment and replace the worn-out window furnishings in the Ellery Lecture Theatre. Welcome change is ahead!

With storage space at a premium, we seek to build a suitably heritage sensitive **storage shed** off the car park, next to the Caretaker's Cottage, and move the fence boundaries accordingly to accommodate the change. Further, we seek to **complete the construction of the main stairs** fronting La Trobe Street and install a robust, fibreoptic **Local Area Network** throughout the RSV Hall. In total, these works will require funding of \$30,000. **Your contribution to the RSV Building Fund would be very gratefully received.**

Awards, Prizes and Fellowships in the Sciences

These are one of the most effective means by which the Society stimulates and rewards achievement in the sciences across the various career stages. While some activities are funded in perpetuity, such as the Phillip Law Prize, others rely on the generosity and support of philanthropy and sponsorship. We particularly wish to expand our capacity to **engage prospective STEM practitioners in primary and secondary schooling** and support these through to early career participation in the Victorian industrial and

research sectors. **We welcome your donation to the RSV Science Fund** and assistance with engaging potential industry partners in sponsorship of our awards, prizes and fellowships.

Donations made to the Royal Society of Victoria are **tax deductible** and can be made at any time. We are particularly grateful to Members who have already donated to support the annual Young Scientist Research Prizes and to renew facilities in our heritage building. Please contact our office on 9663 5259 or at rsv@sciencevictoria.org.au if you would like to discuss your contribution, or ideas for avenues of support.

Young Scientists' Research Prizes



Applications open on **1 June** for the 2015 Young Scientist Research Prizes, offering Ph.D. candidates at Victorian institutions prizes of \$1000 across four fields of science. **Closing 31 July.**

The Royal Society of Victoria has established four prestigious competitive prizes open to postgraduate doctoral students in all areas of the Biological Sciences (Non-human), Biomedical & Health Sciences, Earth Sciences and Physical Sciences. The Biological Sciences (Non-human) prize and Earth Sciences prize are supported by donations from the families of previous Royal Society Presidents Edmund D. Gill and Neil Archbold respectively.

Full details on eligibility and making an application are available from our website: <http://ow.ly/Nt80L> will take you straight there.

CBD Parking

The cost for members to park at the Society remains very cheap - **free** for the first two hours and **\$15.00 for the day** for parking between **8.00am and 5.00pm**. Please just call into the office when you arrive so that we are aware of your vehicle.

To accommodate our commercial parking leases, **please avoid parking in the numbered bays** adjacent to the building.

After hours or weekend parking is by arrangement only.

Parking is **not available** on **Tuesday evenings** due to bookings for the entire building.

Parking for non-members is also available and the Society can accommodate daily, weekly, monthly or yearly arrangements at commercially competitive rates.

wonderful opportunity to engage those curious yet apprehensive members of the community who may not otherwise make contact.

If you are interested and available to take on a morning or afternoon shift, please contact the office at rsv@sciencevictoria.org.au or on 9663 5259.

Former Bureau of Meteorology Site

The Society needs to repurpose the triangle of land vacated by the Bureau of Meteorology last year and is considering a public Expression of Interest process to engage with potential users. Purposes that accord with the mission of the Society as a proponent of the sciences and respond appropriately to the heritage character of our site are open for consideration. **Members with interesting ideas for this high-visibility site are invited to discuss these with the Executive Director, Mike Flattley: ed@sciencevictoria.org.au or 9663 5259.**

Publish in The Proceedings: Invitation to Members

To broaden the scope of our journal *The Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* at the international level, we are inviting members to submit a paper as sole author or in collaboration with colleagues. In addition, we urge you to encourage your research students to submit a research article or review. We seek contributions in all areas of science.

This year we have a very healthy rate of contribution for both editions of the 2015 volume, which is now entirely published and distributed online through CSIRO publishing. **Copies will be accessible through the Royal Society of Victoria's website** once the first electronic edition is released in late May/June.

Open House Melbourne: Volunteers Required

This year the Royal Society of Victoria will once again open its heritage building to tours by members of the public on **Saturday 25th July**.

We are seeking members with an interest and expertise in the rich history of the Society, its rooms, the provenance of the various objects on display, and the biographical details of its prominent historical figures to guide small groups around the building. Melbourne Open House is a

Media Training for Scientists



The RSV is hosting one of Science in Public's popular media training courses on **Wednesday, 3 June** at the RSV Hall. Places are still available.

Designed to help you understand what the media requires to bring your work to life and tell your story accurately, this one day course focuses on science communication as a fundamentally different offering to corporate media training.

Enrolments are from the Science in Public site at <http://www.scienceinpublic.com.au/training>. For future events, two free places will be made available to RSV members; if you cannot make next week's training, but would like to be considered for future enrolment, please contact Mike Flattley at ed@sciencevictoria.org.au.