

Supplementary Material

John Melvin Swan 1924–2015

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This compilation of supplementary information about the life and career of J M Swan is, inevitably, a selection and does not aim to be fully comprehensive. More detail can be found in the extensive collection of papers that John deposited in the Fenner Archives of the Australian Academy of Science (see: <http://library.science.org.au/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=3095>).

The information gathered here is presented under the following headings:

- Contributions to public life
- Contributions to professional organisations
- Consultancies
- Awards
- Recognition of service
- Commercial interests
- Tertiary qualifications

Contributions to public life

John had an astonishing record of involvement in public life, often but not always drawing on his scientific expertise to offer advice and leadership in a variety of organizations. Some he joined in order to advocate deeply-held views, in other cases he was sought out to contribute to kindred causes and organizations.

He proposed and guided the development of a formal affiliation agreement (one of the University's first, in 1985) between the Victorian Bureau of Meteorology and Monash University.

He delivered over 240 talks and lectures to many audiences (including ANZAAS, Royal Society of Victoria, Probus, U3A, Wallaby Club, schools and radio), mostly on scientific and environmental topics.

Here are some of the organizations he served (in alphabetical order) through appointment, contributions and leadership roles:

Member, **Australia Prize Committee**, 1995.

Member of Executive, **Australian-Asian Universities Cooperation Scheme**, 1975-77 (and member, 1968-1979).

Member of **Australian government delegation** to Israel, 6-22 January 1986, to explore Australia-Israel co-operation in science and technology.

Chairman of the **Australian Marine Sciences and Technologies Advisory Committee** (AMSTAC), 1981-84.

Member, **Australian National Commission for UNESCO**, 1980-81.

Member of the **Australian Research Grants Committee**, 1979-81.

Member of the national advisory board of the **Australian Science Archives Project** (later the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre), 1984-96.

Founding Chairman of the Steering Committee that established the **Centre for Human Bioethics** at Monash University, 1980, and Chairman of the Centre's Advisory Board until 1987.

Chairman of the Board of Management of the **Co-operative Research Centre for Southern Hemisphere Meteorology**, 1993-2000. [It brought together researchers from Monash University, the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO.]

Member of the **CSIRO Advisory Council**, 1968-73, and Chairman of its Victorian State Committee, 1974.

Chairman of two **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority** committees: the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Advisory and Review Committee, 1985-87, and the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish Research Committee, 1988-1993.

Honorary Principal Fellow in the Department of **History and Philosophy of Science** at the University of Melbourne, 1999 and 2000.

Honorary Research Associate, **Howard Florey Institute for Experimental Physiology and Medicine**, 1987-95.

Member, **Meteorology Policy Committee**, 1978-80. (This committee advised the Minister of Science and Technology on the operations of the Bureau of Meteorology.)

Member of the **Museum Victoria** Medical Advisory Panel, 1987-88, and the Science and Humanities Committee, 1988-94.

Member of the Scientific Advisory Board of two 'phases' of the **Port Phillip Bay Environmental Study** (1988-89 and 1992-95).

Chairman, **Queen's Fellowships in Marine Science**, 1976-78 (and member, 1973-78). As AMSTAC Chairman, he served *ex officio* on the advisory committee for the Queen's Fellowships and Marine Research Allocations, 1981-84.

Research Associate, **Textile and Fibre Research Institute** (housed at the Melbourne College of Textiles), 1991.

President of Council of **University College**, University of Melbourne, 2000-2002. His outstanding service to the College was recognised by his appointment as a Governor in 2002 and he remained a significant donor to, and an active participant in, the College community.

Member of **Victorian Coastal Council**, 2000-03.

A foundation member of the **Victorian Conservation Trust**, 1972-84, and Chairman 1982-84. This organisation is now the Trust for Nature.

Co-founder in the 1970s of the **Victorian Institute of Marine Sciences**, and Chairman of its Board of Management in 1980.

Chair of the Scientific Committee for the **Western Port Bay Environmental Study** (1972-74).

Founding Chairman, 2000-2011, of the **Western Port Seagrass Partnership** (incorporated 2001).

Member of the **Westernport Region Water Authority**, 1991-94, and its predecessor, the **Westernport Water Board**, 1994-2000. In this capacity he also chaired the Candowie-Lance Creek Catchment Management Group and was a member of

the Westernport Catchment Implementation Committee of the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment and Land Protection Board.

Contributions to professional organisations

While with CSIRO, John took on the role of Organising Secretary for the 1st International Wool Textile Research Conference, held in Melbourne in 1955, and was the coordinating editor.

He served on the Council of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and was President of its Victorian Branch in 1967. He was Editor of the *Proceedings of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute* (precursor of *Chemistry in Australia*) 1959–1961, and of *Reviews of Pure and Applied Chemistry*.

He was a member of the organising committee, and coordinating editor, for the XXII International Congress of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the XXII International Conference on Coordination Chemistry, held in Sydney in 1969.

He had a long association with the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS), a body committed to public education in the sciences. A member since 1960, he was the Liversidge Lecturer in 1967. He organised the very successful Festival of Science in Melbourne in 1985. He joined the ANZAAS Council in 1984, was Vice-Chairman in 1985, and Chairman 1989-92. During his time as Chairman, he was actively involved in the creation of the International Federation of Associations for the Advancement of Science and Technology (launched in Hong Kong in 1991).

He was a member of the Council of the Royal Society of Victoria, 1972-74.

He served on numerous committees of the Australian Academy of Science. He was a member of its Council, 1980-83, and Vice-President in 1982-83.

Consultancies

John consulted for many years to ICI (Australia) in the general field of organic chemistry. He was a consultant and expert witness for various firms of solicitors and patent attorneys in patent litigation in the field of chemistry.

He was a foundation member of the Scientific Advisory Board of CRA Limited, 1981-1995.

Following retirement from Monash University, he participated in a range of consultancies as Chairman (1986-1992) of Tide International Pty Ltd, a company specializing in science and technology, information systems, education and management. Clients of Tide International included the Museum of Victoria, the State

Library of Victoria, various government departments, the Victorian College of the Arts, the Australian China Council, and Deakin University.

His later consultancy work was usually under the name 'Chemical Science Consultancies'.

He consulted to Monier Limited in 1987.

For the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association, he chaired the Independent Scientific Review Committee during 1992-93. This committee examined the environmental implications of offshore oil and gas development in Australia, commissioning five major reviews which were published by the Association in 1994. (This 700-page volume was subsequently awarded the Review Prize for 1994 by the Australian Minerals and Energy Environment Foundation for the best review of existing literature on an environmental subject pertaining to the Australian minerals and energy industries.)

For a five-month period in 1990, he chaired a four-person Trade Waste Review panel appointed by the then Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works to examine and report on all aspects of the disposal of trade waste to the sewerage system.

Awards (in chronological order)

Dixson Prizes in Chemistry II and IV, and the James Cuming Memorial Scholarships (Major and Minor) at the University of Melbourne for 1946 were shared with R.D. Brown.

CSIR studentship, 1947 – enabling PhD studies in London

Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, 1949 (joined as a member in 1947)

Fulbright Fellowship, 1952 – enabling post-doctoral research in New York

H G Smith Memorial Medal of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, 1964 (shared with D J Brown)

Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, 1955 (joined as an Associate in 1948)

David Syme Research Prize, University of Melbourne, 1965 (joint recipient)

Liversidge Lecturer, ANZAAS, 1967

Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, 1968

Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, 1994

ANZAAS Medal, 1994

Emeritus Professor, Monash University, 1985

Doctor of Science degree, awarded *honoris causa* by Monash University, 1994

Honorary Life Fellow, Museum Victoria (awarded during the 1990s)

Centenary Medal, 2001 – awarded by the Australian Government ‘For service to improving the environmental health of Westernport’

Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), 2002 – awarded ‘For service as an outstanding contributor to the advancement of Australian science, particularly in the fields of chemistry, marine science and meteorology, to education, and to the management, protection and conservation of the natural environment’

Recognition of service

Life Member, **Phillip Island Conservation Society**, 1996

Fifty Year Member Award of the **Royal Australian Chemical Institute** (member since 1948)

Life Member of the **Royal Society of Chemistry** (member since 1957)

Emeritus Member of the **Royal Society of Victoria**

Life Member, **Wallaby Club** (member since 1953, and President in 1984)

Commercial interests

During the 1990s, John was the founder and chairman of Hallmark Dell Pty Ltd, a private company with 20 shareholders, established to research new and improved methods for cleaning raw wool. The company traded as Powdertech and had a small factory in Laverton North where it engaged in research and development of new methods.

Kneeling down to deliver a lawn bowl was a struggle for many of his older colleagues, so John and some friends invented a metal ‘bowler’s arm’ that enabled the bowler to deliver from a more upright position. As a prototype, it wouldn’t be allowed in competition bowls but it certainly met a need and the solving of design problems in good company gave considerable pleasure. In 2011, John established another private company, Swanjon Holdings Pty Ltd, to support the potential commercialization of the invention.

Tertiary qualifications

Associate Diploma in Applied Chemistry (Royal Melbourne Technical College – completed 1944)

Bachelor of Science (University of Melbourne – studies completed 1946; ceremony April 1947)

Doctor of Philosophy (University of London – completed 1949, awarded 1950).
Thesis title: 'Studies towards the Synthesis of Penicillin'

Doctor of Science (University of Melbourne – presented December 1968).
Thesis title: 'Proteins, Peptides and Amino Acids'

JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

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4. Swan JM. Thiohydantoins. II. Thiohydantoins derived from aspartic and glutamic acids. *Australian Journal of Scientific Research, Series A, Physical Sciences*, 1952, **A5**: 721-727.
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29. Milligan B, Saville B, Swan JM. New syntheses of trisulphides. *Journal of the Chemical Society*, 1961: 4850-4853.
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