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#### **About the author**

Dr Anne Coote works in the areas of public history and cultural history, including the cultural history of science in colonial Australia. For many years, she held an adjunct position at the University of New England. More recently, as an associate of the Centre for Applied History at Macquarie University, she contributed to a research project investigating the history of shale-mining settlements in the Blue Mountains. She has written entries for the Dictionary of Sydney and published academically on the influence of literate culture on popular perceptions of community and sovereignty in mid 19th-century NSW, popular science journalism, notable collectors of natural history specimens, the intersection of specimen collection with ideas about class, and local and global trade in specimens. Dr Coote is a graduate of the University of Sydney and the University of New England.

## **KNOWLEDGE FOR A NATION**

Origins of the Royal Society  
of New South Wales

**Anne Coote**

#### **About the book**

*Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales* tells the early history of a learned society still active in the intellectual culture of 21st century Australia. The book begins with an account of Australia's first learned society, the Philosophical Society of Australasia (1821-1822), which is the Royal Society's enduring inspiration, if not its earliest incarnation. The Royal Society evolved from the Australian Society (1850-1851), through the Philosophical Society of New South Wales, which was re-badged Royal in 1866. Successfully reorganised a decade later, the RSNSW reached the zenith of its influence on the development of a colonial science community in New South Wales. Hopes and disappointments, conflict and camaraderie, challenges and achievements are all part of this story which highlights the society's initiatives in the cause of science, its all-male membership, the women who nevertheless contributed, and the society's glittering conversazioni. The book concludes in 1914, when a visit to Australia by the British Association for the Advancement of Science demonstrated international recognition for the colonial scientific community which the Royal Society had worked so long to help create.

**Dr Coote and RSNSW President Dr Susan Pond are available for interview. RSNSW media contact Davina Jackson 0412 109 992 [davina@davinajackson.com](mailto:davina@davinajackson.com)**