

## John White Symposium



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## Reflections on John White

*Thursday, 18 July 2024 14:00 (30 minutes)*

### **Reflections on John White's Contributions to Australian Science, together with his Role in Enhancing Pan-Asian Collaboration**

John was born near Newcastle in New South Wales, and got his start in science at Sydney University. He returned to Australia in 1985 and joined the Research School of Chemistry at the Australian National University, where he remained until his death last year.

John's most significant contribution to Australian Science, in my opinion, has been his role in getting both the OPAL Neutron Source (in Sydney) and the Australian Synchrotron (in Melbourne) funded by governments, and built to the highest international standard. Another mark of John's career is the talent that he has nurtured and grown, both while at Oxford and also at the Australian National University in Canberra, where he has played a leading and influential role for the last 40 years or so.

He was a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, and of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (and was its President). He was a member of ANSTO's Bragg Institute Advisory Committee from the beginning, and its chair between 2008 and 2011. He was President of the Australian Institute for Nuclear Science and Engineering between 2005 and 2006, in the crucial time that the OPAL Research Reactor first started and the relationship between ANSTO and AINSE changed in a major way. He was instrumental in setting up the prestigious AINSE Research Fellowship scheme, which for a number of years ensured that bright young researchers were able to nucleate new groups in the Australasian universities, to complement and make optimal use of the capital investment in OPAL. John was the second President of the Asia-Oceania Neutron Scattering Association, and was one of the leading players in its formation. In 2015, he was awarded the AONSA Prize in recognition of his leading role across the Asia-Pacific. Most significantly he was also chair for many years (2002-2012) of the International Advisory Committee for the J-PARC Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex, the other leading facility (along with OPAL) of its type in the Asia-Pacific region.

I will try to summarise John's contributions to Australian science, along with his crucial role more broadly in the Asia-Pacific region. And I will include some interesting and amusing anecdotes, from this time, that the audience may not have heard before.

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