

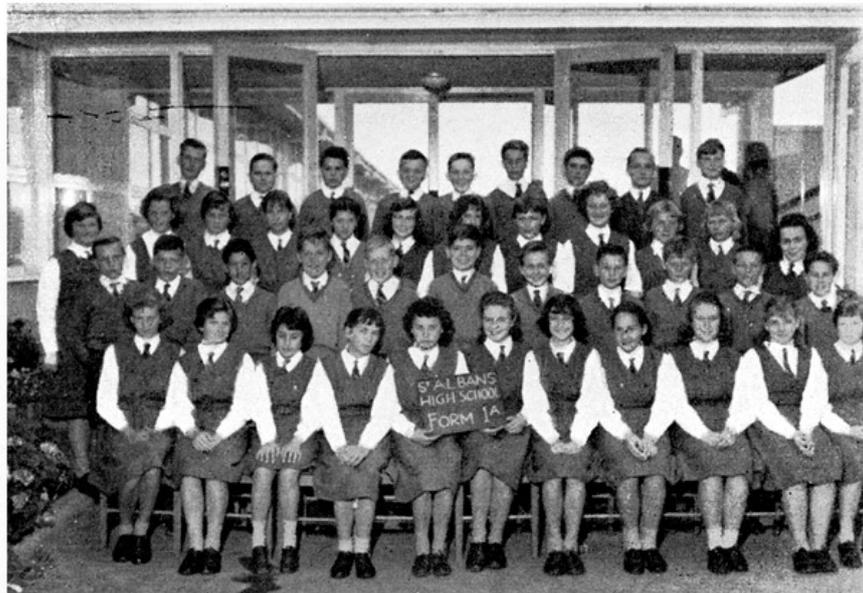
JOHN DODSON: PROFESSOR, INSTITUTE OF EARTH ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

St Albans High School and beyond.



I matriculated from St Albans High in 1965. It was there I developed a love of Science and I did well enough to get into a BSc course in Science at Monash. This young vibrant university was also full of enthusiastic lecturers and while I started with a general set of subjects and developed a love for all forms of science, eventually when specialisation called I spent my upper years in Botany, Chemistry and some Maths.

I travelled to WA with student friends from St Albans at the end of my third year and on that trip I realised I wanted to work in environmental science. In 1969 I did an honours degree in Botany with plant ecology my focus. It was a year on a single research topic and that set me on a career of research in environmental change. I decided the way forward required first class honours and to earn a scholarship. I used that for a further year at Monash for a Masters degree then transferred it to ANU to do a PhD. This change of setting also increased my horizons and it is something I have encouraged many of my research students to follow.



FORM IA

Back Row: Hans Beekman, Greutis Kulbys, Rudolph Marsani, Stan Koliba, Robert Slawitschka, Stefan Hermann, Branko Labas, Helmut Lopaczuk, Jerry Malesz. **Third Row:** Krystyna Konieczny, Margaret Coupe, Ute Klewer, Alla Harbatowski, Ilona Javanoovics, Patricia Bolger, Anna Adamowicz, Anna Denisow, Mary Dore, Christa Albrecht, Teresa Kozlowski, Dalia Ferguson. **Second Row:** Ryszard Charewicz, Adam Koliba, Errol McLeod, Joseph Cymbalista, Jacob Epema, Andreas Engert, Alan Hargrave, John Dudenas, Glenn Brochie, John Dodson, Ken Jackson. **Front Row:** Kristina Sawicki, Halina Ciemala, Katina Joannou, June Gordon, Julie Koschwitz, Barbara Haufe, Janina Witon, Tania Pavlova, Elena Dagsy, Danuta Brozowski, Antje Jablecki.



John Dodson (3rd row from back, 4th from right), Form 6 with Mr Rayner, 1965.

I completed my PhD in 1975 on the vegetation history of SE South Australia over the last 50,000 years. I then took up a lectureship at University of Canterbury in Christchurch and about three years later moved to the School of Geography at University of NSW in Sydney. I was well settled into a world of teaching the material I loved, with great students, and through research grants I carried out environmental change studies on Pacific Islands, Tasmania, New South Wales and Ireland.

I rose through the ranks to become Head of School at UNSW then applied for and was awarded the Chair in Geography at University of Western Australia. I had the excitement of being a full professor and using that to set a stamp on courses and to some extent Faculty directions and appointment of staff.

In 2002 the university decided to restructure its science and agriculture offerings and I became the inaugural Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. While that was also a role with power to set directions I found my teaching and research and contact with students greatly diminished.

It was time to move again, and I did, to the UK. Brunel University in London also had a restructure of its academic programs and I took the role of the first Professor and Director of the Institute for Environmental Research. I had a small staff of about 20 and our teaching programs were all postgraduate masters level courses which we developed and I had time for research again. I had already developed a love for China and was able to continue research in the arid areas there plus in the Lower Yangtze.



I loved living in London. Alas my wife did not and wanted to return to Australia. When I was head hunted to take up the role of Head of the Institute of Environmental Research at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) the chorus to take it was deafening at home so back to Sydney we came. Now I had a staff of over 100 to look after.

My teaching role was diminished once again although I co-supervised several students from China who came to work with me. I was able to continue my research through them. The year 2015 has been a big year for me. ANSTO decided to re-organise its research institutes. I did not like the way it looked like progressing so I did some re-organising of

my own.

I am now a Professor in the Institute of Earth Environment of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and my base for 4-6 months of the year is the amazing city of Xi'an. There I look after the palaeoecology section, I have built a new lab and have the precious care of some young Chinese scientists under my wing. We are studying environmental change in Hubei Province and on the tropical island of Hainan. Plus together we are combining with scientists in Australia to reveal the dynamics of tropical systems in northern Australia and southern China.

In Australia I am also involved in research programs on the Kimberley region of NW Australia. I am dividing my time between China and Australia and in the latter at UNSW and University of Wollongong.

I am still teaching, still researching, still helping to design great facilities and research. Life is sweet, and thank you St Albans for your part in this.

John Dodson, 2015.



John Dodson, Beijing Botanic Gardens, 2015.



Members of the National Committee for Geography. Back row from left: Professor Ruth Fincher, Professor Kathleen Gibson, Professor Jim Walmsley, Professor David Gilleson (Chair), Professor John Dodson, Dr IrAPHNE Childs, Professor Iain Hay. Front row from left: Emeritus Professor Bruce Ryan, Julia Freeman.

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Professor John Dodson

John Dodson held a string of 15 research awards commencing in 1992, with the last one in 2005. He was initially at the University of New South Wales and then moved to the University of Western Australia in 1995. His AINSE-supported research was associated with human-megafauna and environmental change and human impact and his AINSE-supported research has ranged across North Western NSW, central Australia, south-western Australia and New Caledonia.

His research projects have been undertaken in Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Micronesia, China and the United Kingdom. He served on the National Committee for Quaternary Research of the Australian Academy of Science, International Geosphere Biosphere Program (PAST Global Changes) and is currently Chair of the International Year of Planet Earth for Society (Climate Change Group) for UNESCO. He has an impressive publication record and has served on Editorial Boards of *Quaternary Research*, *The Holocene* and the *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. He has held 15 AINSE research awards between 1992 and 2005 and this resulted in 27 publications.

John Dodson has been head of university departments at the University of New South Wales, University of Western Australia and Brunel University, London. In 2007 he was appointed as Head of ANSTO's Institute of Environmental Research.



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