



2014: Consciousness

8:30 – 9:00 | Doors open

Tea and coffee available

9:00 – 9:30 | Welcome to Fusion

9:30 – 10:30

Catherine Phoenix - Lecturer, Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle

Gabrielle Fletcher - Indigenous New Career Academic, Wollotuka Institute, University of Newcastle

Aboriginal Essence and Co-Evolution

This presentation does not claim to make knowledge out of 'Knowing', but rather seeks to dilate the notions of Aboriginal consciousness, mapped by the Dreaming, as a simultaneous 'reality of collective self-hood and personal subjectivity – a coalescent axiom to Being. Phoenix and Fletcher aim to privilege an Indigenous-centered discussion that invites a possibility for co-evolution of understandings that might shape a more holistic experience of a world/'the' world in the human-ness of all.

10:30 – 10:45 | Morning Tea

10:45 – 12:15 | KEYNOTE SPEAKER – Philosophy of Mind

Prof. Frank Jackson - Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Australian National University

The Challenge of Consciousness

There is a sense in which we all know what it is to be conscious. If you doubt me, stub your toe. What makes consciousness such a challenging topic is making sense of it consistently with what we know about the relationship between what goes on in our minds and what goes on in our brains. The knowledge argument is one way to bring out how challenging this question is and will be one focus of the lecture.

12:15 – 12:45

Josiah Walker - Student Team Leader of the NUbots, University of Newcastle

The NUbots - Artificial Intelligence in Action

We often find surprising parallels between what science tells us about our own brains and discoveries in the field of artificial intelligence. We also find many examples where the human mind is decades beyond the science of artificial intelligence today. The NUbots are Newcastle's team of autonomous soccer-playing robots, which compete in the robot world cup - Robocup, every year. In this presentation, we will discuss the techniques we use to allow our robots to understand and interact with the world around them, and the limitations and things we have learned along the way.

12:45 – 1:30 | Lunch & NUbots demonstration

1:30 – 2:30

Dr. Darren Burke - Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology, University of Newcastle

The Nature and Function of Consciousness – An Empirical Perspective

I will be presenting a Psychological perspective on consciousness, cutting across the difficult philosophical debates by concentrating on the empirical data we have so far that could plausibly help us to understand both the nature and function of consciousness. I'll be arguing that we don't really have a very good handle on either of these things, but by describing the neural bases of conscious experience, and by discussing what can and can't be done in the absence of conscious awareness, I hope to shed some light on what it is we need to be able to explain by any comprehensive theory of conscious experience.

2:30 – 3:30

Dan Fanthorpe - Yoga Instructor, Ashtanga Yoga Newcastle

Supreme Consciousness Through Yoga

Yoga is the exploration of consciousness. The goal is to move from the lower to higher levels of consciousness aligning the mind and body into a continual state of balance. Yoga does not require faith or belief it is not religious, it is available free for all who seek depth, understanding & meaning in life. Tantra, Ashtanga yoga & Samkhya's school of thought are just some of India's philosophical gems that we will look into to try and get a basic understanding of how we can lovingly transform our lives through yoga.

3:30 – 4:00 | Afternoon Tea

4:00 – 5:00 | Panel Discussion / Q&A

Chair: Dr Russel Blackford - Conjoint Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle

Speakers:

- Dr. Darren Burke
 - Dan Fanthorpe
 - Prof. Frank Jackson
 - Josiah Walker
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5:00 – 5:30 Closing Remarks

5:30 – 9:30 "Symposium" (GT Bar and Derkenne Courtyard)

BONUS event. We'll be moving next door to the bar and beer garden in the evening. Please join us for an opportunity to digest the day's material in a more casual, social environment. Featuring live music and a collaborative art project.

Canapés provided.