

## **Distinguished Professor Claude Roux**

### **From Forensic to Forensic Science**

Introduced by Geoff McWilliam, Professor Roux spoke of his passion for Forensic Science, commenting that rather than individual professionals such as medical doctors, chemists and engineers analysing a situation from their own professional perspectives and describing themselves as forensic specialists there is a growing but not yet complete acceptance of Forensic Science as a distinct discipline and true science. It is not as glamorous as shown on television and its acceptance has not been aided by a few high profile miscarriage of justice cases overseas and here.

Despite advances in technology critical thinking and asking the right questions are still essential. Apart from the better known 'traces' such as DNA, fingermarks, shoe marks, tyre tread marks, hair and blood samples, there has been an explosion in recent years in the number of "digital traces" arising from our use of phones and the internet.

A 'Sydney Declaration', prepared in advance of a conference of Forensic Science experts in 2023, set down 7 principles aimed at further enhancing the professional practice and standing of Forensic Science. It has had a significant and favourable impact around the world including in Africa

For our interest, Professor Roux recounted several case studies involving, for example, boot sole and tyre tread marks in a case in Canada, and fibres retained on shoe soles in an Australian murder case. He also outlined some of the projects undertaken within his Centre including on how to capture and retain fingermarks on plastic bank notes, and on the development of portable devices for drug detection. In outlining areas where there is scope for further improvement in Forensic Science practices he focused particularly on the capture and processing of traces, especially in the field.

At the conclusion of his presentation Professor Roux fielded several questions including about trace collection and the many different parties that can be involved, depending on the context of a particular case.

On behalf of the members Jim Warren thanked Professor Roux for a "fascinating and riveting" presentation.