



Russell Blackford (on thecsf.xyz)

Russell Blackford is an interesting and talented Australian academic with broad interests and qualifications in different fields. Dr Russell Blackford is a Conjoint Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia. He specializes in legal, political, and moral philosophy, with a special interest in bioethics. His wider interests include philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, and metaphilosophy. Russell describes himself as an Australian philosopher, legal scholar, and literary critic. He holds the following degrees: BA (First Class Honours), Dip Ed, PhD (English literature), LLB (First Class Honours), a Masters in Bioethics and a PhD in Philosophy. He practiced law in Melbourne before making an academic career in Philosophy. Useful biographical sources: [1] [2] [3] [4].

Russell published a large collection of academic, popular and fiction books, as well as academic articles. A selective list of his publications can be found here: [2]. He submitted the manuscript of his latest book ("How We Became Post-Liberal: The Rise and Fall of Toleration") to his publisher a couple of weeks ago. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Evolution and Technology* from 2008 to 2020, and in July 2017 the Australasian Association of Philosophy Media Prize was awarded to him.

There are several reasons why I selected him as the current CSF Secular Thinker: he is a secular thinker of note, in my view he deserves a higher profile, he is an Australian philosopher (and I want to promote Australian thinkers), and he especially made a worthwhile contribution in terms of moral philosophy, which is my special interest. In 2016 he published a valuable and commendable book ("The Mystery of Moral Authority"), which I thoroughly enjoyed. He wrote an interesting chapter in a 2019 book edited by Richard Joyce and Richard Garner ("The End of Morality - Taking Moral Abolitionism Seriously"). Russell contributed Chapter 4 "After such knowledge—what? Living and speaking in a world without objective morality". He also was involved in a noteworthy debate with Sam Harris about Harris' "The Moral Landscape" published in 2010. Future articles in the CSF Morality Series ([Morality Archives - The CSF](#)) will refer to these works again.

Several of Russell's works have been relevant and beneficial for secularism in general. A few examples:

- 50 Voices of Disbelief: Why We Are Atheists. Co-edited with Udo Schüklenk, 2009
- Freedom of Religion and the Secular State, 2012
- 50 Great Myths About Atheism. Co-authored with Udo Schüklenk, 2013

Quotable quote (which I used to open Part 1 of the CSF Morality Series with [The CSF Morality Series, Part 1: Introduction to the CSF Morality Series - The CSF](#)):

"Morality appears to claim objective authority... On reflection, morality's special authority appears mysterious, and we may suspect it is illusory" [5]

Other useful links regarding Russell Blackford:

- His personal website: [1]
- His blog: [6]
- His Facebook page: [7]



Russell Blackford [Image credit: Wikimedia Commons]

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Next Secular Thinkers Article

AC Grayling (by JJ Brits), scheduled for 3 Apr

SOURCES

- [1] [Russell Blackford's website](#)
- [2] [Philosophy CV](#)
- [3] <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/profile/russell-blackford>
- [4] [Russell Blackford](#)
- [5] [“The Mystery of Moral Authority”, by Russell Blackford \(Introduction and Overview\)](#)
- [6] <http://metamagician3000.blogspot.com>
- [7] <https://www.facebook.com/russell.blackford>