

**1333<sup>rd</sup> ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**  
**Wednesday 6 August 2025 at 6:00pm**

**Michael Crouch Room, Mitchell Building, STATE LIBRARY OF NSW**  
**(enter from the Shakespeare Place entrance)**

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The 1333<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW will take place at **6:00 pm on Wednesday 6 August 2025** in the **Michael Crouch Room, Mitchell Building, State Library of NSW**, followed by an open lecture. Registration and refreshments will be from 5:30 pm.

**AGENDA**

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

Vice President, Emeritus Professor Lindsay Botten FRSN.

**2. MINUTES**

Minutes of the 1332<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary General Meeting will be reviewed.

**3. CONFIRMATION OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP**

On the recommendation of the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee, the Council agreed by flying minute to propose the following candidates for admission as Members.

**MEMBERSHIP**

- Associate Professor Christine Meng Ji
- Dr Justin Ellis
- Associate Professor Anai Gonzalez-Cordero

**4. PRESENTATION OF FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES**

The Vice-President will present certificates to new Members and Fellows whose nominations were tabled at the previous OGM or who were unable to attend previously and have notified the Secretariat of their attendance.

**5. REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL**

The Vice-President will update membership on the key activities underway for 2025.

**6. OPEN LECTURE**

**“PFAS in New South Wales: Is it under control?”**

**Associate Professor Ian Wright**

Discipline of Environmental Science, School of Science, Western Sydney University

**Summary:** In 2024, NSW became aware that some of its residents were drinking water containing harmful chemicals — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This was triggered by news that the United States health authorities announced new laws reducing the safe levels of PFAS in drinking water supplies. A Sydney Morning Herald newspaper article in June 2024, *There's no safe level: Carcinogens found in tap water across Australia*, reported that PFAS 'forever chemicals' had been detected in drinking water supplies around Australia. The NSW Chief Health Officer declared on 11 June 2024 that Sydney's drinking water was safe.

It came as a major shock when it was announced in August 2024 that the Blue Mountains water supply contained elevated levels of PFAS. In September 2024, Ian Wright assisted Fairfax journalists in tracking down the source of this contamination. Sampling water from a flowing creek in a 'protected' Blue Mountains drinking water catchment, they discovered PFAS at a concentration that exceeded the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines by more

than 50 times. It later emerged that the contamination was probably from fire-fighting foam used to control the fire from a burning petrol tanker, which crashed in 1992 on the Great Western Highway near Medlow Bath.

PFAS is not just an issue for Blue Mountains drinking water. An additional concern is the impact of elevated PFAS on water supplies in rural and regional communities. Even grazing livestock are known to be susceptible to PFAS contamination of their meat if their drinking water exceeds trace concentrations. PhD student research supervised by Ian Wright has revealed that platypuses have substantial PFOS bioaccumulation.

Should people be concerned about their exposure to PFAS? What action should they take? Should they have their blood tested? Can we trust that contamination by PFAS is under control? Ian Wright's presentation will canvass these questions surrounding an issue that is important to us all.

**About the speaker**

**Ian Wright** is a water scientist and an Associate Professor at the Western Sydney University (WSU) School of Science. He teaches classes in water science and management, environmental planning, and environmental regulation across several degree programs. Before joining WSU, he worked as a scientist in the urban water industry, mainly at Sydney Water. His water science interests include freshwater ecology, water chemistry, and water pollution (both science and management). His research interests include urban water issues, contamination from concrete materials, and the impact of mining on streams and rivers. He has provided independent expert testimony for environmental science matters for the NSW Land & Environment Court and also for mining development proposals being considered through the planning system.

**7. VOTE OF THANKS**

**8. CLOSE**

Emeritus Professor Trevor Brown FRSN  
Secretary