

158th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 6:00pm

Michael Crouch Room, Mitchell Building, State Library of NSW

The 158th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place at **6:00 pm on Wednesday 2 April 2025** in the Michael Crouch Room, Mitchell Building, State Library of NSW, followed by the 1330th Ordinary General Meeting and open lecture. There were 44 members and three visitors present.

1. WELCOME

President, Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN welcomed Members to the meeting and acknowledged the Gadigal People of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the country on which the State Library of NSW stands, paying respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr John Hardie, Dr Jan Herrmann, Dr Jessica Milner Davis and Mr Bruce Ramage.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President noted that this meeting marks the end of her four-year term as President of the Society, a term that began in 2021 just as Australia's first COVID-19 vaccine was being rolled out and before the multiple lockdowns beginning in July that year when the Delta variant hit our shores.

She referred to the summary of the highlights of the past four years in her final column in April 2025 edition of *The Bulletin* and encouraged members to read it on our website if they have not already.

The President referred to the summary of the highlights of the past year in our 2024 Annual Report referred to in the meeting papers and available from the Society's website.

2024 was an exceptionally innovative year for the Society as we intensified our promotion of public, independent, expert, and interdisciplinary debate on critical issues that will define our future. In brief, we were pleased with the notable achievements made in 2024.

We launched our 2024 – 2029 Master Plan, with its five Working Group implementation plans.

Early in 2024, we celebrated three new Excellence Awards, the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Scholar Medal, the Ida Browne Early Career Medal, and the Social and Behavioural Sciences Award. We celebrated a cohort of rising stars, our RSNSW Postgraduate and Early Career Research winners, at a unique event hosted by Western Sydney University at its Parramatta South Campus, the Old Female Orphan School and moderated by Science Show journalist, Robyn Williams.

In partnership with our patron, the Governor of New South Wales, we presented three Ideas@theHouse evenings at Government House that featured speakers at the top of their game in very different fields. They were acclaimed theatre personality and Shakespearean actor, John Bell AO OBE DistFRSN, Australia's E-safety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, and Tim Stephens, an expert on international law of the sea and the Antarctic treaty.

We published *The Bulletin* electronically every month with links to all news and events, maintained an active presence on social media and held regular meetings and topical lectures and panel discussions in Sydney and each of our four Branches.

Many of these presentations are available on the Society's YouTube Channel that amplifies our audience across Australia and internationally by orders of magnitude.

In October, we launched the book, *Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, written by author and historian Dr Anne Coote. This first-ever book about the early history of the Society is well worth reading.

In November, we launched the newest Branch of the Society, the New England North West Branch. Our four Branches now enable the Society to cover the State, providing local opportunities for residents of the region to participate.

We secured the future of our irreplaceable archives and books by completing their transfer to the State Library of New South Wales. The entire collection is now being conserved and catalogued by SLNSW staff and being made accessible to the public as the RSNSW Collection.

Members endorsed changes to the criteria for Fellowship to ensure that the Society can qualify accomplished, highly capable people active in all disciplines and walks of life for election as Fellows of the Society.

Our new website went live in September as a powerful, accessible asset for our members.

The development costs of new website and the appointment of our Communications Officer in July 2023 were supported by the NSW Government, through its Research Attraction and Acceleration Program (RAAP), under the auspices of the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Prof Hugh Durrant-Whyte.

At our AGM a year ago, the President reported that the RAAP sponsorship that began in FY22 had been extended until the end of FY27. Tonight, she was pleased to report that this sponsorship has now been extended until the end of FY2032. It will provide a vital, sustainable financial foundation for the Society while we build up our Future Fund, established as part of the Society's Master Plan, to raise a capital sum of \$5 million.

Although Prof Durrant-Whyte, the speaker at tonight's OGM, was presenting in an independent capacity and not in his capacity as NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, the President thanked him for his unflagging support of the Society.

The President also expressed her sincere gratitude to Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, for her dedicated patronage, and to Dr Donald Hector AM and Em Prof Peter Shergold AC for their exemplary service on Council during the past two years as Secretary and Vice-President, respectively.

Finally, the President commended and recognised the Society's strongest assets, its Fellows and Members, and in particular members of Council and Council Committees whose expertise and energy have made 2024 so successful.

We look forward to the exciting future accomplishments of the Society as an independent platform on which ideas flourish and innovations are debated for the benefit of humanity.

4. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND RESULTS OF ELECTRONIC BALLOTS

Election of Council members and Office Bearers

The terms of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Librarian, the Webmaster and two ordinary members of Council became vacant as of the date of this meeting. At the close of nominations on Friday 28 February 2025, 10 nominations were received to fill seven vacancies. The following nominations were received:

Office Bearers

President – Em Prof Christina Slade FRSN

Vice President – Em Prof Lindsay Botten FRSN

Secretary – Em Prof Trevor Brown FRSN

Librarian – Prof Stephen Garton AM FRSN
Webmaster – Em Prof Graham Town FRSN

As there was only one nomination for each of the Office Bearer positions, they were elected unopposed.

There were five nominations for two vacancies for ordinary Council membership, so an election was held by run by electronic ballot from Monday 10 March 12.00 noon AEDT to Monday 31 March 12.00 noon AEST.

Council members

The candidates receiving most votes and are appointed to Council were (in alphabetical order):
Em Prof Rosalind Croucher AM FRSN
Dr Davina Jackson FRSN

Several other matters of business were determined by the electronic ballot, subject to discussion and acceptance at this meeting.

4.1. Minutes of the 157th Annual General Meeting

The Members **RESOLVED** that:

the minutes of the 157th annual General meeting be accepted as a true record.

For: 157 votes; Against: 2 votes; Abstentions: 47
Motion agreed with 98.74% of the vote.

4.2. Receipt of the Annual Report of Council and the Financial Statements for 2023

The Members **RESOLVED** that:

The Annual Report of Council and Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2024 be received.

For: 186 votes; Against: 2 votes; Abstentions: 18
Motion agreed with 98.94% of the vote.

4.3. Confirmation of Auditors

The Members **RESOLVED** that:

Tinworth & Co., Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors, be confirmed as the auditors of the Royal Society of NSW for 2025.

For: 195 votes; Against: 2 votes; Abstentions: 9
Motion agreed with 99.98% of the vote.

5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The President referred to questions and comments that had been made during the conduct of the electronic ballot. Two minor matters relating to the Annual Report were corrected and the revised report posted to the website. There were no additional questions from the floor.

The Secretary congratulated the President on an outstanding presidency in her four years in office, noting this was a result of an extraordinary amount of work.

6. CLOSE

The meeting closed at 6:25 pm.



Dr Susan Pond AM FRSN
President

3 April 2025