



Royal Society of New South Wales

Awards 2026

The Royal Society of New South Wales has long recognised distinguished achievements in various fields of knowledge through its Awards. Some are amongst the oldest in Australia while others are more recent. From its Act of Incorporation in 1881, the Society's mission has been to encourage "studies and investigations in Science, Art, Literature and Philosophy."

Nominations for all available Awards open on 1 July each year and close on 30 September. Awardees are announced by the end of that calendar year with formal presentations of their Awards in the following year. Almost all nominations require a nominator and a seconder. All RSNSW Awards are assessed relative to opportunity.

See the Awards page for all links, at <https://royalsoc.org.au/awards>.

Career Excellence Medals

Nominations for Career Excellence Medals are called for annually in the four categories described below. Please note that the call for nominations for all awards opens on 1 July and closes on 30 September of each year.

RSNSW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholars Medal

Awarded for sustained, meritorious contributions to knowledge and society made by scholars identifying as Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and conducted mainly in NSW. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The application procedure for this Medal is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

Note: When appropriate, this Medal recognises teams as well as individuals. Nominators are welcome to consult the Society for guidance before making a team nomination, noting that only one physical medal is presented.

RSNSW James Cook Medal — for lifetime career contributions

Awarded for the most meritorious lifetime contributions to knowledge and society in Australia or its territories made by an individual and conducted mainly in NSW. The recipient may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The James Cook Medal was established by Council in 1943 following a donation made by Henry Ferdinand Halloran to celebrate his 50 years as a member of the Society and it has been awarded periodically since 1947.

The application procedure for this Medal is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Edgeworth David Medal — for mid-career researchers

Awarded for the most meritorious contributions to knowledge and society in Australia or its territories, conducted mainly in NSW by an individual who is from 5–15 years post-PhD or equivalent on 1 January of the year of the award, together with signs of leadership. The recipient may be resident in Australia or elsewhere. All assessments consider interruptions and performance relative to opportunity.

The Edgeworth David Medal was established by Council in 1943 in honour of Sir TW Edgeworth David FRS, who compiled the first comprehensive record of the geology of Australia, and following a donation made by Henry Ferdinand Halloran to celebrate his 50 years as a member of the Society. It has been periodically awarded since 1948.

The application procedure for this Medal is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Ida Browne Early Career Medal

Awarded for the most meritorious contributions to knowledge and society in Australia or its territories made mainly in NSW, together with signs of emerging leadership. The recipient may be resident in Australia or elsewhere. Applicants are expected to have been awarded a doctorate or equivalent postgraduate degree. In addition, since this is an early academic career award, applicants are expected to be in the first few years of their career. To be eligible they must have published their first research paper no more than 6 years ago (that is the date that the publication was formally accepted, as shown on the formal publication — not electronic pre-print, should be no more than 5 years prior to the close of applications, normally 30 September. So, for 2025 the publication acceptance date of the first paper should be no earlier than 30 September 2019). All assessments consider career interruptions and performance relative to opportunity.

The Ida Browne Medal was established by Council in 2023 in honour of Ida Browne DSc, palaeontologist and first woman President of the Royal Society of NSW, serving from 1953–1954.

The application procedure for this Medal is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

Discipline Awards and Lectureships

Applications for the Society's discipline awards and lectureships will be called for annually. These Awards are made on a three-yearly cycle, Years A, B and C, as indicated in the listing of the Awards, with Year A Awards in 2026, Year B in 2027, and Year C in 2028. The discipline awards for Year A (offered in 2026, 2029, 2032, ...) are as follows.

RSNSW Clarke Medal and Lectureship in the Earth Sciences

Awarded for distinguished research in any area of the sciences affecting the planet, excluding Medicine and Veterinary Science, and Agricultural and Environmental Science, conducted mainly in NSW. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The Royal Society of NSW Clarke Medal honours Rev. William Branwhite Clarke, a geologist, and a significant figure in the history of the Royal Society of NSW, who served for a decade as a highly influential Senior Vice-President of the Society (in the early years, the Governor of NSW was the President of the Society). The Medal was first awarded in 1878 “*for meritorious contributions to Geology, Mineralogy, and Natural History of Australasia.*” The first Clarke Memorial Lecture was delivered in 1903. Since 2018, the Clarke Medal and Lectureship have been conjoined.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form. Completed nominations (ideally compiled into a single PDF file) should be sent to the email address listed on the nomination form.

RSNSW Walter Burfitt Award in Medical and Veterinary Sciences and Technologies

Awarded for distinguished research in any area of the Medical and Veterinary Sciences and Technologies, conducted mainly in NSW. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The Walter Burfitt Award honours the life and work of Walter F Burfitt BA MB ChM BSc, an eminent Sydney surgeon in the early twentieth century. It was established as a prize with generous support from Dr Burfitt and his wife, and was first awarded in 1929. In 2004, funding for the prize was augmented by Dr Burfitt’s granddaughter, Dr Anne Thoeming. In 2023, Council designated it the Royal Society of NSW Walter Burfitt Award.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Award in the Social and Behavioural Sciences

Awarded for distinguished research in any area of the Social and Behavioural Sciences including Economics, Management, Psychology (with the exclusion of clinical psychology, which is included in the RSNSW Walter Burfitt Award in Medical and Veterinary Sciences and Technologies) and related disciplines, conducted mainly in NSW. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

Council established the Royal Society of NSW Social and Behavioural Sciences Award in 2023 to reflect the full scope of the Society’s founding values.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Award in the History and Philosophy of Science

Awarded for distinguished research in the History and Philosophy of Science conducted mainly in NSW. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The Royal Society of NSW History and Philosophy of Science Award was established by Council in 2013 to reflect the founding values of the Society and was first awarded in 2014.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Award in Computer Science or Information Technology

Awarded for distinguished research in Computer Science and Information Technology, including recent subdisciplines such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security and existing areas of computer science and information technology more generally. Recipients may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

The Royal Society of NSW Award in Computer Science or Information Technology was established by Council in 2025 to reflect the founding values of the Society and will be first awarded in 2026.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

Scholarships, Early Career, and Student Awards

RSNSW Bicentennial Postgraduate Scholarships (3)

Each year, the Society awards three Bicentennial Postgraduate Scholarships. The value of the scholarships is determined annually by Council, and includes a complimentary year of Associate Membership of the Society. The awards will be made primarily on the basis of an academic paper that is published by a higher-degree research student, enrolled at a university in NSW or the ACT. The paper must have been published in final form (electronic or paper form) after 1 July in the preceding year. The student must have been enrolled as a higher-degree student at the time of the initial submission to the journal in which the paper appeared. The student need not be the only or the first author on the paper, but, if there are multiple authors, their role in the work should be carefully explained. These details and an outline of the paper and its significance should be summarised in no more than one page. The curriculum vitae of the student will also be considered, as will recommendations by the nominators, one of whom should be the supervisor.

Winners will be expected to deliver a short presentation of their work at a general meeting of the Society in February or later of the year following that in which the award was made, and also submit a paper to the *Journal & Proceedings*.

Scholarships were first awarded by the Royal Society of NSW in 1999 and in 2023 were redesignated by Council to commemorate the Society's Bicentenary.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Bicentennial Early Career Research and Service Citation (3)

Three citations plus a complimentary year of Associate Membership of the Society are awarded each year to recognise outstanding contributions to research and service to the academic and wider community. Applicants must on 1 January of the year of nomination

be no more than 5 years after the award of their PhD or equivalent by a university or other research institution in NSW or the ACT.

Winners will be expected to deliver a short presentation of their work at a general meeting of the Society in February or later of the year following that in which the award was made, and also submit a paper to the *Journal & Proceedings*.

Council established these Early Career Citations in 2023 to commemorate the Society's Bicentenary.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Jak Kelly Postgraduate Award

Awarded for excellence in postgraduate research in physics annually. The winner is selected from presenters at each year's Australian Institute of Physics, NSW Branch Postgraduate Awards, as advised to the Awards Committee of the Royal Society of NSW.

The Jak Kelly Award honours Jak Kelly (1928–2012), Professor and head of Physics at the University of NSW (1985–1989), Honorary Professor at The University of Sydney (2004), and President of the Royal Society of NSW (2005–2006). It was first awarded in 2010.

There is no nomination form for this award.

Internal and Discretionary Awards

Notes relating to Internal and Discretionary Awards:

- For Internal Awards, the nominator and seconder must be either a current Member or a current Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW.
- Selection of these Awards is made by the Council of the RSNSW, excepting for the Archibald Ollé Award.

RSNSW President's Award

Awarded at the discretion of the President and Council of the RSNSW to an individual whose distinguished work in any area has made an outstanding and eminent contribution to the State and people of NSW. The recipient may be resident in Australia or elsewhere.

Council established the Royal Society of NSW President's Award in 2023 to reflect the full scope of the Society's founding values. There is no nomination form for this award.

RSNSW Citations (3)

The Royal Society of New South Wales Citations recognise an individual who has made significant contributions to the Society, but who has not been recognised in any other way.

The Royal Society of NSW Citation was first awarded in 2019. Council may make up to three Citations in any year at its discretion.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

RSNSW Medal

The Royal Society of New South Wales Medal recognises an individual who has made meritorious contributions to the advancement of knowledge in any field and also to the Society's administration, organisation, and endeavours.

The Royal Society of NSW Medal was first awarded in 1884, revived in 1943, and has been awarded periodically thereafter. Council may award the Medal in any year at its discretion.

The application procedure for this award is described on the nomination form. Each nomination must comply with the conditions of award and will consist of a completed nomination form together with supporting documentation as specified on the form.

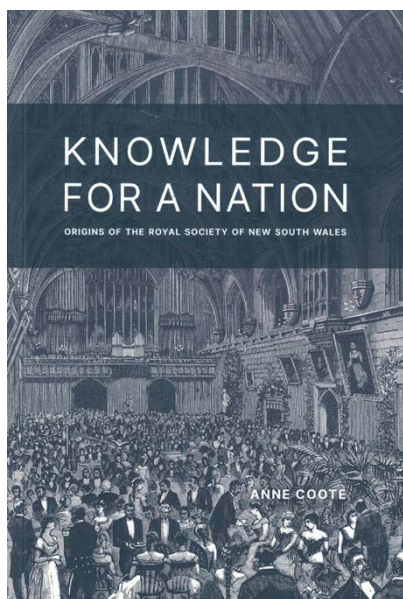
RSNSW Archibald Ollé Award

Awarded to the author/s of the best paper submitted to the Society's *Journal & Proceedings* in any year in which the Award is made.

The Archibald Ollé Prize was first awarded in 1956, established by a bequest from Mrs AD Ollé. The award of the Prize (currently \$500) is determined by the Editor of the Society's *Journal*, in consultation with the Editorial Board. There is no nomination form for this award.

Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales

Anne Coote



The Governor: “this wonderful history”

The State Librarian: “a crystal-clear and beautifully constructed exposition on the intellectual milieu, international parallels and the political machinations behind the creation and administration of the Royal Society. It helps inform not only the history of science in NSW, but more broadly the larger intellectual climate of Australia.”

“a book which is genuinely engaging” “the storytelling is compelling”

“takes the story outside the constrictions of Royal Society personalities, into the much more significant world of colonial society and politics”

“tells the early history of a learned society still active in the intellectual culture of 21st century Australia. Dr Coote’s *Knowledge for a Nation* beautifully captures this story.”

The Society President: “a very readable account that is hard to put down. By using the characters involved in the Society to tell its story, she has produced a rollicking recital of their lives and times, of the Society’s fortunes and misfortunes, ebbs and flows, highs and lows.”

Peter Shergold: “Pick up this wonderful and engaging history by Dr Anne Coote, and you will find yourself in a different place. You will be transported to another time, listening in on vigorous debates about science, technology, medicine, philosophy and society. More importantly, you will gain a sense of the world which shaped their views and their approach to intellectual discovery.”

“because of Coote’s wonderful attention to just the right detail, we are allowed to comprehend the world that existed” 140 years ago

“Coote centres her history of the scientific establishment on the flesh, blood and temperament of the participants, not just on the ideas that they espoused. We meet real people, some snooty, some engaging, some dull, some respectable, some downright unethical but, nearly all of them, insatiably curious or at least feeling the need to behave so in front of others.”

“between the covers of this absorbing book lies ... more than a travel guide to a foreign country... History is not just a quaint place to visit. It has made the world in which we live today and beckons to the future which awaits.”

“To potential readers — Royal Society members and beyond — I thoroughly recommend this book. **Buy it. Read it. Think about it.**”

Knowledge for a Nation: Origins of the Royal Society of New South Wales by Anne Coote

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The book is available from the RSNSW Online Shop at \$50 for RSNSW members (<https://members.royal-soc.org.au/rsnsw-shop/>), or from John Reed Books (\$59.95), <https://johnreedbooks.com.au/p/knowledge-for-a-nation?barcode=9780645859409>

The Royal Society of New South Wales



INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The *Journal & Proceedings* welcomes manuscripts for review in the many areas of interest to the Royal Society: science, engineering, social science, politics, arts, philosophy, and the humanities. Papers presenting aspects of the historical record of research carried out by Australians or within Australia are particularly welcome. Papers (other than those specially invited by the Editorial Board) will only be considered if the content is either substantially new material that has not been published previously, or is a review of a major research programme.

Letters to the Editor, Discourses, Short Notes and Abstracts of Australian PhD theses may also be submitted for publication. We welcome sets of papers where disagreements among authors are ventilated and argued. Please contact the Editor if you would like to discuss a possible article for inclusion in the *Journal*.

In the case of papers presenting new research, the author must certify that the material has not been submitted concurrently elsewhere nor is likely to be published elsewhere in substantially the same form. In the case of papers reviewing a major research programme, the author must certify that the material has not been published substantially in the same form elsewhere and that permission for the Society to publish has been granted by all copyright holders.

Details of submission guidelines can be found in the online Style Guide for Authors at: <https://www.royalsoc.org.au/society-publications/the-royal-society-of-nsw-journal/information-for-authors/>.

Note that references should be formatted using the Sage-Harvard reference style. Include the DOI or ISBN of each reference when available. Do not attempt to copy the page layout of the *Journal*.

Manuscripts are only accepted in digital format (generally Microsoft Word) and should be e-mailed to: editor@royalsoc.org.au. In the unlikely event that a file is too large to email, it should be placed on digital media and posted to:

The Editor,
The Royal Society of New South Wales,
PO Box 576,
Crows Nest, NSW 1585

Manuscripts will be reviewed by the Editor, in consultation with the Editorial Board, to decide whether the paper will be considered for publication in the *Journal*. Manuscripts are subjected to peer review by at least one independent reviewer. In the event of initial rejection, manuscripts may be sent to other reviewers.

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