

1344th Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW

Minutes

The 1344th Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Society of NSW took place at 6:00 pm on Wednesday 2 September 2026 in the Michael Crouch Room, Mitchell Building, State Library of NSW, Shakespeare Place, Sydney, followed by an open lecture.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The President, Em Prof Christina Slade FRSN, presided and welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Em. Prof Lindsay Botten FRSN was an apology.

2. MINUTES OF THE 1343rd ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The President advised that the minutes of the 1343rd Ordinary General Meeting, held in the Michael Crouch Room of the State Library of NSW on 5 August 2026, had been made available on the Society's website.

There were no matters arising.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES FOR FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

The President advised that candidates for Fellowship and Membership had been recommended by Council at its meeting on 26 August 2026, on the advice of the Fellows and Members Assessment Committee.

The names would be circulated to voting members in the coming days, with any objections to be submitted to the Secretary within two weeks after circulation.

4. PRESENTATION OF FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

The President invited new Fellows, Members and Associate Members in attendance to receive their certificates. Certificates were presented to:

Fellows

Dr Bernadette Boss

Associate Member

Ines Wen

5. EDITOR, JOURNAL AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF NSW

The President acknowledged the outstanding service of Professor Robert Marks FRSN, who had served as Editor of the *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales* for approximately ten years.

She advised that a strong field of candidates had been considered for the position of Editor and that the Editor Selection Interview Panel had recommended the appointment of Emeritus Professor Les Copeland FRSN. Council had approved the recommendation at its meeting on 26 August 2026 and referred the appointment to the Ordinary General Meeting for approval.

Professor Copeland was noted to be an experienced academic and journal editor, including approximately 12 years as Editor-in-Chief of *Cereal Chemistry*. He also had extensive experience in manuscript assessment, peer review, editorial decision-making and working with associate editors and reviewers.

The President advised that discussions were also taking place about establishing an Associate Editor position to provide additional support to the Editor. Possible future publishing arrangements for the Journal were also being explored.

The following proposal was presented for approval:

Emeritus Professor Les Copeland FRSN be appointed Editor of the *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*.

In discussion, members emphasised the importance of the Journal to the Society and to the intellectual and scientific history of New South Wales.

It was noted that the multidisciplinary nature of the Journal reflected the broad purposes and membership of the Society, but also created challenges within contemporary academic publishing, where journals were increasingly discipline-specific and publication decisions were influenced by journal rankings and academic promotion criteria.

Professor Robert Marks observed that these circumstances could make the Journal less attractive to early career academics seeking publications that contributed directly to career advancement. High-quality contributions were therefore often likely to come from established or retired academics, or from authors seeking to present work of broad interdisciplinary interest.

Members commented that the Journal had an important role not only as a scholarly publication but also as a record of the proceedings, lectures, forums and intellectual activities of the Society. The importance of adequately resourcing the Journal was emphasised.

Support was also expressed for continuing to make printed copies available to members wishing to receive and pay for hard copies.

The President noted that the future development of the Journal, its resourcing and possible publishing arrangements would be considered further with the incoming Editor and Editorial Board.

6. REPORT FROM COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

The President provided an update on the Society's youth initiative and proposed changes to Associate Membership.

Council had recommended new guidelines designed to broaden participation by younger people, including senior secondary school students as well as university students.

The President thanked members who had contributed to the development of the proposals through the various working groups.

Under the proposed arrangements, senior secondary school students and undergraduate students would be able to participate as Associate Members without a membership fee and would have free entry to Society events. Different arrangements could apply to postgraduate students.

The aim was to build stronger connections between the Society and younger people and encourage their participation in the Society's activities from an earlier stage.

The proposed guidelines were being circulated to Fellows and Members for consideration and approval.

7. OPEN LECTURE

“Ecosystem restoration at scale, reintroducing native species and managing threats – nearly a decade of the Wild Deserts project”

Scientia Professor Richard Kingsford AO FRSN

Director, Centre for Ecosystem Science
School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences
UNSW Sydney

Australia has the world's most notorious extinction record for mammals, driving widespread functional loss in our desert ecosystems. The Wild Deserts project is a nationally significant ecological restoration initiative in the Strzelecki Desert of the Sturt National Park in far-northwestern New South Wales. Established in 2016, this project is led by UNSW's Centre for Ecosystem Science and Ecological Horizons, collaborating with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Taronga Conservation Society. The Wild Deserts Program

represents one of the most ambitious attempts to restore arid ecosystems in Australia. It was designed not only to reintroduce seven locally extinct species but to restore ecosystem function at a landscape scale through integrating species' reintroductions, threat management, particularly feral cats, and adaptive data-driven decision-making. This presentation focuses on the successes and failures of ecosystem restoration at large scales, reflecting the vision of the Wild Deserts Project.

About the speaker

Richard Kingsford is a Scientia Professor at UNSW Sydney and the Director of the Centre for Ecosystem Science. He is a conservation biologist who has worked extensively on ecosystem restoration and threatening processes in Australia. He has led projects in aerial surveys of waterbirds, informing river management, reintroduction of platypuses and reintroductions of locally extinct mammal species. He has expertise in the conservation of ecosystems, particularly freshwater aquatic ecology. He has worked with many different communities and governments across Australia on the conservation management of ecosystems. His research has influenced conservation policy and management, including through involvement on state and federal advisory committees. He leads the Wild Deserts Partnership, focusing on restoring seven locally extinct mammal species to Sturt National Park in far western New South Wales and monitoring, evaluation and research for water for the environment in the Macquarie River and Lower Balonne.

Richard has been a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW since 2020. His work has been acknowledged by numerous awards, including three Eureka Awards in 2001, 2008, 2015, the Hoffman Medal in 2007 for contributions to global wetland science, and in 2025 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for 'distinguished service to conservation biology, to environmental sustainability research, and to freshwater biodiversity and ecosystems governance.' Richard is also the inaugural winner of the Royal Society of NSW Life Sciences Award in 2025.

8. VOTE OF THANKS

A vote of thanks was given by Em Prof Christina Slade FRSN.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. CLOSE

The President closed the meeting at 7:30 pm.

The minutes were recorded by the Secretary, Em Prof Trevor Brown FRSN.

Signed as a true record
Em Prof Christina Slade FRSN
President

RSNSW YouTube link: [Ecosystem restoration at scale—nearly a decade of the Wild Deserts project](#)