

# Securing the Society's Future

## Royal Society of New South Wales Master Plan 2024 – 2029

### Background

In September 2023, Council engaged strategic design experts from *Poetic Thinking* to work with the Society to create the pathway to a secure future.

The brief for this project was to:

- Build on the Society's 2015 and 2019 White Papers and 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan
- Consult widely with the membership and generate engagement with and willingness to participate in the Society
- Position the Society around a purpose that is Contemporary, Progressive and Relevant
- Identify the most important strategic programs and develop plans to implement them effectively

After a survey of the entire membership, several working sessions were held with the group of 30 members who expressed interest in participating. These discussions built on successive reviews of the Society since 2015, including the most recent 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan

### Purpose

The Royal Society of New South Wales traces its origins to the Philosophical Society of Australasia, which was established on 27 June 1821. The Society received Royal Assent in 1866 and was incorporated by an Act of the NSW Parliament in 1881.

Today, the Society is learned institution that creates and disseminates knowledge across a broad spectrum of disciplines – science, art, literature and philosophy.

The purpose of the Society is to draw people together from these diverse disciplines and from diverse backgrounds, creating a place to share their experience, wisdom and expertise.

Their knowledge is employed to investigate, elaborate, inform and influence public discourse on the highly complex, “wicked” problems facing the world in the 21st century, particularly those that impact NSW and Australia.

**The Society's ambitions are summarised by its Vision of *Enriching Lives Through Knowledge and Inquiry*.**

## Values and Culture

The Society upholds the principles of liberal democracy, religious, political, and cultural freedoms by promoting *non-discriminatory, evidence-based discourse* and the *free exchange of ideas*. The Society subscribes to these ideals:

- **Commitment to advancing the best interests of society:**
  - advancing knowledge for a more just, sustainable and secure society.
- **A questioning spirit:**
  - supporting the principles of freedom of thought and speech, and rational inquiry.
- **Diverse and inclusive engagement:**
  - embracing individual and cultural differences to enhance our collective success.
- **Boldness and innovation:**
  - acting with courage to address issues of the day, take calculated risks and to innovate as modern technologies expand ways to communicate.
- **Good governance:**
  - organisational practices that are ethical, inclusive, respectful, consultative, participatory, accountable and sustainable
- **Gathering place:**
  - for people who have a common interest in advancing knowledge and contributing to a better future, and
  - in a social setting that provides ample opportunity for informal discussion, and exchange of ideas and to meet people outside their usual networks.
- **Sharing ideas, achievements and knowledge across disciplines**
  - recognising excellence as part of this process and through the Society's prestigious Awards
- **Substantive influence on the discourse** around critical issues that face NSW, Australia and beyond.

## 2024 – 2029 Master Plan

### Underpinning Principles for each Program

Each program is described in terms of six principles:

- What – a concise statement of the activity
- Who – who is responsible for it
- When – an outline of the timeframe
- Where – where (geographic location and group)
- Why – the purpose (where the value lies)
- How – the means of implementation (including other stakeholder involvement)

## The Five Master Plan Programs

Future Fund	Activities with Impact	Effective Communication	Member Engagement	Operational Excellence
Build up a capital preserved fund of \$5 – \$10 M to strengthen the long-term financial position and support operational expenses.	Create a more innovative and engaging program that is influential in public discourse on the complex issues and challenges facing modern society.	Maximise the impact of the Society and make it more relevant and relatable to the wider community.	Attract a vibrant, and diverse group of members spanning academia, the arts, civil society, industry, government, and public administration.	Enhance the resilience of the Society's operations and financial planning and enable optimal allocation of the time and expertise of our volunteers.

### Implementation

Each of the five Programs is being implemented by a group working with a designated leader from Council.