

## 2026 PREMIER'S PRIZES FOR SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

### NOMINATION GUIDELINES

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The Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering (Prizes) recognise excellence in science and engineering, and reward leading researchers and educators for cutting-edge work that has generated economic, environmental, health, social or technological benefits for NSW.

The Prizes aim to raise community awareness and appreciation of the important contribution scientists, engineers and educators make and encourage careers in STEM fields.

#### Categories

##### Scientist of the Year

The top award is the Premier's Prize for Scientist of the Year, presented to an outstanding individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of science and/or engineering which has benefited or has the potential to benefit the people of NSW. There is no nomination for Scientist of the Year as the Selection Committee manages this category by another process.

The 2026 Scientist of the Year will receive a trophy and \$60,000 in prize money.

##### Other award categories

A trophy and \$5,000 in prize money will be awarded to the winner in the following nine categories:

- 1. Excellence in Mathematics, Earth Sciences, Chemistry or Physics** Awarded to a researcher who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution and impact in one of these fields, and whose research has made a significant contribution to addressing a real-world challenge.
- 2. Excellence in Biological Sciences (Ecological, environmental, agricultural and organismal)** Awarded to a researcher in the biological sciences – in relation to ecological and environmental science, and aspects of the behaviour, physiology, evolution, form and function of plants and animals – who has demonstrated an outstanding role and impact in one of these fields, and whose research has made a significant contribution to addressing a real-world challenge.
- 3. Excellence in Medical Biological Sciences (Cell and molecular, medical, veterinary and genetics)** Awarded to a researcher in the medical biological sciences – in relation to human and animal health, biotechnology, and basic cellular and molecular understanding of biological processes – who has demonstrated an outstanding role and impact in one of these fields, and whose research has made a significant contribution to addressing a real-world challenge.
- 4. Excellence in Engineering or Information and Communications Technology** Awarded to a researcher who has demonstrated exceptional impact in their field of engineering or ICT and big data analytics, and who has made a significant contribution to the community or state through their research or professional projects.
- 5. NSW Early Career Researcher of the Year (Biological Sciences)** Awarded to an individual who is 35 years or younger (at the closing date of nominations) or who has been awarded their PhD in the last five years, who is conducting outstanding and novel research in the biological sciences, ranging from ecology to molecular and medical science.
- 6. NSW Early Career Researcher of the Year (Physical Sciences)**

Awarded to an individual who is 35 years or younger (at the closing date of nominations), or who has been awarded their PhD in the last five years, who is conducting outstanding and novel research in the physical sciences, including mathematics and engineering.

7. **Leadership in Innovation in NSW** Awarded to an individual demonstrating excellence in leadership in the application of novel ideas and techniques to address challenges, solve problems and generate new knowledge for the benefit of New South Wales.
8. **Innovation in NSW Public Sector Science and Engineering** Awarded to an individual from a NSW public sector agency who has contributed to innovative research or to finding solutions to challenges facing New South Wales, especially in transport and logistics, water, resources and energy, agriculture and other priority areas.
9. **Innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics Teaching in NSW** Awarded to a primary or secondary school teacher, who is in a teaching role at the time of nomination, and who has motivated and inspired students to become involved in student-centred learning, and whose work impacts on the science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) participation and performance of students in their school or educational facility.

#### NOTE

- Categories are not exclusive and each nomination should be submitted under the category which correlates best with the nominee's field of expertise. The selection committee may at its discretion allocate the nomination to a more suitable category.
- Prizes in **categories 1-8** will be presented to individuals based on the excellence and impact of research which has been primarily conducted in the last five years. The nomination should clearly explain how the researcher's work has benefited New South Wales or the wider community, or how it has addressed a significant economic, environmental, health or technological challenge.
- Nominations for **category 9** must demonstrate an outstanding ability in leadership and innovative thinking in their contribution towards STEM learning in NSW primary and secondary schools.

#### Important Dates

##### **Monday 30 March 2026**

Nominations open at 9am AEST

##### **Monday 18 May 2026**

Nominations close at 5pm AEST

#### Eligibility

1. The 2026 Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering can only be awarded to individuals. Where the research has been a collaborative effort between two or more persons, you are encouraged to submit separate online nomination forms outlining individual involvement in the research. Posthumous nominations will not be accepted.
2. Eligibility for the 2026 Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering is limited to Australian citizens or permanent residents who have resided in NSW for at least five years in total up to and including the nomination deadline and who have performed the majority of the work being acclaimed while a resident and working in NSW.
3. Primarily work undertaken in the five years up to and including the nomination deadline will be considered for this year's Prizes. Allowance may be made for nominees who have experienced a career interruption as defined by the Australian Research Council Eligibility and Career Interruptions Statement: <https://www.arc.gov.au/about-arc/program-policies/eligibility-and-career-interruptions-statement>

If you have questions regarding a career interruption, please contact [premiers.prizes@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:premiers.prizes@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au) prior to submitting your nomination to determine your eligibility.

4. In addition to the above conditions, eligibility for **category 9** for the *Innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics Teaching in NSW* award is limited to applicants who have been teaching at primary and/or secondary school level in NSW for a period of at least two years up to and including the nomination deadline. The nominee must be teaching in a NSW primary and/or secondary school or an educational facility at the time of nomination.
5. Previous unsuccessful nominees are eligible and strongly encouraged to reapply.
6. Past recipients of any of the category awards will not be considered eligible for a prize in the same category.

### How to apply

To submit a nomination, you must:

1. complete the online nomination form  
**<https://chiefscientist.smartygrants.com.au/PPSE2026>**
2. provide all the information requested and address the nomination criteria
3. submit your nomination by the closing date.

### Nomination criteria

Each **nominator** must include:

1. A *Curriculum Vitae* of the nominee. This should be **no more than five pages in length**, and include:
  - a. Full career details, including current and former appointments
  - b. A brief career interruption statement (*if relevant*)
  - c. A publication record listing important, impactful research, including the top five publications with citation metrics and h-index (*required for categories 1-8 only*)
  - d. Date of birth (*required for categories 5 & 6 only*)
  - e. A record of grants awarded
  - f. Contact details for three referees. Referees will be contacted if the panel requires further information or to verify any aspect of the nomination.
2. A completed nomination form, including:
  - a 250-word written statement for categories 1-8 explaining:
    - the significance, impact and quality (include indicators) of the nominee's research,
    - how their achievements in science and engineering have translated into beneficial outcomes for the wider community of NSW;
  - or**
  - for **category 9**, a 250-word written statement explain how this teacher has contributed to innovative science, technology, engineering or mathematics teaching methods, and the positive impact this has had on the students in the school or educational facility.

The **nominee/nominator** may also be asked by the Selection Committee to provide:

1. The nominee's proof of Australian citizenship or permanent residency (e.g. birth certificate, citizenship certificate, visa). Certified copies are allowed on the proviso that they are clearly legible, and copies of identification pages of passports accompany any visas.

2. A signed Statutory Declaration asserting that the majority of research being acclaimed was performed in NSW and that the nominee has resided in NSW for at least five years in total, up to and including 18 May 2026 (for categories 1-8).

### Self-nominations

Self-nominations will be accepted where the nomination is supported with strong references.

### Closing date

Nominations for the 2026 Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering **must be submitted by 5.00pm AEST on Monday 18 May 2026**. Late nominations will not be considered.

### Selection Process

The Selection Committee comprises prominent members of the Australian science, technology and education sectors.

Eligible nominations will be assessed by the Selection Committee on how well they meet the nomination criteria. All information provided in the nomination will be taken into consideration during the assessment process.

The Selection Committee's recommendations will be submitted to the Premier for endorsement. The recommendations of the Selection Committee are final and the NSW Government reserves the right not to present an award in any year. There will be no correspondence regarding the final outcomes of the selection process including feedback on any nomination.

Nominations are only relevant for categories 1-9. There is no need to nominate for Scientist of the Year as the Selection Committee manages this category by another process.

The successful nominees will be notified by late August 2026.

The winners will be announced at the 2026 Premier's Prizes for Science & Engineering award ceremony. Recipients must be present to accept their award or alternatively, nominate a representative to attend the ceremony to accept the award on their behalf.

### More information

For any questions please contact:  
Crista Bracamonte, Manager, Strategy and Programs  
Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer  
**E:** [premiers.prizes@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au](mailto:premiers.prizes@chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au)  
**P:** 02 9228 3347

### Probity

The Premier's Department (the Department) will make sure that the awards opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines and incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct.

### Privacy

We treat your personal information according to *the Privacy Statement from the NSW Premier's Department's Privacy Management Plan* available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/contact-us/privacy> and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Department may also use or disclose information about nominees and award recipients under this Program for reporting purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other NSW Government entities and the Premier's Prizes for Science and Engineering Selection Committee for purposes including managing the program, research or service delivery, according to Australian and NSW laws. As part of your nomination, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)* and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything that would breach your obligations under the Act. For more information on our privacy policies, including rights to access and/or correct personal information, please visit the Department website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/contact-us/privacy>

### Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the nomination without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the nomination confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the Selection Committee and other NSW Government employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of the Department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other NSW Government departments or agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the NSW Parliament

We may also disclose confidential information if

- we are required or authorised by law to disclose it
- you agree to the information being disclosed, or
- someone other than us has made the confidential information public.

## **Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009**

Nominators and nominees should be aware that information submitted in nominations and all related correspondence, attachments and other documents may be made publicly available under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)*. Information that is deemed to be commercially sensitive will be withheld.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)* makes government information accessible to the public by:

- requiring government agencies to make certain sorts of information freely available
- encouraging government agencies to release as much other information as possible
- giving the public an enforceable right to make access nominations for government information
- restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure