

Research Scientist Classification

Information Sessions
4 May 2026

Neusa Soares
RSCC Secretariat



Acknowledgement of Country

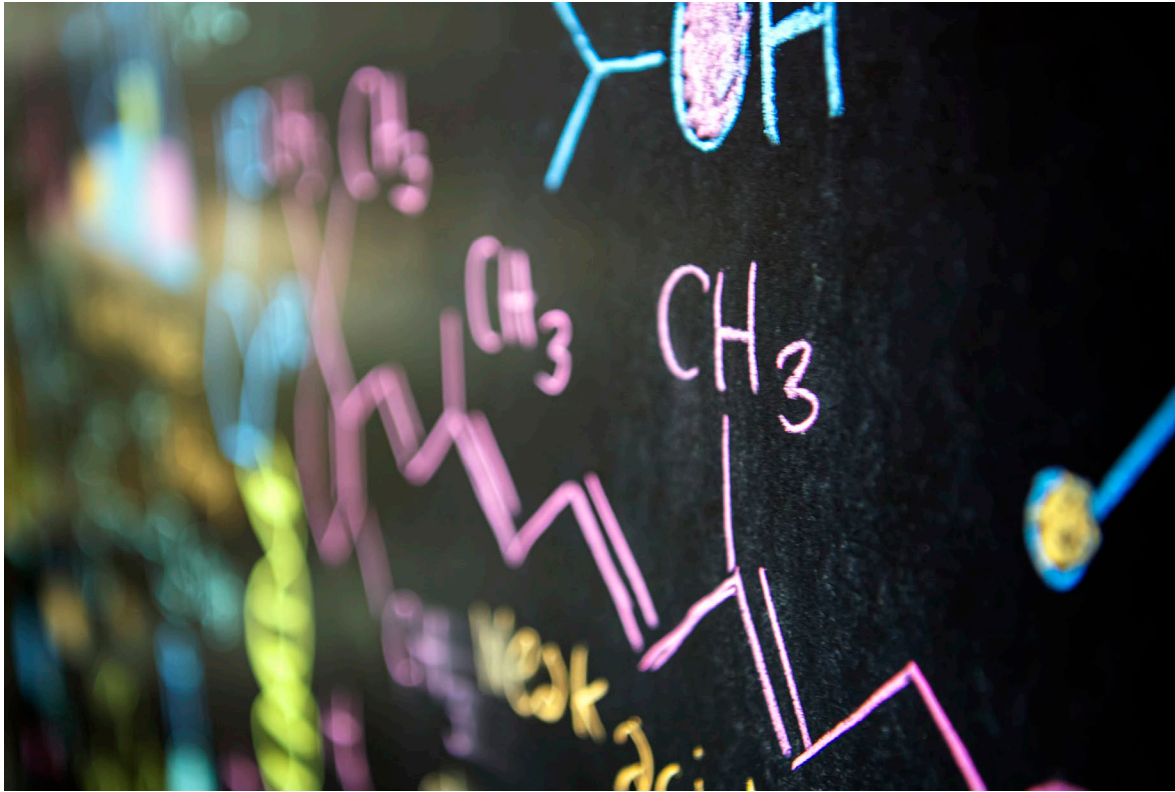
Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer

Introduction

Welcome

- Prof Hugh Durrant-Whyte, Chief Scientist & Engineer
- Dr Georgina Kelly, Chair of the Research Scientist Classification Committee

Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer



Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte
Chief Scientist & Engineer

NSW Research Scientist Classification

The NSW Research Scientist Classification (RSC) is administered by the Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE)

Intended for Scientists whose primary role is original research and publication

RSC committee make recommendations on:

- Entry
- Progression
- Continuation
- Regression

Research Scientist Classification: Policy and Guidelines

Authoritative source of information and requirements – please read carefully

- Research Scientist Classification: Policy and Guidelines (July 2025) – most recent
- Available online:  <https://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/research-support/science-in-nsw/research-scientist-classification>

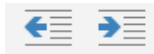


About the Research Scientist Classification

To Enter:

- 12+ months in government, with research as a core role
- Established research projects aligned to agency priorities, with proven outputs and outcomes
- Level at entry is determined by the Committee

Few things to note:



- Efficiency Barriers (EB) within all levels except PRS
- Entry conditions may be waived in exceptional cases with agency support
- Progression between levels are not automatic
- Progression to the highest levels is not guaranteed for all

Once on the RSC



Individual will receive increments within each level yearly until the Efficiency Barrier or top of the level is reached

Individuals must apply every 3 years

- Can apply to defer (email request to agency before applications open)
- Require formal written application with structured questions and external reports
- Interviews at discretion of Chair

Application makes case to:

Continue at level
Progress through EB
Progress to next level

Criteria – Applicable for all levels



Full criteria contained in Sections 3 and 4 of the RSC Policy and Guidelines

Application Process

Application is via online form:
<https://rsc.awardsplatform.com/>

Summary case (200 words)

Four criteria (1000 words each)

- Research & innovation
- Impact
- Leadership
- Future research plans

*Optional: Extenuating circumstances
(200 words)*

Include attachments:

- Attachment 1 – List of projects
- Attachment 2 – List of publications

Optional – Performance relative to opportunity, other supporting attachments

Third party reports:

Sent automatically to:

- Supervisor
- Director
- Three scientific referees

Ensure their contact details (email) are correct!

Dates for 2026 RSC

4 & 5 May 2026	RSC information sessions
By 18 May 2026	Outcome of deferral applications sent to Research Scientists
18 May 2026	RSC applications open – Details will be published on OCSE website
30 June 2026 – 5pm	RSC applications close – No extensions available
August–September 2026	Interviews conducted – 52 Martin Place, Sydney
October 2026	RSCC submit recommendation reports to Chief Scientist & Engineer
Mid–October 2026	Chief Scientist & Engineer endorses recommendations. Distributes outcomes to Secretaries and Agency heads

Dr Georgina Kelly

Chair of the Research Scientist Classification Committee

Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer

RSC Committee



Chair and Committee are appointed by the Chief Scientist & Engineer

Members consist of both external (independent) members and agency nominees – All have had Senior public service roles

Appointments are 3 – 5 years

Members have research and leadership expertise in range of scientific disciplines

RSC Committee Role



Each application is assigned a minimum of 3 Committee members who:

- Read, assess and score applications independently
- Consider referee, supervisor and senior departmental reports
- Participate in the interview panels
- Reach a consensus recommendation
- Assist in drafting assessment reports
- Participate in appeal panels as required

General Observations

- The committee recognises the diverse contexts of government science — there are no fixed benchmark
 - Applicants need to provide evidence of scientific credentials and impact
 - Application should be clear and concise
 - Use dot points, attach summary tables, avoid repetitive text*
 - Have a clear forward research plan with pathway to deliver
 - Carefully select referees appropriate to your level
 - Start early to allow adequate preparation time
 - Think of the interview as an opportunity for clarification and reinforcement (NOT an inquisition)
-



Hear from a peer

Andrew Denham
Senior Research Scientist

DCCEEW

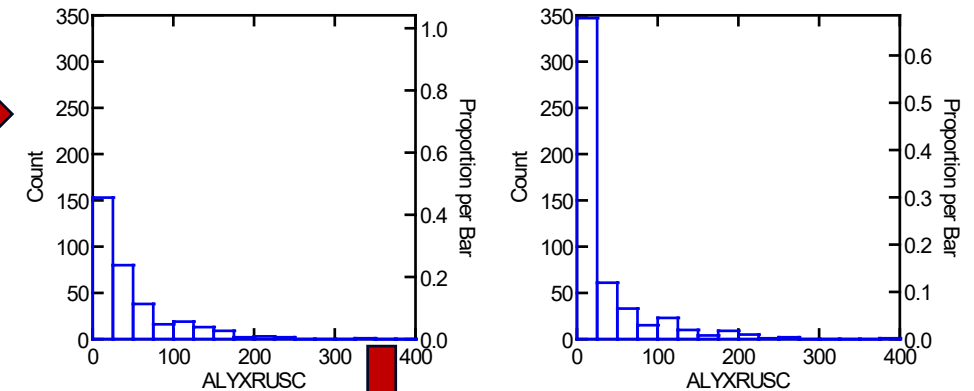
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Analysis and reporting

pre

post



Management decisions

THREATENED SPECIES HAZARD REDUCTION LIST - PART 1 - PLANTS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Listed on TSC Act	Listed on EPBC Act	Species Specific Conditions relating to the use of Fire	Species Specific Conditions relating to Mechanical Forms of Hazard Reduction
<i>Acacia acanthoclada</i>	Harrow Wattle	Endangered		No fire more than once every 10 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia acionastes</i>	Pindari Wattle	Endangered		No fire more than once every 5 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia atrox</i>	Myall Creek Wattle	Endangered		No fire	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia ausfeldii</i>	Ausfeld's Wattle	Vulnerable		No fire more than once every 10 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia bakeri</i>	Marblewood	Vulnerable		No fire	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia baueri</i> subsp. <i>aspera</i>	<i>Acacia baueri</i> subsp. <i>aspera</i>	Vulnerable		No fire more than once every 7 years	Only to 50 cm after March
<i>Acacia bynoeana</i>	Bynoe's Wattle	Endangered	Vulnerable	No fire more than once every 7 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia carneorum</i>	Purple-wood Wattle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	No fire more than once every 10 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal
<i>Acacia chrysotricha</i>	Newry Golden Wattle	Endangered		No fire more than once every 25 years	No slashing, trittering or tree removal

Andrew Denham, Senior Research Scientist
Conservation and Restoration Science Branch
Science and Insights Division, DCCEE

Reasons for moving to Research Scientist Classification

- Specialist roles with long timeframes for development
- Limited scope for progression on standard award
- Ensuring scientific rigour
- Credibility for individuals and agencies

Hear from a peer

Steve Simpfendorfer
Senior Research Scientist

DPIRD

Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer



Why?

Field pathology

- Play to your strengths
- Value-add
- Collaborate
- Students
- Plan
- Value feedback

An abstract background graphic on the left side of the slide, featuring a dark blue and black grid with glowing blue and orange lines and numbers (157, 150, 45, 10) in a futuristic, digital style.

Hear from a peer

Dr Catherine Offord

Head of Australian PlantBank Research, Senior Principal
Research Scientist

Botanic Gardens of Sydney

Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer

Cathy Offord – SPRS

Botanic Gardens of Sydney

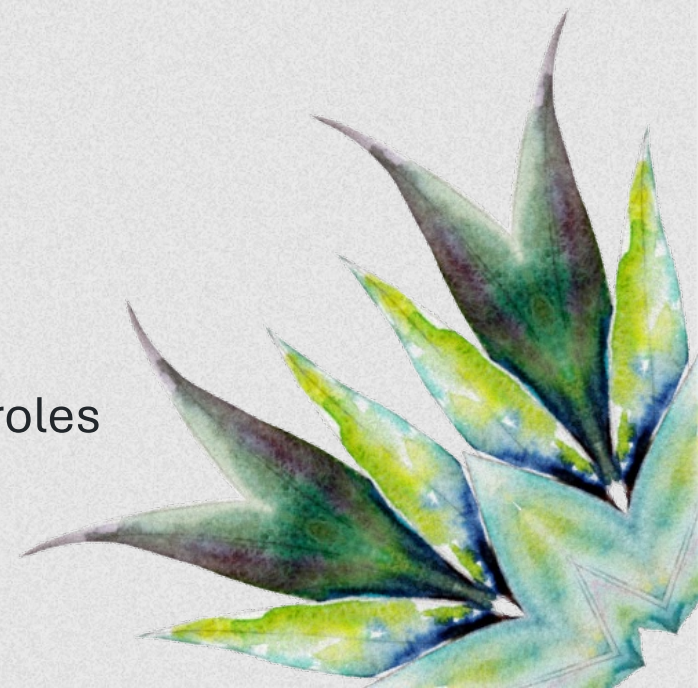
Entered as RS after PhD in 2001, progressed to SPRS in 2021

Field: conservation of flora; agricultural science background

Motivation: Helps to frame work my program based on research outcomes

Tips:

- Take a long-term view of progression
- Life happens - don't be afraid to take 'breaks' even if eligible to progress
- Balance admin and research, think of admin as supporting research
- Build networks - committees, organise conferences, adjunct university roles etc
- Mentor staff and students – pay it forward
- Encourage staff to enter the scheme



Hear from a peer

Dr Hervé Sauquet

Head of Plant Discovery and Evolution Research, Principal
Research Scientist

Botanic Gardens of Sydney

Office of the Chief Scientist & Engineer



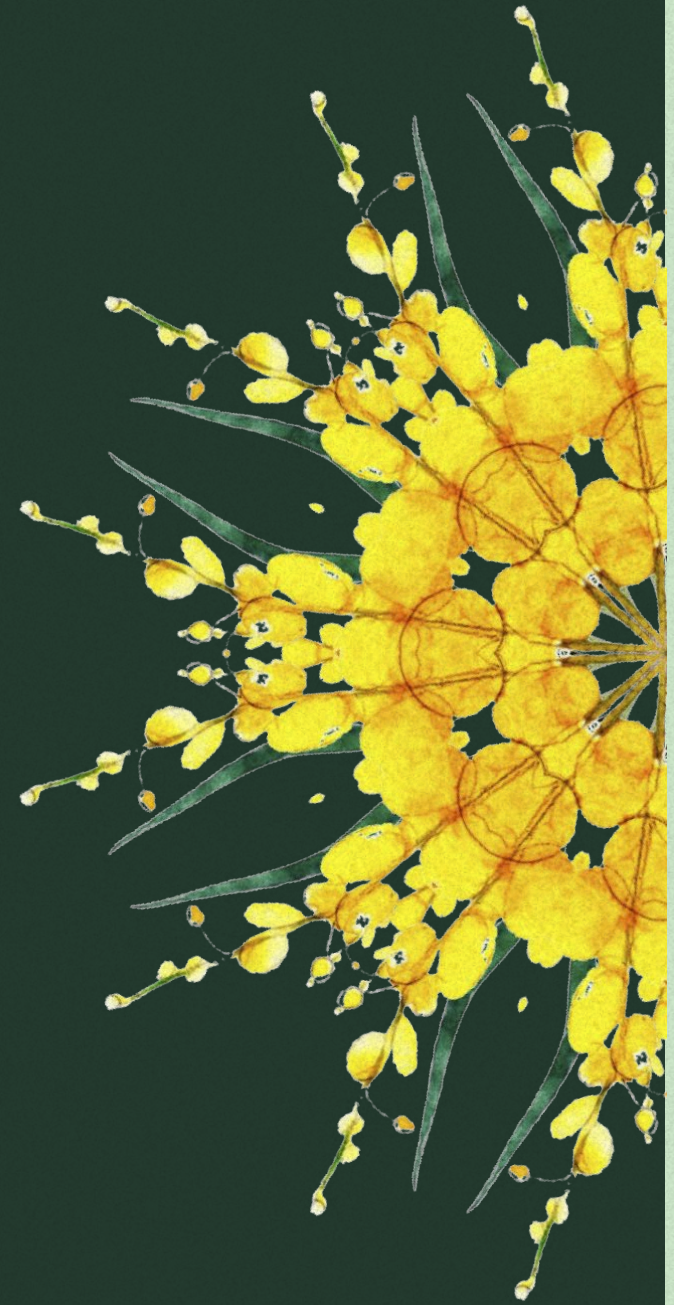
**BOTANIC
GARDENS
OF SYDNEY**

Hervé Sauquet

Head of Plant Discovery and Evolution Research (2023-now)

Principal Research Scientist (2023-now)

- Organise recent and future research in a very clear, coherent plan by themes (need not be exhaustive)
- Emphasise leadership role in publications, supervision, projects, grants
- Sustained (and increasing) scientific output is critical, impact is just as (if not more) important than diverse metrics
- Summary page is really helpful (for panel and oneself), focus on achievements since last interview (be explicit, use numbers)
- Think strategically ahead (of future RSC application), prioritise commitments, learn to say no (and yes)





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Q&A

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