2026 AGM Meeting of the Australian Society of Plant Scientists Minutes

DATE:	Wednesday 30 September
TIME:	5:15-6.05 pm
VENUE:	In-person: International Convention Centre Sydney meeting room C4.7
PRESENT:	Brent Kaiser (BK, President), Mary Byrne (MB, Secretary), Joseph Pegler (JP, Treasurer), Peter Ryan, Soumitra Patekar, Jun Ming Loke, Ben Long, Ghazanfar Khan, Daniel Wallis, Russell Woodford, Eric Bowels, Jasmine Divinagracia, Katie Schleyer, Vrinda Prabhu, Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh, Xiujuan Yang, Maria Ermakova, Bo Xu, Nicholas Booth, Maryam Zarean, Gabriella Jessica, Annamaria De Rosa, Iain Searle, Brett Williams, Karthik Holehonur Nataraj , Crystal Sweetman, John Patrick, Anna Koltunow, Alex Johnson, Kim Johnson, Mike Haydon, Ashley Jones, Laura Wey, Claudia Keitel, Sunita Ramesh, Qinqin Yang, Peter Crisp, Eduardo Flores-Sandoval, Dugald Reid , Mathew G Lewsey, Samantha McGaughey, Judith Lichtenzveig, Ricarda Jost, Zhong-Hua Chen, Thomas Roberts, Guilherme Ventura Yoshikawa, Oliver Berkowitz, Chris Cazzonelli, Nathan Tivendale, Monika Murcha , Scott Boden, Martha Ludwig, Anna Koltunow, Andrew Smith, Mark Tester, Barry Pogson, Tony Millar, Vanessa Melino, Claudia Keitel.
APOLOGIES:	Kathleen Soole

ASPS Agenda

1. Welcome and Apologies (Brent Kaiser)
2. Accept minutes from 2025 (Mary Byrne)
3. ASPS 2026 Awards (Brent Kaiser)
4. Future ASPS/ComBio meetings (Brent Kaiser /Mary Byrne)
5. Report President (Brent Kaiser) New web site.
6. Report Finances (Joey Pegler)
7. Report Communications (Scott Boden)
8. Report Global Plant Council (Kathleen Soole)
9. Science Meets Parliament (Brent Kaiser)
10. Functional Plant Biology Liaison Editor (Judith Lichtenzveig)
11. Report Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Sunita Ramesh); highlight different member opportunities (Brent)
12. ASPS Executive Composition (Brent Kaiser) ask for president elect nominations, ask for secretary nominations
13. ELECTION OF OFFICERS Nominations to fill ASPS positions (Brent Kaiser /Mary Byrne). Nominatin from Scott.
14. SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS
    Recognition of 2025 elected life and corresponding members (Brent Kaiser)
    Nominations for Life and Corresponding members (Brent Kaiser)
15. Any other business

ASPS Minutes and Actions

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
1.	**Welcome and Apologies (BK)**	Declare Meeting Open: Acknowledgement of Country		
2.	**Accept minutes from 2025 (MB)**	Any issues arising from the 2025 AGM minutes.	- No issues arising - accepted minutes; Joseph Pegler and Vanessa Melino	

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
3.	**ASPS 2026 Awards (BK)**	**Awards given this year**: - Goldacre Award: Dr. Renée Marchin Prokopavicius - Jan Anderson Award: Dr. Vanessa Melino - ASPS Education and Outreach Award: A/Prof. Claudia Keitel - JG Wood Lecture: Professor Barry Pogson - Functional Plant Biology Best Paper Award – Ms. Aayushree Kharel - Annals of Botany Lectureship: Dr. Qi Shen RN Robertson travel award: Ms. Marie-Emma Denarié, Western Sydney University and Ms. Madhoolika Karunakaram, University of Western Australia - Student Travel Awards: 14 awarded	Due to increasing cost of travel and increasing funds available for the RN Robertson Travel Award, the total funds available annually will be increased from $7,000 to $14,000 with applications capped at $7,000.	The increase to $14K was explored with the UWA Finance team. They indicated that the current capital in the R.N Robertson fund does not support a significant increase in the award. However, the treasurer will continue to review the award value across the coming years and seek to increase it once the capital has grown to a level that makes such an increase financially sustainable.
4.	**Future ASPS/ComBio meetings (BK/MB)**	Future ASPS meetings. ○ 2027: ASPS combined local face-to-face and hybrid meeting. ○ 2028: ComBio Melbourne* ○ 2029: ASPS face-to-face; venue Perth *ComBio	18th November 2027 **Queensland**: University of Queensland Stephanie Conway and Stephanie Kerr **Victoria**: Monash University Maria Ermakova and Eric Dusenge **Western Australia**: University of Western Australia Samantha Harvie **NSW & ACT**: University of Newcastle Vanessa Melino and Joseph Pegler	

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
		○ biannual, alternating between Melbourne and Sydney	**Tasmania**: University of Tasmania Eloise Foo and Frances Sussmilch **South Australia**:Adelaide University/ Flinders University Scott Boden and Crystal Sweetman **New Zealand** Will try to arrange joining **National coordinators** Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh and Mary Byrne A survey will be sent out to gather membership vote on whether to continue with ComBio or the hybrid format. The hybrid format was approved at the AGM in 2024, but all membership has not been consulted. Aim to do this after the new web site is released.	
5.	**REPORT** **President (BK)**	President's report	Announced new web page to be released in 4-6 weeks. Announced winners of the photo competition for the new web page. Update on possible partnerships with other Societies (reciprocal membership registration fees, Asia-Pacific regional meeting) – approved report, Kim Johnson, Mike Haydon	
6.	**REPORT** **Finances (JP)**	Honorary Treasurer's Report	– approved report, Chris Cazzonelli, Tony Millar	
7.	**REPORT** **Website & Communications** **(SB/**JW/CB/GK/FS/LC**)**	Communications Report	– accepted report, Anna Koltunow, Barry Pogson	
8.	**REPORT** **Global Plant Council (PR)**	Presentation on GPC activities.		
9.	**Science meets Parliament (BK)**	Science Meets Parliament 2026, ASPS was represented by: Dr Joanna Melonek (ANU)		

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
		Australian National University. Dr Sajitha Biju (UniMelb) University of Melbourne. Report of SMP within the April Phytogen Edition		
10.	**Functional Plant Biology Editor (JL)**		Noted Terms of Reference is being developed.	
11.	**REPORT Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SR)**	DEI Report – no report	Thanks from Sunita for the opportunity to be a Discipline representative.	
12.	**ELECTION OF OFFICERS Nominations to fill ASPS positions (BK/MB)**	For election (incumbents elected 2025, nominations 2026): Vote for Continuing: Secretary – Mary Byrne (USyd) Treasurer – Joseph Pegler (UNewcastle), Genetics and Molecular Biology – Farhad Masoomi-Aladizgeh (USyd) and Stephanie Kerr (QUT) Plant Development – Stephanie Conway (UQ) Plant Physiology – Sajitha Biju (UoM) Future Agriculture – Samantha Harvie Vote for nominations: Cell Biology - Lucas Auroux (La Trobe) Plants and the Environment – Bo (Weasley) Xu (UoA) Plant-Microbe Interactions - Francine Perrine-Walker (USyd) Diversity and Inclusion – Eleanor Imlay (UoA) Plant Science Education and Outreach – Claudia Keitel (USyd) Student representative - Suprikesh Kadlag (Murdoch) Volunteers:	– all nominations unanimously approved – nomination of Maxim Prokchorchik for Plant Microbe Interactions Discipline representative approved by the Executive Committee post-AGM and by agreement with Francine Perrine-Walker and Maxim Prokchorchik to co-represent the discipline.	

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
		Website and Communications Team –Dr Janet Wheeler, Dr, Dr Beth Loveys, Dr Frances Sussmilch, Dr Caitlin Byrt, Dr Alison Bentley, Lucas Auroux and Razlin Azman Website Administrator: Janet Wheeler		
13.	**SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS Nominations required for Members (Life/Corresponding) (BK)**	Noted welcome to 2025 Life and Corresponding members: Life members: Martha Ludwig (UWA) Peter Ryan (CSIRO, Canberra) Anna Koltunow (UQ) Andrew Smith (UA) Corresponding members: Mark Tester (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology) Ueli Grossniklaus (University of Zurich) - Suggestions for Life members 2025: Emerita Prof. Susanne von Caemmerer (ANU) Prof. Robert Furbank (ANU) - Suggestions for Corresponding members 2025: Prof. Dr. Berit Ebert, Ruhr-University Bochum Germany Professor Matthew Turnbull University of Canterbury, NZ	All life members present at the meeting. Mark Tester, corresponding member, present at the meeting. Nominations approved.	
14.	**ASPS Executive Composition (BK)**	Proposal to elect a Communications Officer to the Executive Committee	– unanimously approved Changes to the constitution – motion 1 - unanimously approved – motion 2 - unanimously approved	

No.	Item	Comments	Actions	Timeframe
15.	**Nomination for Communications Officer**	Nomination: Scott Boden	Scott to take up the position for 1 year. Nominations open for election at the 2027 AGM.	
16.	**Conference and award sponsors**	Slide of sponsors.	Including acknowledgment to FPB and AoB for sponsorship.	
17.	**Any other Business**			