Invited Statement to ACS Congress: Governance and the New Constitution

Roger Clarke FACS
19 June 2020

What makes a Professional Society?

- A Widely Recognised Body of Learning
- Special Knowledge and Skills
- Learning derived from Research, Education, Training and Deep Experience
- Ethical Standards
- High Standards of Behaviour
- Codes Enforced
- Application of Knowledge and Exercise of Skills in the Interest of Society and the Economy

Key Functions of a Professional Society

- Standard-Setting
- Knowledge Assessment
- Professional Development
- Collegial Interaction
- Member Services
- Public Policy

A Professional Society is clearly distinct from:
- A Commercial / For-Profit Corporation
- An Industry Association

The Principles underlying a Professional Society Constitution

Underlying all the Other Principles:

The Centrality of the Professional Membership

- The Society is of, and for, the Members
- Professional members are directly involved in the Society's values, strategy and priorities
The Principles underlying a Professional Society Constitution

(1) Embodiment of Values
(2) Behaviour Consistent with Values
(3) Dispersed Responsibilities, Powers, Funds
(4) Workable Delegations
(5) Control of the Key Constitutional Documents by the Professional Membership
(6) Control of Nomination Processes by the Professional Membership
(7) A Dual-Electorate Mechanism to Ensure Balance among CBDs/Suburbs/Regions
(8) Ongoing Vigour of Branches and Chapters

Some Features of a Member-Driven Constitution
All can be implemented in a manner compliant with the Corporations Act

- Centrality of the Members
  - Voting by Professional Members only
  - Open Processes for Nominations
  - Express Requirements for Member Services
  - Member-driven Panels supporting the Board
  - Membership approval for key documents
  - Communication channels among members
  - Branch powers and resources, sufficient to provide services regionally
  - Appropriate prioritisation for the use of surpluses from business lines

Getting from Here ... to There

- Openness and Participation
- A Task Force
- Widely Representative Composition
- Resourcing and Resource Control
- Engagement with the Membership
- Drafting and Debate
- Publication of Submissions, Reports

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