

JAMES RILEY | OCTOBER 25, 2019

ACS restructures in narrowest vote



Yohan Ramasundara: The corporate changes will not change the DNA of the ACS

Australian Computer Society members have approved a comprehensive restructuring of the organisation by the narrowest of margins, with 75.1 per cent of the eligible voters approving the changes. The proposals needed at least a 75 per cent approval rate in order to be accepted.

That 0.1 per cent margin made all the difference to the passage of the structural changes, which will see the society move from being an incorporated association under ACT law into a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act and regulated by ASIC.

Over the coming months, the legal entity under which the ACS has existed since it was founded more than 50 years ago in 1967 will be dissolve and be replaced by a new legal entity Australian Computer Society Limited.

The ACS executive has declined to release the final count on the proposal.

It is understood however that the chair of the meeting had declared 747 votes were cast - a ACS member inside the room told *InnovationAus.com* (<http://InnovationAus.com>) - with a Yes count of 561 (or 75.1004 per cent of the total.)

Had the Yes count been a single vote lower at 560, it would have tallied 74.9665 per cent of the vote, and the proposal would have failed. It has been a quite extraordinary day in the history of the ACS.

At stake in the vote were the governance structures and ultimately the people behind them that will control ACS' more than \$36 million annual revenue and its \$25 million cash reserves.

Of the eligible members who turned up at the ACS national headquarters for the ballot, 131 voted in favour of the proposal and 23 voted against the motion for a total of 154 votes cast in the room.

Of the proxy voters, 430 cast a vote in favour of the proposal and 163 voted against the proposal for a total of 593 proxy votes cast.

In total, of 561 members voted in favour of the proposal, 186 voted against for an overall voter participation number of 747.

It is understood the vote count at the special general meeting had been overseen by the ACS' auditors KPMG.

Despite the votes razor thin margin, society president Yohan Ramasundara hailed the decision as “a strong mandate” that the organisation was headed in the right direction.

He quickly moved to dispel concerns aired by the ‘No’ campaign that the organisation was moving too far from its core mission as a society for technology professionals delivering all of the credentialing, professional standards and professional education services that comes with that.

“I want to assure all members that our DNA won’t change as a result of this decision,” Mr Ramasundara said.

“ACS remains a not for profit membership based professional body, our core focus is on professional standards setting through the development and maintenance of core bodies of knowledge, certification and accreditation programs, and professional education,” he said.

“Professionalism is enshrined into the new constitution by ensuring only members of the ACS Professional Group are eligible for consideration on the future Board of Directors, and that our membership in the governance model is limited to individuals only rather than companies”.

Since being founded in 1967, the ACS has been an incorporated association in the Australian Capital Territory. In 2017 the ACS laid out its five-year Strategic Plan focusing on boosting the profession’s capacity and capability while positioning ACS as a catalyst for sparking innovation.