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'No confidence': ACS leadership cops a hiding



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Editorial Director
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The Australian Computer Society's National Congress has voted overwhelmingly to support a 'no confidence' motion against its own management committee, the ultimate ruling body of the troubled professional association.

The no confidence vote has set in motion a timetable for a possible spill of the entire management committee at another meeting of the Congress set for Monday November 2. The committee would then need to be reconstituted through fresh elections.

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The no confidence motion was supported by a two-thirds majority of the National Congress and follows a year of damaging internal brawling on the ACS management committee. The management committee of the association carries similar powers and responsibilities as a company board of directors.



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No confidence: The Australian Computer Society rifts are out in the open

The vote of no confidence was one of four motions passed at the meeting, each aimed at improving the transparency, improving governance, and ending the shocking impasse on the management committee that has stymied the effective running of the organisation.

Motion 1: That all Management Committee minutes for 2019 and 2020 and hereafter on an ongoing basis be made available to Congress, other than those sections of minutes related to incamera sessions, and those sections of minutes subject to ongoing legal privilege.

Motion 2: That a pecuniary interest register be established and updated at each Management Committee meeting when Interests and potential Conflicts of interest are declared where each member of Management Committee must disclose if they and/or any member of their immediate family, or any company they are associated with, receives any benefits from ACS or any supplier of goods or services to ACS. This register to be maintained by the secretariat of Congress on behalf of the ACS.

Motion 3: That a full and detailed independent financial audit be conducted of ACS expenditure for the financial years 2018/19, and 2019/20. This audit to specifically examine adherence to the ACS delegated authority framework, and examine formal agreements entered into by the ACS.

Motion 4: That Congress has lost confidence in the ACS Management Committee.

The four motions were put forward by ACS president Ian Oppermann, who was elected to the role in March, and seconded by

the society's South Australia branch chair Christopher Kadbone.

Dr Oppermann, who is also the NSW Government's chief data scientist, also gave notice of another meeting to be held on November 2 at which four votes will be held to remove national office bearers and the congressional representatives on the management committee.

The four planned motions would remove everyone from the management committee – including Dr Oppermann's own seat as president. The National Congress would then need to meet again on November 16 to vote on filling the empty management committee positions.

The no confidence vote by the National Congress last Friday came one day after long-time ACS chief executive Andrew Johnson left the society, replaced by an internal interim candidate Rupert Grayston, who has been the ACS director of professional standards and assessment services.

Mr Johnson resigned from the ACS in July after six years as CEO and nine years in today with the society. But after working a three-month notice period, it was unclear until the final week whether he intended to leave the organisation.

The turmoil at the ACS has taken a toll on the reputation of society, and follows a disastrous attempt to restructure from an incorporated association in the ACT to become a Company Limited by guarantee.

That restructure was defeated by a single, but only after its result had been challenged in the Federal Court by a rebel group of members led by ACS Fellow Roger Clarke. The rebel group of members have long complained about a lack of transparency in the organisation, and even a culture of secrecy by the management committee.

The vote of no confidence and clean out of the management committee – after a lengthy and by all reports extremely unpleasant meeting of the National Congress last Friday – looks like it should strengthen the hand of Dr Oppermann in reconstituting the board.

But where the society ends up is far from clear, with the divisions in the 50-year-old professional association now out in the open.

Do you know more? Contact James Riley via [Email](mailto:james@innovationaus.com) (<mailto:james@innovationaus.com>) or [Signal](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.thoughtcrime.securesms&hl=en_AU) (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.thoughtcrime.securesms&hl=en_AU).

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Bela
2 months ago

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This is just a demonstration of poor leadership. Defaming voluntary committee members because Oppermann could not lead to consensus. This is not leadership. The theatrics of a leadership spill for the first time in ACS history demonstrates a person that is not capable of resolving complex challenges in a

professional manner. Who would want to work with someone like that! Shame! Shame! Shame! With governance by humans like this, I can see why he is pushing Ethical AI- so humans don't abuse process.

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