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/ More heads should roll, say Clarke and Goldsworthy

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# More heads should roll, say Clarke and Goldsworthy Featured

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Clarke - Johnson is leading by example

## Two of the leaders of the dissident Rescue Your ACS group have issued public statements after CEO Andrew Johnson's resignation, calling for more people to go.

The leader of the group, Dr Roger Clarke, has welcomed Johnson's departure (/it-industry/johnson-resigns-as-accs-ceo.html), but believes much more needs to be done. Professor Ashley Goldsworthy, always outspoken expresses the same sentiments in stronger terms. Below are lightly edited versions of both statements.

### Dr Clarke's statement

"For the last two years a small clique has used the Australian Computer Society to build commercial value. In doing so, the clique has seriously harmed the professional society.

As CEO, Johnson pursued revenue as an end in itself, and prioritised the attraction not of professionals but of members in non-professional categories.

His actions were inconsistent with the purposes, values and needs of the professional society. He undermined services to professional members, gutted the powers of the Branches, and generally disenchanted large numbers of professionals, many of whom declined to renew their memberships. He thereby switched the balance of voting power over to non-professionals.

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Johnson also appeared to be uninterested in governance processes. Many of his actions over the past 12 months demonstrably flouted the Society's rules, and the law.

He should have resigned or been dismissed shortly after the Federal Court castigated the long series of procedural errors made by the CEO and the then President, Yohan Ramasundara, in the context of the General Meeting in October 2019.

The clique had presumed that the old Society would cease in December 2019 and be replaced by a semi-commercial corporation. The court's decision quashed that manoeuvre.

So the Management Committee was halved in size during the early months of 2020, and, even in mid-July, multiple Branch Committees still aren't properly constituted. Johnson retained his position through the interregnum, but abruptly ceased to be CEO on 9 July.

The 'Rescue Your ACS' movement welcomes his departure. At this stage, the other members of the clique have yet to resign their roles. The movement is sustaining its pressure on the ACS to eject the other individuals most responsible for the many process irregularities and for the commercialisation drive and the harm it's caused to the Society.

Also unclear are: who will act as CEO? What KPIs will they work to? And what profile is to be sought in the person to replace the CEO?

The reformist agenda of the new President, Ian Oppermann, must be strongly supported.

To attract that support, he needs to make every effort to directly involve not just Congress and the members of the Management Committee who are not members of the clique, but also the membership as a whole.

Apart from the process to replace the CEO, the other critical issue right now is the vehicle and procedures whereby a new constitution will be developed that is member-driven, and has members as its focus.

### Professor Goldsworthy's statement

Following Andrew Johnson's resignation as ACS CEO, Past President Ramasundara and Vice-President Nick Tate should also resign. Both remain members of the Management Committee of the Society.

They, along with Johnson, CEO of the Society, were the principal architects of the disastrous tactic to commercialise the Society in October last year. Since that scathing judgement by Justice Wigney, I have been seeking the resignation or termination of Johnson. With his resignation, Ramasundara and Tate should now follow him out the door.

After the criticisms of Justice Wigney I cannot understand how Ramasundara and Tate can continue on the Management Committee. If I had been in their position I would have resigned the day Justice Wigney released his judgement. They should be embarrassed to turn up to Management Committee C meetings.

While they continued to hold influential positions on the MC, they will impede frank and open discussions on the very issues that Justice Wigney criticised.

I called on Andrew Johnson to resign on 15 January 2020. In responding he said, 'I have no intention of resigning, my role has been to support the National Congress recommendations and Management Committee resolutions, which I have done faithfully.'

Being a CEO does not absolve one of acting ethically and professionally in objection to what might be unethical and unprofessional. A CEO has a critical role in correcting errors of omission and commission by the Management Committee and the President, and to advise them of their errors. The Nuremberg defense (*Befehl ist Befehl*, or 'orders are orders') is not acceptable. Neither is the Ostrich defense. A strong CEO is in a position of great influence to control what goes on.

Six months have now passed and Johnson has gone. Ramasundara and Tate should follow, otherwise the Management Committee will continue to be infected with the attitudes and desires of the past. The Management Committee needs fresh minds and unfettered debates to address the issues it has to resolve to make the ACS a viable professional society and not a commercial operation.

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