



Invited Statement to ACS Congress re Governance and the New Constitution

Roger Clarke FACS
19 June 2020

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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



Australian Council of Professions
<http://www.professions.com.au/about-us/what-is-a-professional>

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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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