

Australian Computer Society
Constitutional Reform
Membership Consultation Round 1 – SUMMARY
Version of 18 September 2021

Introduction

ACS has, for many reasons, begun the process of developing a new constitution. This work is being undertaken in three stages. By means of this package of documents, **you are being invited to offer your views and comments on this, the first stage.**

This initial discussion concerns **the principles that should guide the design of a new constitution.** Later rounds will be about the constitution's features, and then the actual clauses.

The documentation package includes a 9-page Consultation Document. This provides background information and considerable detail about key factors that appear to be relevant to the discussion about the principles. You are reading the 1-page Summary of these factors. This is intended as a pathway and index to the longer consultation document. There is also a 1-page Questions List containing what appear may be the most important issues for discussion.

Factors to be Considered when Developing Guiding Principles for the Constitution

1. The Nature of a Professional Society

A professional society is a very specific kind of organisation, and its constitution needs to reflect its special circumstances. More information is on page 1 of the Consultation Document, and see Q.1.

2. The ACS's Mission and Purposes

The current Objects are in need of re-visiting, to reflect contemporary conditions. However, any material changes need to respect the Society's nature, including its social responsibility, and ensure its legitimacy. More information is on page 2 of the Consultation Document, and see Qs.2-3.

3. Implications of the ACS's Nature, and Mission and Purposes

As a society of professionals, the ACS needs to have thresholds for membership, and pathways to reach those thresholds. In addition, a professional society is required to prioritise the public interest, and that is an important point of differentiation from both for-profit corporations and industry associations. More information is on pp. 3-4 of the Consultation Document, and see Qs.4-6.

4. The ACS's Key Functions and Supporting Business-Lines

A constitution needs to reflect the organisation's nature, and express its Mission and Purposes. It also needs to enable the organisation to perform its functions.

The ACS has been successful in developing business lines that generate surplus, which supports the achievement of its Mission and Purposes.

So clarity is needed about which are the Society's key functions, and which are commercial business lines intended as revenue-sources to support those key functions.

More information is on pp. 4-6 and 9 of the Consultation Document, and see Qs.7-10.

5. Toward Principles to Guide the Drafting of the New Constitution

Given a sufficiently common view of those preliminary matters, some principles can emerge to provide a basis for the next rounds of discussions about the features of, and then the wording of clauses within, the new constitution.

A draft set of Principles is offered on pp. 6-8 of the Consultation Document, and see Qs.9-14. **It is stressed that these are drafts, intended as a basis for discussion.**

Members' input is sought, including feedback on all matters raised in these documents.