



# RACP

## Specialists. Together

## Candidate Weekly Updates - Friday 5 April

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### Election of RACP President Elect

#### Dr Sharmila CHANDRAN

Our college is going through major challenges. We need a strong, considered, and well-informed leadership to guide the college and to bring the structural change needed to overcome these challenges.

We need staff and committee members to work together with collegiality while always keeping the member at the centre of all decisions.

In clinical practice, we talk about a patient centered approach and open disclosure. I strongly believe in endorsing a similar culture within the college and embracing a member-centered, transparent approach and to implement systems and services to better serve our members. Simultaneously, any projects that are draining resources without adding value to members should be discontinued to ensure we don't face the problems of our sister colleges.

We need not copy the actions of our sister colleges but learn from them, take a considered approach, and bring changes to our college that will address the unmet needs of our members.

We already have a skills-based board with 3 community directors, and it is vital that member directors have board experience, work in partnership with other members of the college and have the strength and wisdom to make decisions that will best serve the needs of our college.

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#### Dr George LAKING

So far it is a very quiet election in the RACP, you almost would not know it is happening. We can thank the By-Laws, that ensure everyone is well-behaved and stays in their zone of comfort. I feel okay – my inbox is not full of angry emails. On a larger scale, my hospital is not being bombed and its patients aren't assassinated in their beds by pretend doctors. Our College is a place of privilege and power. Along with that goes a strong pressure to conform. I have seen poor behaviour in the College so appreciate the calm. But too much calm can turn into sedation.

I've held to the idea of College governance reform since my first round on the Board, 2020—2022. Members can review the [papers that were written at that time](#). It turned out one aspect of the RTGS was not feasible. Despite Australia's history with [Reserve Powers](#), the College Council could not use these to [dismiss a Director](#). The closest you can get is an EGM. A good remedy is a careful nominations process and fixed term appointments.

It was really the events in the outside world that prompted me to step up in this Election. Our College should be a voice against bombing hospitals, starving children, and driving people from their land. Election turnouts in the College are historically low. Maybe we have become too comfortable. If you read this and agree, please forward it to a colleague and encourage them to vote.

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## Dr John O'DONNELL

Governance or its dysfunction is **the major issue** for the College.

Despite the intervention by both regulators, ACNC and ASIC, the resignation of the recently appointed RACP CEO highlights the persistence of concerns.

The President advised us on 3 April 2024 that the CEO

*"...explained to the Board that he made the difficult decision after forming the view that the agenda of the RACP would be best addressed by a CEO with a specific focus on governance reform"*

If the College does not resolve serious ongoing issues of governance at the top of the organisation it will not function as it should and its very existence will be threatened. The College is required to operate in a regulator environment that those who govern must be familiar with or, have the ability, to rapidly become familiar with.

The College does need to restructure governance: re-visit the advancement of the Transformational Governance Structure recommended by Effective Governance and consider the appointment of an independent chair for the Board.

I believe my past-experience and commitment to the College over many years, recognised by the award of The John Sands Medal in 2016, is evidence of those abilities.

John O'Donnell FRACP FRCPA GAICD  
Candidate for President-elect.

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## Professor Graeme MAGUIRE

### Wellbeing and Flexibility

I have highlighted the importance of governance reform, ensuring the right systems are in place to make and implement decisions, and our College's key role in educational excellence.

None of these matter unless we support, attract and retain our members.

A key element of this is a focus on member wellbeing and flexibility in meeting training and CPD requirements.

### Wellbeing

High quality healthcare relies on a strong, supported and safe workforce. There is no place in our College or profession for unsafe working hours or workplaces, bullying, harassment or discrimination. Our College cannot support the provision of healthcare in workplaces that are not safe. To do so risks the wellbeing of you, our members, and our patients.

In alignment with our charitable purpose, I will have zero tolerance in addressing these issues through training accreditation and member advocacy. I will also expect similar standards of behaviour from all College members.

'The standard you walk past is the standard you accept'.

### Flexibility

We should focus on maintaining high and consistent standards through meeting and assessing learning outcomes in training and CPD. This does not mean we cannot be more flexible to meet the needs of our trainees and Fellows.

In practice this means less emphasis on where, how and over what time education and training are delivered and more emphasis on high quality assessment. In so doing we will attract and retain a membership that will bring diversity and the varying perspectives this brings.

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### Election of RACP Member Director

#### **Professor Nicholas BUCKMASTER**

As a Board member I will advocate to improve the role and the visibility of the College Council. The Council is one of the few broadly representative bodies within our College drawing membership from the faculties, Chapters, and Divisions as well as from the Consumer Advisory Group, College Education Committee and strong representation from Trainees. While arguably too large to be totally effective we were able to push forward solidly with Regional, Rural and Remote workforce strategy, act as a broader consultation body for the Board, and to commence work on a unifying framework for member behaviours (Grounded in the SPPP). There were discussions with the Board and the Divisions as to how to reduce overlap in roles and to make the Council more streamlined. I am unaware of further progress subsequent to June 2023.

I want to move our College towards better processes for trainee assessment. While acknowledging the hard work that so many of our members volunteer, I am not convinced that we are using best practice methods. Assessment of knowledge through our Divisional exams must be delivered in a more flexible way. I know that the previous experience with computerising these exams has been very distressing, however I know from my previous experience with jurisdictional IT projects that with proper governance computerisation can be done. I would advocate for a thorough review of our other assessment processes to look at how they also can become more robust, consistently valid and also how we can ensure that there is a greater focus on assessment of the aspects of physician practice which do not rely on clinical knowledge alone.

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