

Proposal for Re-shaping the Society Governance Structure

The Royal Society of New Zealand Act sets out that there is a “Council” as the governing body of the broad-based body, and an Academy Executive Committee (AEC), as the governing body for things related to the Academy and Fellowship. The roles ascribed to the AEC are to recognise and encourage excellence and outstanding achievements in each of the areas of science, technology, and the humanities; and contribute to the intellectual leadership role of the Society. All other governance falls to the Council.

The present Council is comprised as follows:

- President (and one year in three a President-elect),
- Three Vice-Presidents, (who also serve on Academy Executive Committee)
- Councillor appointed by Branches,
- Councillor elected by Constituent Organisations,
- Three Councillors elected by the individual members (Fellows, Professional members, Associate members, Companions), and
- Up to three persons co-opted to the Council to ensure diversity.

The Council is particularly concerned that it has proven necessary in the last few years to use co-option to get the voices of humanities, Māori researchers, early career researchers and even non-University perspectives to the table.

A proposed new governance model has been developed, with the intention that this be implemented progressively from 2019. The Council wants to ensure that the membership understands and is supportive of the proposed change prior to its approval. The new structure and transitional arrangements will be set out in revised General Rules timetabled for approval by the Council on 20 February 2019.

Each role is proposed to be elected for a three year term by an electoral college (electoral colleges are a requirement of the Act). It is proposed that each member of the Society belongs to and votes in just one such college, eliminating multiple votes by some types of member as at present.

Council role	Form of electoral college
President	The present Council (no change)
President-elect - one year in three	The present Council (no change)
Chair of the Academy Executive Committee	The present Academy Executive Committee plus any other Fellows serving on Council
Deputy Chair of the Academy Executive Committee	The present Academy Executive Committee plus any other Fellows serving on Council
Councillor appointed by Branches	The Branches (no change)
Councillor elected by Constituent Organisations	The Constituent Organisations (no change)

Councillor elected by individual members who are not Fellows	Companions, Professional members (who do not hold early career researcher status), Associate members
Councillor elected by Early Career Researchers	Professional members holding early career research status
Councillor bringing Māori researcher perspective	An electoral college to be co-developed with Māori research communities
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Up to three co-opted Councillors	No change

The two primary criteria for co-option will be the spread of Council as a whole across:

- Sectors (non-University)
 - Crown Research Institutes
 - Independent Research Organisations
 - Research-based professions
 - Innovation community
 - GLAM sector - galleries, libraries, archives, museums
 - Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics
- Domains
 - Humanities
 - Social and Behavioural Sciences
 - Biological and Environmental Sciences
 - Physical, Earth and Mathematical Sciences
 - Medical and Health Sciences
 - Technology, Applied Science and Engineering (TASE)

What are the big changes?

- Introduction of three new permanent roles (early career and Māori research perspectives), but reduced numbers of other types of role to avoid Council enlarging.
- Replacement of three Vice-Presidents by a Chair and Deputy Chair of the Academy Executive Committee, these roles serving on both the Academy Executive Committee and Council to help ensure cohesive decision making between the two bodies.
- The general membership electoral college which elected three Councillors is disbanded in favour of more specific electoral colleges set out above, each electing one Councillor.
- Each membership group votes in only one electoral college¹.

The implementation of this proposal is intended to be progressive so all Councillors will complete their present multi-year terms. Thus the Council would morph from the existing to the new structure across 2019-2021.

If members wish to comment on the proposal please send an email to our Chief Executive, Andrew Cleland (andrew.cleland@royalsociety.org.nz) by 5 November.

¹ One membership group, the Fellows, is not shown here: each Fellow will vote in one electoral college to elect a member of the Academy Executive Committee for their domain, and then that Committee plays a major role in electing the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee who serve on the Council as well.