

## Constitution Amendments – Detailed explanation of proposed changes

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### Changes to Diplomate, Certificants and creation of a new membership category for Certified Associate Members

RANZCOG proposes to change the membership class "Diplomate" to "Certified Associate Member" with effect from 1 January 2024. Accordingly, as summarised below, further changes are proposed to associated courses and membership classes for Certified Associate Members.

- a. The "Certificate of Women's Health" will be renamed as the "RANZCOG Associate Member Training Program Level 1 (RAM1)." Completing this program will attain "Certified Associate Member Level 1."
- b. The "Diploma" will be renamed as the "RANZCOG Associate Member Training Program Level 2 (RAM2)." Completion of this program will attain "Certified Associate Member Level 2."
- c. The "Advanced Diploma" will be renamed as the "RANZCOG Associate Member Training Program Level 3 (RAM3)." Completion of this program will attain "Certified Associate Member Level 3."

The rationale for changing the membership class "Diplomate" to "Certified Associate Member" and updating the associated courses and membership classes is based on several factors. Firstly, the terms "Diploma" and "Advanced Diploma" are protected by law as part of the Australian Qualifications Framework. The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has instructed colleges offering Diploma qualifications to cease using these terms or align with universities or other registered education providers so these programs can be accredited by the relevant regulatory body (which would not be the Australian Medical Council). Compliance with this instruction would involve significant time, resources, and ongoing expenses for new accreditation and reaccreditation processes.

To avoid these burdens while continuing to offer existing education programs, the proposal suggests creating a new membership category called "Certified Associate Member" and updating the names of the courses and membership classes accordingly. This allows RANZCOG to align with the requirements set forth by TEQSA without undergoing the lengthy accreditation process. Additionally, this change creates a pathway for trainees currently undertaking the Certificate of Women's Health, Diploma of RANZCOG, and Advanced Diploma of RANZCOG training programs, ensuring their qualifications are appropriately recognised within the revised framework:

It's important to note that this change will not affect existing Diplomates who can continue using their current title/post-nominals. The proposed modifications solely apply to new members and trainees pursuing the aforementioned programs. By implementing these adjustments, RANZCOG aims to comply with legal requirements, minimise administrative burdens, and provide clarity in membership categories and course pathways.

## Changes to include Suspension of membership

The Professional Standards Committee, in its past meetings, has considered including suspension as one of the Sanctions for Members.

The inclusion of suspension as a sanction serves several purposes. Firstly, it provides a middle ground between lesser sanctions such as reprimand or censure and the severe sanction of termination. The suspension offers a meaningful consequence for members who have violated the College's standards and Code of Conduct, allowing for temporary removal of privileges and responsibilities.

Currently, the RANZCOG Constitution does not explicitly cover the suspension of membership by the Board. Therefore, a constitutional amendment is required to provide a comprehensive framework for disciplinary actions.

When membership is suspended, privileges, including access to CPD, may be revoked. At the same time, the College acknowledges the importance of supporting members during their suspension, which may mean that permission to continue CPD should be granted in certain cases. The imposition of such conditions will be addressed in the Regulations.

## Changes to Council membership

Council membership is proposed to be amended to increase the number of Diplomates and Community and Trainee representatives to include the Deputy Chair of the Trainees Committee from New Zealand.

The proposed change to the RANZCOG Council membership aims to enhance representation, inclusivity, and effective governance. Increasing the number of Diplomates, Community and Trainee Representatives on the Council ensures a broader range of perspectives and expertise, reflecting the diverse membership and incorporating community viewpoints. Transforming the Trainee Chair role to have separate representatives for Australia and New Zealand recognises distinct training environments and promotes tailored support for trainees. This change also improves the bi-national balance within the Council and enhances decision-making by incorporating a wider range of perspectives. The proposed change strengthens the Council's ability to address diverse issues, make informed decisions, and better serve RANZCOG members and the community.

It is also proposed that community representatives be given voting rights to participate in decision-making processes actively. This ensures that community representatives' voices are heard, their perspectives are considered, and their interests are represented meaningfully. It reflects inclusivity and community engagement and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among all Council members.

Additionally, the current provision in Clause 9.1.1(a)(vi) of the Constitution mandates the presence of "2 Fellows resident in South Australia and the Northern Territory (to represent both places)" on the Council. However, this setup allows the Council to potentially have two Fellows from either South Australia or the Northern Territory, leaving the other State or Territory unrepresented. With the increasing number of Fellows in the Northern Territory, it is necessary to amend the Constitution and propose the election of one representative from each State and Territory. This amendment will ensure equal representation from both State and Territory and address the need for fair and balanced representation in the Council.

## Changes to align terminology with the current Annual Fellowship renewal period

The Constitution currently refers to a three-year renewal of Fellowship in line with the previous triennium arrangement for CPD. Since RANZCOG has now transitioned to an annual CPD program, any renewal would need to be aligned with this annual cycle. A yearly renewal process will ensure that Fellows comply with their CPD requirements. It will also account for the mandatory reporting RANZCOG will be required to undertake annually for non-compliant Fellows.

Therefore, ensuring that the relevant clauses in the RANZCOG Constitution accurately reflect this new practice is essential. To maintain consistency and alignment with the current framework, it is proposed to refer to the annual renewal of the Fellowship instead of the previous three-year renewal cycle.

## Changes to College objectives to align with its charitable purpose and commitment to health equity

The following amendments are made to the objectives of the College:

- To demonstrate that the College monitors issues affecting the interests of the College or the professional interests of its members in furtherance of promoting improved health outcomes for women and babies in respect of preventing or controlling disease.
- To demonstrate that the College provides advice and support to members in the context of ensuring better patient outcomes.
- To reflect that, the College can reimburse members for costs incurred in carrying out charitable objects.
- To reflect the inclusion of equity in women's health, particularly concerning the First Nation people; and
- To reflect and address our commitment to Te Tiriti O Waitangi in the governing documents of the College.