

Election of RANZCOG Council Members Policy and Procedure

Purpose and Scope

In accordance with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) Council *RANZCOG Constitution* clause 10.2, this Policy outlines the procedures and requirements involved in the election of RANZCOG Councillors. This Policy confirms who is eligible to be elected as a RANZCOG Councillor and outlines the process for conducting the RANZCOG Council elections.

This Policy applies to Fellows of the College and College staff who are responsible for managing the election process.

1. Policy

The objective of this Policy is to ensure that the election of RANZCOG Councillors, conducted by RANZCOG, is open, transparent, comprehensive, scrutinised, and managed in accordance with the RANZCOG Regulations.

2. Procedure

2.1. Eligibility

Councillors for the next term of office, that is, the next Council term, shall be elected from the Fellowship.

All current Councillors eligible to stand for election for the subsequent Council term must re-nominate for election to participate in the election. All financial Fellows of the College, at the time of a nomination being submitted, are eligible to stand for election.

For election purposes, to be deemed a financial Fellow, the individual will have no outstanding monies owing to the College, including the annual subscription fee for the relevant membership period.

2.1.1. *Eligibility: RANZCOG Councillor representing an Australian State or Territory, or New Zealand*

- All financial Fellows at the time of a nomination being submitted, are eligible to stand for election as a RANZCOG Councillor representing the Australian State or Territory or New Zealand in which they reside.
- All proposers and seconders of a nominee to represent an Australian State or Territory or New Zealand must be financial Fellows of the College at the time of supporting a nomination, and resident in the applicable Australian State or Territory or New Zealand of the relevant nominee at the time of the nomination being submitted.

2.1.2. *Eligibility: RANZCOG Councillor representing Māori Fellows in New Zealand*

- All financial Māori Fellows resident in New Zealand, at the time of a nomination being submitted, are eligible to stand for election as the RANZCOG Councillor representing Māori Fellows in New Zealand.

- All proposers and seconders of a nominee to represent Māori Fellows in New Zealand must be financial Māori Fellows of the College at the time of supporting a nomination and be resident in New Zealand at the time of the nomination being submitted.

2.1.3. *Eligibility: RANZCOG Councillor representing Regional Fellows*

- All financial Regional Fellows at the time of a nomination being submitted, are eligible to stand for election as a RANZCOG Councillor representing Regional Fellows.
- All proposers and seconders for a Councillor representing Regional Fellows must be financial Fellows, at the time of supporting a nomination, and resident in the same Australian State or Territory, in which the nominee resides.

2.2. Timetable for elections

The election process shall begin in May and end in July of the Election Year.

2.3. Returning officer

The Company Secretary shall be the Returning Officer and shall have the authority to appoint College staff, i.e., the Election Office, to assist in the conduct of the elections.

2.4. Nominations

2.4.1. *Call for nominations*

The Election Office will issue a call for nominations in May of the Election Year. The call for nominations shall indicate the close of nominations and the provisions for conducting the election.

2.4.2. *Incomplete nominations forms*

Where the Nomination Form is not completed or submitted properly, the Nomination Form will be deemed invalid and shall not be accepted. The Election Office will advise the nominee of any irregularities. The Election Office will offer the nominee the chance to resubmit their completed Nomination Form by the closing date for nominations. The nomination will not be accepted if the Nomination Form is not resubmitted by this date.

Where a nominee is not financial, the Nomination Form will be deemed invalid. The Election Office will advise the nominee of any irregularities. The Election Office will offer the nominee the chance to make payment of outstanding monies owed to the College by the closing date for nominations. The nominee must settle outstanding payments by the closing date and provide evidence to the Election Office.

2.4.3. *Close of nominations*

The promoted date and time for the submission of nominations shall be strictly adhered to. The Election Office will not accept late nominations, irrespective of the reason. The closing date for nominations will be at least seven (7) days prior to the opening of an online ballot.

2.4.4. *Acknowledgement of nominations*

The Election Office will acknowledge all accepted nominations within two (2) business days of receipt.

2.4.5. *Withdrawal of nominations*

Nominees may withdraw their nominations at any time up to the close of nominations. All notices of withdrawals must be in writing. Nominees wishing to withdraw their nominations after this deadline must write to the Returning Officer outlining the reasons for the request. The withdrawal of a nomination following the nomination deadline will be at the discretion of the Returning Officer.

2.4.6. *Promotion of nominees*

Nominees will be kept confidential until the close of nominations.

2.4.7. *Publicity*

The College will not supply names and/or contact details nor distribute to members any material for publicity purposes by candidates.

2.5. Election of Council Members if a ballot is not required

2.5.1. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing an Australian State or Territory or New Zealand*

If the number of nominations received for a particular Australian State or Territory or New Zealand does not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled, then a ballot will not be required, and the nominee/s for that Australian State or Territory or New Zealand will be advised accordingly.

2.5.2. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing Māori Fellows in New Zealand*

If the number of nominations received does not exceed the vacancy to be filled, then a ballot will not be required, and the nominee will be advised accordingly.

2.5.3. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing Regional Fellows*

If the number of nominations received for RANZCOG Councillors representing Regional Fellows does not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled, then a ballot will not be required, and the nominees will be advised accordingly.

2.6. Voting

Ballot documentation shall include the following:

- The names and candidature statements of the nominees (reproduced verbatim);
- Notice of the method in which the ballot is to be conducted: Voting will be by 'Preferential' method, that is, the candidate who receives the most votes after all preferences have been allocated will win the ballot; and
- The ballot closing date and time.

2.6.1. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing an Australian State or Territory or New Zealand*

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled for a particular Australian State or Territory or New Zealand, the Election Office shall conduct a ballot by secure online election software and postal ballot for any Fellows that do not have an email address registered with the College.

2.6.2. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing Māori Fellows in New Zealand*

If the number of nominations exceeds the vacancy to be filled, the Election Office shall conduct a ballot by secure online election software and postal ballot for any Fellows that do not have an email address registered with the College.

2.6.3. *Procedure: RANZCOG Councillor representing Regional Fellows*

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled for RANZCOG Councillors representing Regional Fellows, the Election Office shall conduct a ballot by secure online election software and postal ballot for any Fellows that do not have an email address registered with the College.

2.7. Counting of votes

Each Fellow will be entitled to submit one (1) vote for each ballot they are eligible to participate. The candidate who has received the largest number of votes after all preferences have been allocated will be declared elected.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Policy the online ballot will be conducted for a period of fourteen (14) days and distributed to:

- all eligible Fellows within the applicable Australian State or Territory or New Zealand for the position of Councillor representing an Australian State or Territory or New Zealand for which a ballot is to be conducted;
- all eligible Māori Fellows resident in New Zealand for the position of Councillor representing Māori Fellows within New Zealand for which a ballot is to be conducted; and
- all eligible Fellows resident in Australia for the position of Councillor representing Regional Fellows for which a ballot is to be conducted.

2.7.1. *Postal Ballot*

A Postal Ballot voting paper and outer envelope, together with any voting papers contained within, shall be declared to be invalid by the Returning Officer in the opinion of the Returning Officer:

- the outer envelope or the ballot paper contained within have not been lodged by a Fellow entitled to vote;
- the name of the Fellow on the outer envelope cannot be read;
- a Fellow entitled to vote has submitted more than one outer envelope;
- a voting paper is marked in such a way that the intentions of the Fellow casting a vote are not clear;
- the voting paper is received after the ballot closing date; or
- a Fellow entitled to vote has submitted more than one vote.

2.8. Notification of results

Pursuant to clause 8.1.5 of the RANZCOG Constitution, the results of the election of RANZCOG Councillors will be declared as formally elected in the business of the Annual General Meeting of the Election Year.

Pursuant to clause 10.4 of the RANZCOG Constitution, the elected Councillors shall assume office at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting in that Election Year.

The Returning Officer shall, as soon as practical after the results have been declared, advise the successful and unsuccessful candidates. The list of successful candidates will be published in *Connect*, *O&G Magazine* and on the College's website.

2.9. Casual Vacancy

2.9.1. *Casual vacancy during Election Year*

If a casual vacancy arises for any Councillor position during an Election Year, a call for nominations will be made in accordance with Section 2 of this Policy to eligible Fellows.

If the number of nominations received does not exceed the number of vacancies, then the nominee(s) will be declared elected following the close of nominations.

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of casual vacancies to be filled, the Election Office shall conduct a ballot in accordance with Sections 2.5 to 2.6 by secure online election software and a Postal Ballot for any Fellows that do not have an email address registered with the College.

2.9.2. *Casual vacancy during Council term*

If a casual vacancy arises for any Councillor position during the Council term, a call for nominations will be made, and it shall indicate the time of close of nominations, the provisions

for conducting the election, and will be conducted in accordance with Sections 2.4.2 to 2.4.7 of this Policy to eligible Fellows.

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of casual vacancies to be filled, the Election Office shall conduct a ballot in accordance with Sections 2.4 to 2.6 by secure online election software and a Postal Ballot for any Fellows that do not have an email address registered with the College.

The Returning Officer shall, as soon as practical after the results have been declared, advise the successful and unsuccessful candidate(s). The successful candidate(s) will be declared elected following ratification by the RANZCOG Board. The list of successful candidates will be published in *Connect*, *O&G* and on the College's website.

2.9.3. *In case of further vacancy*

If no nominations are received for a vacant position, a second call for nominations for that position will be issued. If, following a second call, no nominations have been received, the RANZCOG Board may elect to:

- canvass the particular Australian State or Territory or New Zealand, or Regional Fellows, for a suitable Fellow to fill the position(s); or
- elect to keep the position(s) vacant.

2.9.4. *Tenure of casual vacancy appointment*

Any Councillors appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office only until the next election of Councillors and shall be eligible for election in accordance with the *RANZCOG Constitution*. The period of time served to fill this vacancy shall not be counted as a period of office.

3. Governance

3.1. Retention of records

Records pertaining to the election will be retained by the Returning Officer for a period of one (1) year from the date of the first Council meeting in the Election Year.

3.2. Invalidity

No election is to be invalid by reason of:

- Any formal error or defect in any declaration, other instruments, or in any publication made pursuant to these procedures or intended to be so made;
- Any such publication being out of time;
- Any delay in holding the election at the time appointed or in taking the poll; or
- Any inadvertent failure to send to any eligible Fellow any notice or voting paper; or
- Any defect of a merely formal nature.

3.3. Appeals

Where a candidate is aggrieved with a decision of the Returning Officer, they may seek a review of that decision in accordance with *RANZCOG Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions Policy*.

Related RANZCOG documents

- *RANZCOG Constitution*
- *RANZCOG Code of Conduct*
- *RANZCOG Council Charter*
- *Reconsideration, Review and Appeal of Decisions Policy*
- *Tenure of Appointment to RANZCOG Committees and External Bodies Policy*

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1	November 2022	New policy extracted from relevant regulation
v2	April 2023	Revision to remove the requirement for Regional Fellow to apply for voting rights
v3	February 2024	Revision to include casual vacancy procedure as it occurs in a non-Election Year

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