

# Governance Reform Project

President's Symposium

6 May 2026

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The Royal  
Australian &  
New Zealand  
College of  
Psychiatrists



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Nations and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters now known as Australia, and Māori as tangata whenua in Aotearoa, also known as New Zealand.

We recognise and value the traditional knowledge held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Māori.

We honour and respect the Elders past and present, who weave their wisdom into all realms of life — spiritual, cultural, social, emotional, and physical.

## Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We recognise those with lived and living experience of mental health challenges and distress, their chosen families, whānau, carers and kin.

Their contributions, diverse perspectives, insight, and courage keep us grounded and inclusive, and focused on humanity, healing, and hope.

We strive to work in genuine partnership in all that we do, honouring their voices by centring their experiences and expertise.

# Introduction

1. What is the problem we are trying to solve?
2. Alignment with the Directions of the College recently defined in the 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan.
3. How will we go about solving the problem?
4. Developing a contemporary, transparent, compliant, future focussed and efficient Governance Framework that is known, understood and allows the College to achieve excellence against its agreed strategy.
5. Project Timeline – next steps.

# Problem Statement

*“I can’t describe the differences in impact or effort between the groups. What each group is meant to do is unclear, and I cannot explain how their roles differ.”*

- Complexity and duplication in committee structures.
- Unclear and slow decision-making and lack of transparency and feedback.
- Gaps in representation and member voice.
- High administrative load without clear outcomes.
- Need to link governance with strategic delivery and accountability.
- Growth of groups without rules, limits or rationale – increased administration workload, strained resources and created duplication.
- Uneven oversight and unclear reporting structures – e.g. role of the Committee versus role of Executive.
- Gaps in data, leading to limited ability to strategically design a sustainable structure.

# The College in 2030

- By 2030, we will be a purposeful, responsive and agile College, recognised for our leadership, integrity and the value we deliver to our members and communities.
- We will be:
- **Clear in purpose and direction**, setting and holding our strategic course
- **Modern and adaptive**, training and developing compassionate, culturally safe, collaborative and patient-centred psychiatrists for contemporary practice
- **Member centred**, delivering meaningful value across all career stages
- **United in voice**, grounded in evidence and trusted across systems
- **Inclusive and diverse**, reflecting the communities we serve and embracing lived and living experience
- **Culturally safe**, informed by and working in partnership with Māori and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- **A collaborative system leader**, shaping models of care and working across disciplines and sectors
- **Recognised and trusted**, as a leading authority on mental illness and its treatment

# 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan



## Plan on a Page

### Our Purpose:

To lead, connect and be accountable for strengthening psychiatry in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

### Our Vision:

Leading the transformation of how mental illness is understood, experienced and treated

### Our Values:

#### Collaboration

We are consultative and listen with humility.

We foster a connected profession and work in partnership across disciplines, systems and communities.

We know that meaningful progress in mental health requires shared responsibility and collective effort.

#### Equity

We are committed to fairness, inclusion and cultural safety.

We seek to actively address inequities.

We embed diverse perspectives, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Māori, and people with lived and living experience, across all that we do.

#### Integrity & Respect

We act with honesty, transparency and accountability, and uphold dignity and professionalism in all our interactions.

We create environments where people feel safe to speak, to be heard, and to contribute.

#### Impact

We translate intent into action.

We are purposeful, responsive and focused on delivering meaningful and measurable improvements in psychiatry and mental health systems.

### Our Priorities and Initiatives:

#### A future-ready and sustainable College

To deliver on this priority, we will:

1. Build a **professional College** environment, with a focus on member service and value, and where staff are supported and fulfilled.
2. Deliver **governance reform** to strengthen accountability, decision-making and organisational effectiveness.
3. **Modernise systems and processes**, with better use of digital platforms, data and analytics.
4. Diversify income streams and improve **financial sustainability** for long-term impact.

#### A thriving psychiatric profession

To deliver on this priority, we will:

1. **Enhance the Fellowship** by fostering a strong sense of belonging, shared professional identity and collective responsibility across all career stages and practice settings.
2. Expand and sustain the **psychiatry workforce pipeline** to meet current and future system demand, with capability and capacity aligned with the needs of mental health systems and those with lived and living experience of mental illness.
3. **Strengthen leadership capability across the career span** by supporting supervision, mentoring and peer connection, and by developing psychiatrists as clinical, educational and system leaders.
4. Modernise **training and assessment frameworks** to be future-ready, fair and fit for contemporary psychiatric practice.
5. Enhance the **health and wellbeing** of our members.

#### Collaborative system leadership

To deliver on this priority, we will:

1. Lead and influence **system reform through collaboration** across professions, services and sectors.
2. **Collaborate with government and stakeholders** on medical workforce strategy, as well as strengthening **joint working with regulatory bodies**, other colleges, peak bodies and international colleges of psychiatry.
3. Position the College as a **trusted international leader** in psychiatry and taking responsibility for advancing mental health care across systems beyond Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

#### Trusted partnership with communities

To deliver on this priority, we will:

1. Establish our **social contract with the community**, building public understanding of people experiencing mental illness and the role of a psychiatrist.
2. Work in **partnership with patients, carers, communities, First Nations and lived and living-experience leaders**, embedding co-design principles, shared responsibility and accountability in our advocacy and system engagement.
3. **Challenge stigma and discrimination** by using the College's voice to **promote equity, dignity and safety** in how people living with mental illness, regardless of their background, are treated within health systems and the broader community.

# GRT Activity to Date

- Board led process – the Governance Reform Taskforce (GRT) was endorsed by the Board in November 2025.
- The GRT was convened in February 2026 has held four meetings as at the end of April 2026.
- The GRT has drawn from the significant work already completed within the College:
  - External, independent reports
  - Feedback from Members and staff
  - Observations
- The GRT is a **time-limited** group which will either complete tasks or distribute them back to the relevant area of the College for implementation.

# The Governance Reform Taskforce (GRT)

- **RANZCP Members**
- A/Prof Alex Cockram
- Dr Angelo Virgona
- Professor Richard Newton
- Dr Hiran Thabrew
- Dr Alan Altham
  
- **External Subject Matter Expert (appointed by the Taskforce)**
- Professor Andrew Way
  
- **RANZCP Staff**
- CEO, Damian Ferrie
- Executive Director, Policy & Advocacy, Felicity Loxton

# Principles of the Governance Reform

- **Clarity** – staff and Members have a clear pathway to achieve desired results and there is clarity and transparency in College systems and processes.
- **Accountability** – clear reporting and decision rights both from membership and staffing perspectives.
- **Strategic Alignment** – governance supports strategic goals.
- **Representation** – jurisdictions, trainees, subspecialties, lived experience.
- **Efficiency** – minimise duplication and burden.
- **Agility** – use time-limited task groups for emerging needs.
- **Engagement and Acknowledgment** – recognition of member contributions and commitment to the College.

# RANZCP Governance Reform Project Timeline

*Building a contemporary, transparent and effective governance model*

## Phase 1

Jan 2026 – Jun 2026

Key planned tasks:

- Governance reform taskforce convened
- New strategic plan
- Present vision at 2026 congress
- Develop corporate governance framework
- Develop communications & stakeholder engagement plan
- Convene staff working party to coordinate tasks

## Phase 2

Jul 2026 – May 2027

Key planned tasks:

- Planned consultation
- Implement key tasks of governance reform
- Implement committee design & representation
- Define decision rights & reporting pathways
- Identify & update key policy documents & templates
- Embed new risk management & audit system
- Present changes at 2027 congress

## Phase 3

Jun 2027 – Dec 2027

Key planned tasks:

- Prepare for constitutional changes
- Membership value proposition
- Embed cultural change & new ways of working
- Continued review & updating of policies and key documents
- Implement performance & evaluation model

## Phase 4

Jan 2028 – Jun 2028

Key planned tasks:

- Consider or review any outstanding constitutional changes if required
- Evaluate changes & make adjustments
- Continuous improvement transitions to BAU



Staff and stakeholders are supported throughout the process

**Outcome: A contemporary, transparent, compliant, future focussed and efficient Governance Framework that is known, understood and allows the College to achieve excellence against its agreed strategy.**