1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the role, responsibilities and selection criteria for external co-opted members (community representatives and honorary advisors) on the committees of RACS (the College). The College wishes to involve the community and broaden the skills, knowledge and experience which are relevant and beneficial to key committees and boards. The appointment of external co-opted members demonstrates the College’s commitment to the highest standards of accountable and transparent governance and decision-making. External co-opted members are chosen for the independent judgment, expertise, experience, community perspective and personal qualities they bring.

2. KEYWORDS

External co-opted member, community representatives, honorary advisors, committees, boards, criteria, appointment, reappointment, termination, confidentiality, conflict of interest, Nomination Committee

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Definition

External co-opted members are community representatives or honorary advisors who contribute their skills, knowledge and experience. Community representatives provide community and health consumer input consistent with the Australian Medical Council’s requirements for community and stakeholder representation. Honorary advisors offer advice in a specific area of expertise.

3.2. Committees and Boards

3.2.1. Any RACS committee may request an external co-opted member. However the contribution of external co-opted members with specific attributes and competencies is sought for the following committees and boards of the College:

- College Council
- Education Board
- Professional Development and Standards Board
- Governance and Advocacy Committee
- Resources Committee
- Risk Management and Audit Committee
- Investment Committee
- Information Technology Governance Committee
- Global Health Committee
- Foundation for Surgery Board
- Board of Surgical Education and Training
- Speciality Training Boards

3.2.2. A separate process nominates representatives on the Appeals Committee. Members have specific expertise and experience relevant to a particular appeal.
3.3. **Role**

The role of external co-opted members includes the following responsibilities:

- To inform themselves and actively participate in committee meetings of which they are a member. External co-opted members have the same responsibilities and voting rights as other members, except being able to elect or be elected to office bearer positions.
- To contribute to robust, transparent decision-making that aligns with the College’s mission, vision, values and strategic and business plans.
- To provide a societal perspective on issues and/or specialised knowledge and advice.
- To ensure the committee considers community and health consumer interests in its decision making.

3.4. **Criteria**

The following key selection criteria may be supplemented with additional criteria according to a committee’s need:

- Shared values and demonstrable, but independent, interest in the College’s business and related health matters.
- Time and capacity to add value and/or expertise.
- Skills that contribute to achievement of the strategic goals of the board/committee.
- Ability to provide a broad societal perspective on issues.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Good judgement and the capacity to be an enthusiastic and flexible team member.
- Ability to analyse issues and judge their effects on the community.
- Capacity to negotiate on issues to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Computer skills and access to email.
- Availability to participate in face to face meetings at the College or by teleconference as required.

3.5. **Appointment**

External co-opted members are appointed by the Council, or senior boards/committees of the College. A Nomination Committee is convened when necessary to co-ordinate the recruitment process with input from relevant committee chairs and Directors.

As soon as possible after appointment, external co-opted members are provided with an orientation program designed to provide further information about the College’s purpose, structure and processes, and appointees’ specific duties.

Honorary advisors with specific skills required for the committees of the Resources Portfolio may be appointed in accordance with the Appointment of Honorary Advisors to Committees of Resources Division policy.

3.6. **Remuneration**

The direct costs incurred in attending committee meetings are reimbursed to external co-opted members in accordance with the Travel and Accommodation policy. The positions themselves are honorary.
3.7. **Confidentiality**

During the course of service, external co-opted members have access to information regarding hospitals, Fellows, Trainees, IMGs and College activities and functions and are expected to observe the principles of confidentiality.

3.8. **Privacy**

The College is committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals and complies with all relevant privacy legislation. The College's privacy policy outlines how the College collects, uses and discloses personal information, and the procedures that allow access to this information. External co-opted members are required to comply with this policy.

3.9. **Representations on behalf of the College**

External co-opted members must not make public statements on behalf of the College without obtaining prior written approval through the CEO. Examples include media interviews, speaking at conferences or written material for journals or other publications.

3.10. **Conflicts of interest**

The College’s conflict of interest policy provides guidance with regard to identifying and handling potential perceived and actual conflicts of interest involving the College and its activities. The policy primarily relates to Councillors and College managerial staff, but is intended to raise awareness of conflict of interest issues and provide guidance to all who fulfil a role with the College such as committee members, examiners, community representatives or staff involved in College work. Individuals seeking appointment as external co-opted members are requested to declare any potential conflicts of interest. Further, appointees are obliged to declare any conflict of interest that may arise during service.

3.11. **Duration of appointment, reappointment, termination**

Appointments are normally made for a period of three years. Reappointment may occur by mutual agreement for a further two terms of three years. Review of committee memberships occurs annually. Council reserves the right to terminate early, or extend, an external co-opted member's term.

4. **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

Nomination Committee Terms of Reference policy
Appointment of Honorary Advisors to Committees of Resources Division policy
Travel and Accommodation policy
Privacy of College Information policy
Conflict of Interest policy
Australian Medical Council’s Requirements for Community and Stakeholder Representation
Building Respect and Improving Patient Safety Action Plan
Position Description - Community Member on Specialty Training Boards
External Co-opted members on Committees and Boards Procedure

**Approver** Chief Executive Officer

**Authoriser** Council