

VOLUNTEER ONBOARDING HANDBOOK

Welcome

We are so excited you have joined us.

“We are powerful individually and
unstoppable together.”

Acknowledgement of Country,

“In the spirit of reconciliation ACN acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community.

We pay our respects to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.”



Welcome from CEO Adjunct Professor

Kathryn Zeitz PhD FACN

Welcome onboard as a volunteer leader with Australian College of Nursing (ACN). Your willingness to contribute your time and expertise to the work of ACN is greatly appreciated. Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing our programs and initiatives and we are excited about the fresh perspectives and energy you will bring.

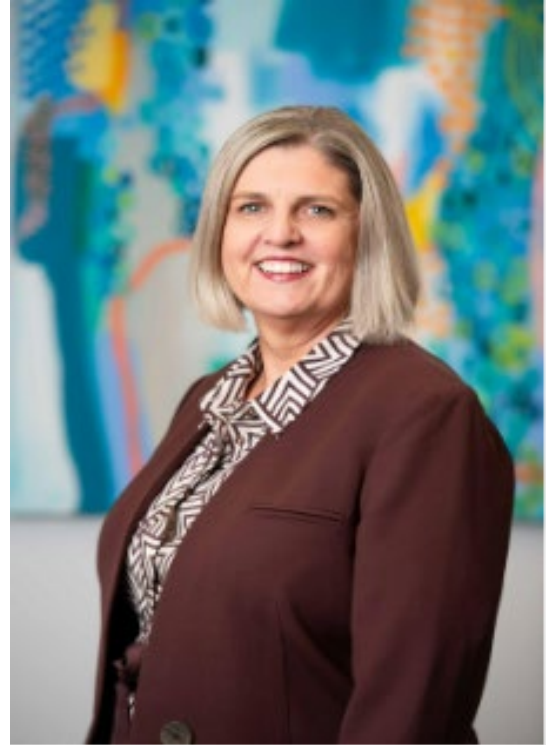
Thank you for agreeing to volunteer your time with ACN whether that be as part of a leadership team within a Faculty or Region, representing ACN or in another capacity. I commenced a lifelong career as a volunteer at age 11 so I personally understand the commitment you have made. We are thrilled to have you join our team.

As you settle into your new position, please know that the ACN team are here to support you. This handbook has been developed to help you align your own passion for nursing with that of ACN's policies, strategic vision, and operational workings. It will also assist you in providing key contacts at ACN, explaining our history and our current products and services.

Thank you once again for choosing to be a part of ACN. We look forward to working alongside you and achieving great things together for the benefit of the wider nursing community.

Kind Regards,

Adjunct Professor Kathryn Zeitz PhD FACN



History



The Mews at The Nurses Memorial Centre:
The original home



Home of the College of Nursing at 2-6 Arthur Street
(now Slater Street), Melbourne



Napier Close Deakin West Canberra 1994



Sign for New Building, College of Nursing,
Australia 2-6 Arthur Street, Melbourne. The
building was officially opened on 18 April 1970



The Nurses Memorial Centre Melbourne

From the beginning

Our history

The Australian College of Nursing developed from two organisations:

- **The NSW College of Nursing**, formed in January 1949, became the College of Nursing, Australia
- **The College of Nursing**, Australia formed in March 1949, that became the Royal College of Nursing, Australia

In July 2012 these two organisations joined together and became the Australian College of Nursing.

- The NSW College of Nursing (which was to become the College of Nursing, Australia)
- A Provisional Council met on 12 January 1949 and the College was launched.

The primary objectives of the College were to:

- Develop and offer relevant postgraduate courses for nurses.
- Promote the art and science of nursing and the advancement of nursing as a profession in all its branches.

College of Nursing Australia (which became the Royal College of Nursing, Australia)

- The Provisional Council met on 23 March 1949 and the College was established.

The primary objectives of the College were to:

- Cultivate and maintain the highest principles of nursing practice and ethics.
- Raise the status and standard of the nursing profession by making provision for trained teachers and administrators in the profession.
- Make adequate provision for postgraduate training of nurses.

The Australian College of Nursing was established in July 2012

- On 1 July 2012 the unification of the College of Nursing, Australia and the Royal College of Nursing, Australia took place and the

Australian College of Nursing was established, the key focus of the College is its members. It aims to:

- Engage members in advocacy and representation work in key policy areas
- Support and develop leadership in areas of nursing practice
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of nurses across Australia
- Support and provide education for nurses.

To learn more about our history

Proudly preserving nursing's heritage – ACN archives

The ACN Archive is the repository for the historical documents, both organisational records and donated material, of the organisation. The archive networks with other health industry and professional organisations to promote access to the collection, enhance the value of the collection and ensure best practices.

Parramatta

Thursdays (by appointment only) 02 9745 7570 or 1800 061 660

archives@acn.edu.au

Canberra

By appointment only 1800 061 660

archives@acn.edu.au <https://www.acn.edu.au/about/history>

Useful resources

Smith R G In Pursuit of Nursing Excellence: A History of the Royal College of Nursing, Australia 1949-1999. Oxford, South Melbourne, 1999

Pratt R & R L Russell A voice to be heard. The first fifty years of the New South Wales College of Nursing. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2002

ACN'S Strategic Pillars

We will demonstrate how clinical, professional and health policy issues can be enhanced through the expertise and experience of nurses through developing, debating, responding, publishing and commissioning good policy for all.

Our strategic pillars



Advocacy

We will advocate for the issues that matter to our profession and the health of all Australians to make real and lasting change for today and generations to come.



Community

We will support an engaged and contributing community of nurses – at all stages and levels of their career – inclusive of a strong band of supporters, volunteers, health professionals, media and government.



Education

We will train, educate, inspire and mentor nurses, with constant access to world-class information, research and evidence, and foster the intellectual rigour required of professionals making health-care decisions.



Leadership

We will prepare nurses to lead. We will facilitate opportunities for nurses to make a difference and grow, to expand career options and horizons to reach their utmost potential.



Policy

We will demonstrate how health and professional care can be enhanced through the expertise and experience of nurses via developing, debating, responding, publishing, promoting and commissioning good policy.



Social Impact

We are inclusive and here for all nurses and their place in society. We will actively strive to develop respect and appreciation for nurses and improve the beneficial impact nurses have on our society and to protect the environment we all share.

Our people

At ACN, we believe that the power is in our people. The experience, expertise and passion of our team is what makes us such an innovative and high-performing organisation.

ACN is led by our Chief Executive Officer with the support of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and National Directors. A nine (9) member Board governs ACN, made up of seven (7) directors elected from and by the membership of ACN and two (2) independent directors appointed by the Board.

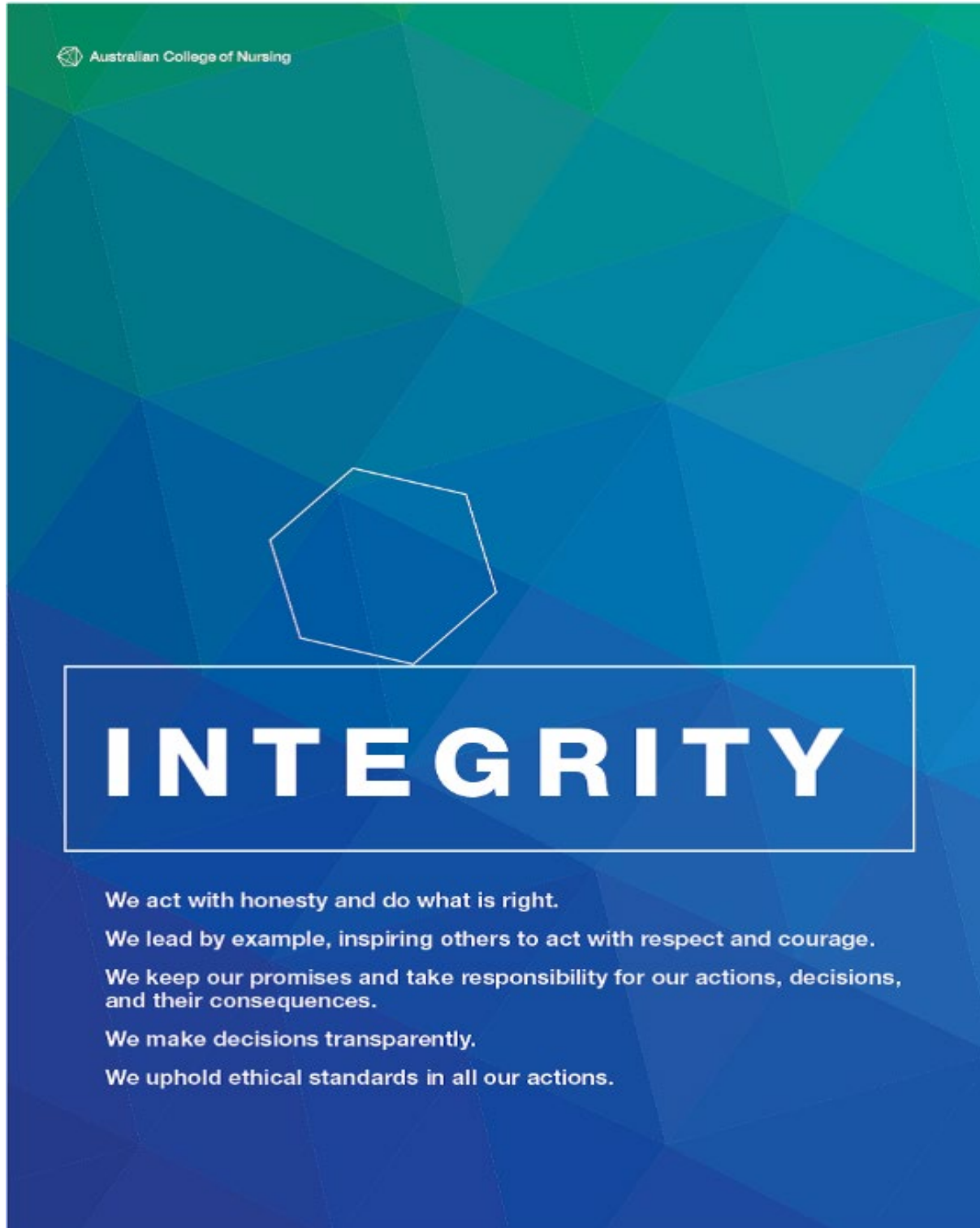
The Board is responsible for ensuring that ACN has an appropriate corporate governance structure to create and protect member value. The Board sets the Strategic Direction and goals in line with the charitable objectives set out in the Constitution. The Board monitors progress in achieving these by ensuring that appropriate accountability and control systems are in place. Our current Board President is Adjunct Professor David Plunkett FACN. The profiles for Adjunct Professor Plunkett and our other Board Directors are on our website <https://www.acn.edu.au/about/governance-structure>.

Our dedicated and talented workforce spans across our two offices in Sydney and Canberra. Our teams consist of staff who specialise in accounts, customer services, ICT, events, partnerships, marketing, communications, scholarships, library, higher education, training and assessment, policy and advocacy, leadership, engagement and representation, media, archiving and records management.

For further information regarding ACN's corporate profile please go to our website **[acn.edu.au/about/governance-structure](https://www.acn.edu.au/about/governance-structure)**

ACN Values

Integrity



Respect



Courage



Australian College of Nursing

COURAGE

We share our thoughts and ideas openly.

We take risks to learn and innovate.

We are open to new ideas and different ways of thinking.

We call out behaviours and practices that are not aligned with our values, policies, nor in the best interests of members, students and staff.

We challenge the status quo and take on new challenges, even when the path is unclear.

We see errors as a way of developing new understanding.

Guidelines for volunteers

Definition of a volunteer

A volunteer is someone who has been engaged by ACN to represent ACN without remuneration or payment for the service. All out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed; this is not viewed as payment. A volunteer can be a Distinguished Life Fellow (DLF),

Fellow, Alumni, Member or non-member who is engaged by ACN to either represent the organisation or undertake tasks that support ACN in achieving its Strategic Direction: Shaping Health, Advancing Nursing. Examples include but are not limited to a member representing ACN on an external committee, members attending an external event as ACN representatives, and members undertaking archival works at ACN offices.

Code of conduct

ACN values volunteer contributions and the impact their work has on the nursing profession. It is expected that all ACN members working in a volunteer capacity will adhere to the [International Council of Nurses Code of Ethics](#) as in any health service role. ACN acknowledges the importance of our volunteers being aware of and maintaining professional boundaries. This is essential for fostering a positive, respectful, and productive environment. ACN provides resources on boundaries and are available [here](#) for your use. We ask all volunteers to respect the structural governance of ACN in all aspects of ACN-related work, communications, events, and activities. We also request that all volunteers represent the ACN in a positive light during their time as a volunteer. Any circumstances where an issue or concern arises can be brought to the Professional Practice team at any time: engagement@acn.edu.au

Conflicts of interest

Members and volunteers who represent ACN are obliged to act in the best interests of ACN whilst carrying out their role and must not act for their private interest or gain. However, there may be situations where a member or volunteer's interest and the interests of ACN co-occur or appear to clash. The issue is not the integrity of the member or volunteer concerned, but the management of any potential to profit from or otherwise abuse the position of being a member or volunteering for ACN.

Confidentiality

At times, volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality as part of their role. This will be specified in the role description and associated training. Additionally, we may ask volunteers not to share information about embargoed campaigns; this will also be explained at the time.

ACN takes the responsibility of data protection very seriously. Any data collection or research that was undertaken on behalf of ACN, or while representing ACN, must be reviewed against the ACN Conduct of Research Policy. Please notify the National Director of Professional Practice, if you are involved in any activity where data is being collected or held in your volunteer role.

Volunteers must not collect the contact numbers, financial details, or other personal information of any ACN Members or members of the public unless they have their express written permission to do so. Should such information be acquired, it must only be used for the purposes identified and must be destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed.

For example, for an event, bank details or emergency contact information may be kept for the duration of the event but then must be destroyed as soon as the event is over.

While we understand that maintaining confidentiality can be challenging, it is vital for some of our roles. It gives people trust in ACN, which may give them the confidence to report a welfare concern where they would otherwise not feel safe to do so. If volunteers are not sure about maintaining confidentiality or are worried, there may have been a breach, they should contact the National Director of Professional Practice immediately to discuss.

Bullying and harassment

Everyone in the ACN team, volunteers, and employees alike, deserves to be treated with respect. ACN promotes a safe working environment that is free from harassment and bullying and where people treat each other with courtesy and respect. Harassment, bullying, victimisation, and other behaviours that contravene workplace laws will not be tolerated. ACN has a duty of care to all staff, students, visitors, volunteers, and contractors to ensure that ACN is free from harassment and bullying. All staff and volunteers are accountable for ensuring proper standards are maintained in the place of work or place of volunteering.

ACN will endeavour to respond to claims of harassment, bullying and victimization immediately. If an employee, volunteer, or contractor of ACN has been found to

have engaged in harassment, bullying or victimisation, ACN may take disciplinary action against them, up to and including, termination of engagement (with or without notice).

Volunteers can raise concerns about behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them. Complaints can be made via the process outlined below. Maliciously making or supporting an untrue complaint will not be tolerated.

Complaints

If a volunteer has a complaint about the behaviour or conduct of another volunteer or an ACN staff member, please contact the team at engagement@acn.edu.au or on **1800 061 660**. All communications will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Health and safety

ACN is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all members and volunteers. Should volunteers feel unwell during the delivery of their role, they should alert another volunteer or ACN employee for support as soon as possible. ACN holds an insurance policy that covers volunteers when carrying out activities that fall within the remit of their assigned roles. This policy covers all ACN events and opportunities for engagement.

We ask that all volunteers be mindful of their safety and the safety of other people around them and avoid taking unnecessary risks whilst volunteering for ACN. ACN will ensure that each volunteer is trained and capable of fulfilling their functions adequately. Volunteers can contact members of the Professional Engagement Team if they have any concerns or questions. Please email engagement@acn.edu.au

Intellectual property

All volunteers agree to transfer all intellectual property rights and interests (including copyright) in any ideas or materials they create relating to their provision of voluntary services to ACN. Any information gained through accessing ACN members remains the property of ACN and requires acknowledgement and identification within any publication.

Volunteers are requested to gain the consent of ACN to use such creations in a manner considered reasonable as part of the voluntary services provided under this document.

Volunteers also agree not to bring any claim for infringement of their moral rights in respect of that use.

In general, ACN retains ownership of all intellectual property created in a partnership or under the direction of ACN unless specified in a legal agreement or memorandum of understanding between the partners. If there is a situation of joint ownership of intellectual property, any commercial use must be agreed upon by the other party. Please notify the National Director of Professional Practice if you are involved in any activity where intellectual property may be involved.

Media and social media

ACN volunteers must not speak to the media without authorisation from ACN. If contacted by the media, please contact ACN's Media team in the first instance via ACN.Media@acn.edu.au. The Media team may ask you to comment to the media. If so, remember to introduce yourself in your capacity as either a Distinguished Life Fellow, Fellow, or Member of ACN and state the role you are representing ACN at the time, e.g. State Chair, Faculty Chair etc. Public speaking and media training may be provided by ACN for Chairs and those volunteers required to regularly represent ACN in the media.

We appreciate volunteers bringing to our attention social and/or digital media.

discussions about ACN, its volunteers or its employees. However, we ask that you do not comment on these discussions before discussing them with the Media team. Volunteers can contact the Manager, Professional Engagement if they find a disturbing social media thread at engagement@acn.edu.au or by contacting ACN on **1800 061 660**.

Recognition and reward

A positive outcome of volunteering within ACN is professional exposure, career development, opportunities for networking and professional mentoring within ACN. At all points of volunteering, there will be individualised discussions undertaken by a member of the Professional Practice team to determine the volunteer's level of knowledge and skills about the work to be undertaken. Ongoing plans will be developed with volunteers to facilitate them through the various pathways within ACN as part of this interaction e.g. DLF, Fellow, Institute of Leadership.

Volunteers will receive appropriate recognition and support in the exercise of their functions. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will report to the Board regularly on the activities and achievements of volunteers.

Where agreed, volunteers will be reimbursed for all 'pre-approved' expenditures incurred in the exercise of their functions. The volunteer should retain all receipts and present them to the ACN Engagement Team at engagement@acn.edu.au within 5 days of expenditure for reimbursement.

If the member or volunteer does not agree to have their profile promoted for any reason, they can discuss this with the Professional Practice Team, where all avenues of privacy protection and need will be negotiated.

Reporting

It is an expectation that volunteers representing ACN will share the information gained or shared during the representation opportunity. This information sharing is to keep ACN up to date with professional issues and current or emerging strategies. The volunteer will complete a report after the meeting/consultation, using the template in Appendix 1. The report will be emailed

to engagement@acn.edu.au, where it will be shared with relevant ACN members and staff.

Regions will be required to report every 6 months regarding progress against the annual agreed priorities. The link for this online form submission is

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2024fb06e4174ae3aa59f5ab9520c188>

Faculties will discuss progress in the 1:1 bimonthly meeting with the Engagement Team.

For any issues or concerns, please contact the Manager - Professional Engagement at engagement@acn.edu.au

Representation

ACN may be approached by local, state/territory or national bodies to nominate someone to speak on behalf of ACN or to participate on committees or advisory groups.

Representation appointment is for a maximum period of 2 years with a further 2-year extension if required.

At all times volunteers are required to ensure they acknowledge their role within ACN as DLF, Fellow, Member or Alumnus and represent the views and position of ACN. The volunteer will be provided information about the event/ appointment and a briefing from the Professional Practice Team if required, who will provide an overview of any position statements, white papers, discussion papers or policy recommendations that ACN have developed. If the volunteer is asked to provide a PowerPoint presentation, then the slides must be developed using the ACN PowerPoint or the individual faculty branded template. The volunteer can provide content. The final editing and approval of the presentation remain the responsibility of ACN.

Following each representation event/meeting, representatives are requested to complete the online representation report form –

https://acn.formstack.com/forms/representation_report

For further information and guidelines please contact Professional Engagement at engagement@acn.edu.au

Microsoft 365 Teams access

ACN volunteers fulfilling a State, Region and/or Faculty leadership team role will be provided access to Microsoft Office 365. This access will provide the functionality required for utilising Microsoft Teams for meetings and as a tool for communication whilst volunteering for ACN.

A generic email address will be established for all faculty/regional leadership teams to which all members of the leadership team will have access. It is expected that all communications to and from that faculty/region be routed via the online community platform, The Buzz, or the generic email address of the faculty/region.

Any issues relating to communication or technical problems should be raised with the Engagement Team for support – engagement@acn.edu.au.

Whistleblowing

ACN acts within the Law and consequently has rules to ensure it is always observed and that we are honest in all our dealings.

Volunteers, therefore, have a responsibility to act with integrity, diligence and care whenever engaged in ACN business. They also share a responsibility to bring to the attention of the appropriate person in authority, any instance where the highest standards of regularity and propriety are not being achieved.

The Board has determined that no person, whatever their position within ACN, will suffer any disadvantage whatsoever because of raising a legitimate concern about the lawfulness or appropriateness of any action of ACN. The only exception to this will be where it is clear from the investigation that the allegation has been made maliciously. Any issue raised in good faith will be treated as a matter of the strictest confidence.

Volunteer engagement strategies

The Professional Practice Directorate aims to provide support and leadership to volunteers to facilitate the achievement of ACN Strategic Directions.

Engagement focuses on three core areas:

- Representation and Engagement
- Membership
- Capacity and Capability Development

ACN's States/Territories/Regions (Regions) and Faculties provide ACN, members and volunteers with the opportunity to network with like-minded colleagues, champion areas of specialty or practice, participate in CPD activities and support their career progression with peers who share similar interests or geographic locations.

A dedicated Leadership Team will lead each Region and Faculty and, in partnership with ACN, will set the annual priorities, and co-design networking and professional development opportunities. Future leaders of each Region and Faculty will come from within, with existing leadership team members coaching and mentoring to ensure continuity, opportunity and succession planning for leadership roles among the membership.

ACN will provide dedicated support and mentoring to the Leadership Team through investment in experienced and dedicated nursing leaders and, where necessary, coaching, mentoring, and training in developing high-level leadership skills or media training.

Outlines of Leadership Team roles, responsibilities and expectations will be provided upon acceptance of the role.

Faculties

ACN's National Faculties are designed to focus on specific issues or specialties impacting the nursing profession and are unpinned by the six strategic pillars of ACN's 2022-2026 Strategic Directions: advocacy, community, education, leadership, policy and social impact. The faculty framework incorporates members as the foundation, facilitating nurses to achieve ACN's Strategic Direction: Shaping Health, Advancing Nursing.

Faculties provide members with a national profile at all levels of nursing, from novice to expert, with a range of opportunities to engage and grow professionally. All members will benefit from the novice to expert model. More experienced or expert members will lead activities such as policy development or education sessions on contemporary issues relevant to the faculty specialty. Mid-career, early and novice nurses will benefit through mentorship, networking, and exposure to highly skilled and experienced nurses.

Faculty leadership team members will collaborate with ACN to co-design strategic priorities and facilitate CPD sessions and networking opportunities for members. Online discussion forums such as The Buzz, webinars and events assist members to connect with other like-minded nurses and those interested in similar specialties. The regions will collaborate with the faculties to advise, support or guide in areas that may have an impact in that region. All ACN members are encouraged to belong and be active in at least one faculty, encouraging a sense of belonging.

There is no limit to how many faculties an individual member can belong to. However, they should be mindful of the time and commitment required to be engaged and active if involved in more than one faculty.

The cessation of a faculty will be determined by the member engagement, achievement of agreed priorities, leadership team engagement and agreed outputs. All efforts will be made by the Professional Engagement Team to support the continuation of the faculty. A briefing will be presented to ELT seeking support to cease a faculty.

Regions

Regions provide unique networking opportunities for DLFs, Fellows and Members to connect with their peers and to keep actively involved in State, Territory and local professional issues and their professional development.

Each Region also has a four-person leadership team, including a Chair, Deputy Chair and two leadership support positions, who coordinate networking events and lead and represent the region.

DLFs, Fellows and Members are initially assigned to their local Region based on their residential address and postcode.

However, those based in border towns or working away from home can choose the region to which they are assigned or self-allocate to more than one region.

Assistance with changes can be arranged by contacting engagement@acn.edu.au

