

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY



1. PURPOSE

1.1 Foundation

The Australian College of Theology (ACT) was established by a Determination of the 1891 General Synod of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania. ACT was founded in order to provide for the “systematic study of divinity” especially among the clergy and ordination candidates, there being no chance for them at that time to avail themselves realistically of the opportunities for earning the Bachelor of Divinity (BD) degree at English universities.

In 1995 ACT was incorporated as an association and in 2007 ACT was registered as a public company limited by guarantee as the Australian College of Theology Limited (ACN: 127 429 083). The then Constitution of ACT is included as a Schedule to the Australian College of Theology Canon 2007. The Constitution of ACT was amended in 2011 and 2021 in accordance with the Canon.

From its inception ACT has positioned itself as a provider of higher education, specifically of courses in theology and ministry.

ACT now operates as a national consortium of affiliated independent colleges. This arrangement originated in 1974 when several colleges - Ridley College in Melbourne and Moore Theological College in Sydney (both Anglican) and two interdenominational Bible Colleges (Bible College of Victoria and Bible College of New Zealand) - sought approval from ACT to deliver the newly proposed Bachelor of Theology (BTh) degree.

There are now 17 Anglican and non-Anglican theological and interdenominational Bible colleges (Affiliated Colleges) situated in each mainland State and one in New Zealand, which have been approved to deliver the accredited courses of ACT on its behalf. In 2021 these colleges enrolled 1,249 equivalent full-time students, or 3,073 individual students and research candidates, in the awards of ACT.

The relationship between each Affiliated College and ACT is articulated in, and regulated by, an “evergreen” Affiliation Agreement. It is recognised that each Affiliated College is an independent entity in its own right. There is a high value placed on collaboration and cooperation across the consortium.

1.2 Self-accrediting authority

ACT has self-accrediting authority for all Australian Qualifications Framework levels of its present courses (from undergraduate diploma to research doctorate) and is recognised in the provider register of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). ACT was the first Australian provider to be awarded self-accrediting authority under the then National Protocols for Higher Education Recognition Processes.

Paul Barker

Date of appointment: 8 May 2017
 Title: Non-independent Director
 Special responsibilities: Deputy Chair, Board of Directors (from 1 September 2019)
 Qualifications: BTheol (Ridley College), PhD (University of Bristol)

Experience and Expertise:

Rt Rev Dr Paul Barker currently serves as Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. He also currently holds the post of Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies at Myanmar Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, and is responsible for Langham Scholar Care, Australia. Dr Barker is an ACT graduate with extensive exposure and experience in theological education around the world, and most particularly in our South East Asian region. He has served as a CMS missionary based in Malaysia, delivering academic courses at thirteen seminaries in ten countries (2006-2016). Prior to this, he has had teaching responsibilities at Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education in the UK, and as Adjunct Lecturer at Ridley College, Melbourne. He has held formal titles as Visiting Professor, Lecturer, or Scholar at five seminaries in five different countries. Dr Barker has a strong publication record and extensive experience in the governance of Christian organisations, having served in 36 committee or board positions including: Twelve years as a member of the Ridley College Council, with six of those as Vice-Chairman; Eight years on the Ridley College Faculty Review Committee; Five years as a member of the Australian College of Theology Council (2004–2009); Ten years on Archbishop in Council for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne; Six years on the Executive Committee for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne; Two years on the Standing Committee of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia; Five years as a member of the Asian Theological Association, AGST Alliance Post-Graduate Biblical Studies Steering Committee.

Dr Barker has also served in a variety of church ministry roles, including thirteen years as the Vicar of Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Doncaster, Victoria.

Phillip Dolan

Date of appointment: 17 September 2018
 Title: Independent Director
 Qualifications: BA (Maqu), MBusAdmin (UNSW), PhD (Stanford).

Experience and Expertise:

Phil Dolan has tertiary qualifications in mathematics, computer science, business administration and finance, and is a graduate of Macquarie University, the University of New South Wales and Stanford University. He is currently an adjunct professor at La Trobe University Business School. His prior roles include Head of Investment Research in the Funds Management arm of Macquarie Bank, Head of the Department of Applied Finance and Actuarial Studies at Macquarie University, Dean of the Business School at the University of Western Australia, and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Commerce at La Trobe University. His research and teaching interests are in finance and investment management. Prof Dolan has served on the Boards of a number of educational institutions, including Abbotsleigh School and Robert Menzies College in Sydney, and Methodist Ladies College and St George's College in Perth. He is a member of the congregation at St Jude's, Carlton.

Special responsibilities: None

Gregory Norman Hammond OAM

Date of appointment: 26 May 2014
Title: Independent Director
Special Responsibilities: Chair, Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee (from 1 September 2019)
Qualifications: BA (Hons) (Syd), LLB (Hons) (Sydney), PTC (Moore), ThA (Hons) (ACT)

Experience and Expertise:

Greg is a consultant and adviser to financial institutions, charities and not-for-profit organisations and has over 30 years' experience as a commercial lawyer. He was a member of the panel which reviewed the ACNC legislation in 2018 and he completed an independent review for the Federal Government on access to capital by cooperatives and mutuals in 2017. He was a partner of King & Wood Mallesons for over 27 years (1987–2014) and an Adjunct Fellow with the Applied Finance Centre at Macquarie University for over 20 years.

His current roles include being chairman of Anglican Community Services (t/as Anglicare Sydney) and Olive Tree Media, a director of Anglican Representative (National Redress Scheme) Limited, G&C Mutual Bank and Opportunity International Australia, and a member of the Glebe Administration Board (the trustee of the Diocesan Endowment for the Anglican Diocese of Sydney) and the Standing Committee of the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.

Kathryn Joy Harden-Thew

Date of appointment: 8 May 2017
Title: Independent Director
Qualifications: BADipEd, Med (TESOL UOW), PhD (UOW), FHEA

Experience and Expertise:

From 2008 to 2020, Kathryn engaged in various academic roles at the University of Wollongong. Moving from the School of Education in early 2014, she became an Academic Developer (Lecturer) working in the Deputy Vice Chancellor's (Academic) unit. She was the Co-ordinator of the University's professional development in learning and teaching review process for all teaching staff at the University. Kathryn's research interests include investigating transitions in higher education; professional development for sessional staff. Kathryn brings her extensive experience of working in higher education at subject, course and institution level to ACT.

Prior to taking up employment at UOW, Kathryn met the challenges and joys of full-time ministry for nine years. While having served in a number of capacities in women's and children's ministries across adult life, Kathryn's particular passion is reading the Bible and praying one-to-one with women, especially ministering to women who have experienced tragedy in adult life.

Kathryn Harden-Thew has served ACT as a member of the Board of Directors since 2017. During this time she has also continued to encourage the development of industry leading teaching and learning PD across ACT through leading workshops and speaking at the annual teaching and learning conference. Prior to taking up membership of the Board of Directors, Kathryn was an external member of both the Coursework Committee and the Coursework Unit Review Panel.

Brian Shardlow Harris

Date of appointment: 8 May 2017 (as the Principal of an Affiliated College)
 1 January 2020 (as a Board appointed Director following his retirement as the principal of Vose Seminary)

Title: Non-independent Director

Special Responsibilities: Chair, Academic Board (from 22 May 2017)

Qualifications: BSocSc, BTh (Hons), MTh, PhD (University of Auckland) Cert IV TAE

Experience and Expertise:

Dr Brian Harris directs the AVENIR Leadership Institute and was for 17 years the principal of Vose Seminary in Perth (now merged with Morling College), where he continues to teach on a part time basis. A Distinguished Visiting International Scholar of London's Spurgeon's College, Brian has also been a visiting scholar at theological colleges around the world and has served as a director of numerous Christian Boards. He is the chair of the Academic Board of the Australian College of Theology.

Roger Lewis

Date of appointment: 17 September 2018

Title: Independent Director

Special responsibilities: Chair, Board of Directors (from 1 September 2019)

Qualifications: BSc Hons (USyd), PhD (Griffith), DipTheolSt (Moore), BTheol (ACT Ridley).

Experience and Expertise:

Roger Lewis is a Senior Professor and Associate Dean Research in the Faculty of Engineering and Information Sciences at the University of Wollongong. He was previously the Head of the School of Physics. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Physics, a Fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society and a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators. He has served on the College of Experts of the Australian Research Council (2015-2017, 2019+) and as an Executive Member of the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (2012-2018). He holds a Diploma of Theological Studies (Moore Theological College) and a Bachelor of Theology (Australian College of Theology), studying in multiple modes (on-line, intensive, distance, on campus) at multiple institutions (Ridley, SMBC, Christ College, MST). He is a Fellow and Board Chair of the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology. Dr Lewis has served in a variety of church ministry roles, most recently as Associate Minister at Figtree Anglican Church, March-June 2018.

Ian Colwell Miller OAM

Date of appointment: 7 June 2010

Title: Independent Director

Special Responsibilities: Member, Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee

Qualifications: BA, LLM, ThL (ACT), MAICD, GradDipTheol (CSU), MTh (CSU)

Experience and Expertise:

Ian has 40 years' experience in law. He was a partner of Hunt & Hunt Lawyers from 1981 to 2020 and has now moved to the position of Senior Consultant. Until 2016 he was Chairman of the Council of Barker College. He is a Director of the Church Missionary Society Trust Limited and Chairman of Pentel (Australia) Pty Limited and a Consultant Editor to CCH Australia. Ian has been actively involved in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney and is a member of the Sydney Diocesan Synod as well as serving as Churchwarden of his parish. In addition, Ian is the Chairman of the Board of Management in a retirement village

Brian S Rosner

Date of appointment: 8 May 2017

Title: Non-independent Director

Qualifications: BA (Hons) (Sydney), MTh (Dallas), PhD (Cambridge)

Experience and Expertise:

Brian is a New Testament scholar of international standing, having edited or written over a dozen books, published in most of the major peer-reviewed journals and supervised around twenty doctorates. He is the Principal of Ridley College and previously lectured at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland and Moore Theological College. He has served on the Board of Studies at all three institutions, with particular responsibilities to do with postgraduate studies and higher degrees by research at Aberdeen and Moore. He is currently a director of Ridley College and previously served as a director of Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University. Brian is an active researcher and a great believer in the value of collaborative endeavour. He is an ordained Anglican minister, serves as President of EFAC Victoria and Tasmania and is on the Victorian Committee of the Gospel Coalition of Australia. Brian is also passionate about promoting the gospel in the public sphere and is a fellow of The Centre for Public Christianity. In recent years, his articles have appeared in The Age and The Australian and he has been interviewed on Compass and The Spirit of Things.

Ian Smith

Date of appointment: 1 January 2021

Title: Non-independent Director

Qualifications: BA (Sydney), DipEd (STC), BTh (Hons) (ACT), MEd (Hons) (New England), MTh (ACT), PhD (Sydney)

Experience and Expertise:

Ian was appointed by the Board to fill the casual vacancy for a Principal of an Affiliated College following the retirement of Brian Harris as principal of Vose Seminary. Ian is the Principal of Christ College in Sydney and lecturer in New Testament and Greek exegesis. He has been on the full-time staff at Christ College since 1995, prior to which he was a missionary with Australian Presbyterian World Mission at Talua Ministry Training Centre in Vanuatu. Ian has also worked as a high school teacher and as the minister of Griffith Presbyterian Church.

3.2 Meetings of Directors (2021)

The number of meetings of the Company's Board of Directors ("the Board") held during the year ended 31 December 2021, and the number of meetings attended by each Director were:

	Director' Meetings	
	Number attended	Number eligible to attend
Anne Abraham	7	7
Paul Barker	7	7
Philip Dolan	7	7
Gregory Hammond OAM	6	7
Kathryn Harden-Thew	6	7
Brian Harris	6	7
Roger Lewis	7	7
Ian Miller OAM	7	7
Brian Rosner	6	7
Ian Smith	7	7

3.3 Company Secretary and CEO

Professor James Dalziel

Professor James Dalziel joined ACT as Dean and CEO in June 2020 and was appointed Company Secretary at the same time. Prior to that, Professor Dalziel was Dean of Education at Morling College and a Professor of the University of Divinity. Previously, he has been Professor of Learning Technology at Macquarie University and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney. Professor Dalziel is an internationally recognised expert in the fields of Learning Design and educational technology. James is a Member of the Australian Psychological Society. James is married to Dr Bronwen Dalziel, and they have three children.

4. ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST GENERAL SYNOD (2017)

4.1 Coronavirus Response

ACT temporarily closed its physical office in March 2020 and arranged for staff to work from home as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Delivery of all units in ACT's courses was converted to online studies in early 2020, and there have been significant ongoing developments in e-learning at Affiliated Colleges.

The process of re-opening ACT's physical office started in July 2020 with a limited staff presence during work-days. Public health orders in NSW in June 2021 resulted in the temporary closure of the physical office.

The ACT has continued to provide support to the Affiliated Colleges in the implementation of their Covid response plans and their engagement with state-based public health orders.

ACT has maintained its viability amidst an increase in student withdrawals due to the pandemic.

4.2 Affiliated Colleges

The Chinese Theological College Australia and Trinity College Queensland affiliated with ACT in 2020 and started to offer ACT's courses in the same year.

From 1 January 2021, Vose Seminary disaffiliated from ACT (as it was acquired by Morling College, an ACT Affiliated College, and Vose is now a campus of Morling College). No notable adverse effects have arisen from Vose's operations being merged with Morling College.

On 12 May 2021 The Supreme Court of Queensland appointed receivers for The Presbyterian Church in Queensland (PCQ) as a result of matters which had arisen within its PresCare aged care business. This raised implications for the ACT Affiliated College, Queensland Theological College (QTC – which is part of PCQ). The ACT appraised TEQSA of the matter, and TEQSA did not express ongoing concerns but requested updates as required. The Dean has been in regular contact with the Principal of QTC, and the appointed receivers through the ACT's legal representative MinterEllison. Delivery of studies continued unaffected to students at QTC in 2021 and continues in 2022. The ACT secured provisions to support ongoing delivery of studies to students in the unlikely event that the receivers' actions might impact QTC's operations (these provisions have not been required to date). The Board of Directors and ACT's Finance, Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee continue to monitor the situation at QTC.

The following Affiliated College Principal changes for 2021 are noted:

Rev Mike Dicker succeeded Rev Dr Willis (Bill) Salier at Youthworks College
Dr Louise Gosbell succeeded Rev Dr Katy Smith at Mary Andrews College

4.3 Academic

4.3.1 Application for University status

In March 2016 ACT applied to TEQSA for a change of Provider Category status to Australian University of Specialisation under section 38 of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act (TEQSA Act). In June 2019 TEQSA rejected the application.

In March 2021 TEQSA announced new Higher Education Provider Category standards and invited the ACT to make a submission by 23rd April 2021. The ACT made a submission for the category of Australian University (with a specialised focus) – this is equivalent to the prior Australian University of Specialisation category; as well as the new University College category.

The ACT Board considered the Change of Provider Category Submission to be a solid and compelling proposal that made a strong case for the ACT to be recognised as an Australian University (with a specialised focus).

In July 2021 TEQSA announced the ACT as an “Institute of Higher Education”, effectively leaving the ACT’s existing status unchanged.

After reviewing the TEQSA decision and noting deficiencies in the reasons given, the ACT Board decided to lodge an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

At the time of this report the AAT process is ongoing. The Board of Directors continues to believe it has a strong case for a change of Provider Category.

4.3.2 Student load

Equivalent Full Time (EFT) Student Numbers	
2019	1423
2020	1369
2021	1249

4.3.3 Research output

ACT is not required to report its research output formally to the Department of Education or TEQSA. However, the steady building of a research culture across the consortium is an important measure of success. While there has been an increase in the quantity of publications by faculty, the focus of TEQSA has shifted to the quality of publications. ACT is therefore putting in place policies and procedures to align ACT’s research publishing with the Excellence of Research Australia criteria used by TEQSA.

In April 2021 the Academic Board recommended to the Board of Directors the adoption of the ACT Research and Scholarship Strategy (“Strategy”), which provided new requirements for research and “confessional scholarship” publishing. The Board of Directors approved the Strategy as the guiding document to further enhance the research culture of the ACT.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP OUTPUTS ACT 2016–20

These figures are taken from “[Research and Scholarship: ACT Report 2020](#)” published in September 2021 (p28). It presents a historical analysis of ACT publications from 2016-2020 based on the new requirements in the 2021 Strategy.

YEAR	RESEARCH	SCHOLARSHIP	TOTAL
2016	41	104	155
2017	61	105	166
2018	48	106	154
2019	49	95	144
2020	53	139	192

Research outputs only include research books, book chapters and articles. Scholarship outputs include confessional scholarship books, book chapters, articles plus edited books, book reviews and conference presentation.

4.4 Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)

Until 30 January 2012 oversight of higher education (registration, accreditation, and endorsement) was exercised by state-based higher education regulators. This ceased when TEQSA began operations under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act in 2011. TEQSA has been managing the folding of all responsibilities for registration, accreditation and endorsement (including the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)) into itself.

The Dean and CEO monitors the requirements of TEQSA and is the designated person for all communications to and from TEQSA.

4.5 IT infrastructure and website

Several updates to ACT’s website improved efficiency and effectiveness of ACT’s communication to its stakeholders and the public.

ACT is working with its Affiliated Colleges on new systems to improve the effectiveness and efficiency around relevant processes. Projects include student engagement with studies and course planning projects.

4.6 Financial

2.4.1 ACT Financial Performance

Profit (Loss)	Results
2019	2,535k
2020	268k
2021 (unaudited)	80k

2.4.1 ACT Balance Sheet

Balance Sheet	Net Assets
2019	7,329k
2020	7,597k
2021 (unaudited)	7,677k

4.7 Staffing

The Dean and CEO, Professor James Dalziel commenced his role on 1 June 2020. Professor Dalziel comes to ACT with extensive university and theological college experience.

In December 2021 the Rev Dr Graeme Chatfield retired as Associate Dean and Director of Research. The ACT thanks the Rev Dr Chatfield for his distinguished and faithful service to the organisation.

Dr Edwina Murphy commences in February 2022 as Deputy Dean and Director of Research.

2021 ACT Staff:

Office of the Dean	James Dalziel, Dean and CEO Nathain Secker, Executive Officer of the Board of Directors and Director of Special Projects Cathy Harris, Executive Officer of the Academic Board and Coursework Committee and ACT Policies Administrator.
Research	Graeme Chatfield, Associate Dean and Director of Research (Retired Dec 2021) Neil Ormerod, Executive Officer of Research Quality Megan Powell du Toit, Publishing Manager
Teaching & Learning	Ian O'Harae, Director of Teaching and Learning
Academic Services	Simon Davies, Registrar Diana Tadjudin, Deputy Registrar Elisa Norris, Administrative Coordinator- Graduation and Support Services (Resigned Dec 2021) Asanka Gunarathne, Academic Administrative Officer & Overseas Student Liaison Officer Coralie Scott, Academic Administrative Officer (Resigned Apr 2021) Rebekah Wall, Academic Services Officer Jaynee Tan, Academic Services Officer (LOTE) (Commenced May 2021) Witali Klein, IT Officer
Risk & Compliance	Paul Yeates, Director of Risk & Compliance Erin Sessions, Quality & Inclusion Officer Stephen Sarkoezy, Academic Quality Officer
Finance	Vicki Chen, Director of Finance Mary Ann Navidad, Financial Accountant Carmen Buca, Accounts Receivable & Accounts Payable Officer (Contract role Apr-Dec 2021)

5. PLANS AND GOALS

As noted above, ACT is continuing its appeal with the AAT regarding TEQSA handling of both its 2016 application for a change of category, and the 2021 application for the category of Australian University (with a specialised focus); as well as the new University College category. The implications for ACT gaining Australian University or University College status are far-reaching, opening new opportunities of funding and impact which will enable gains not possible to date.

In 2019-20 ACT reviewed its overall governance framework, including the Constitution of ACT. Article 21 of the Constitution provides that no amendment of the Constitution shall take effect unless and until it is or has been approved by the General Synod or the Standing Committee of the General Synod.

In 2020 representatives of ACT and the Standing Committee began discussing amendments to the Constitution. As a result of those discussions two tranches of amendments to the Constitution of ACT have been pursued:

- a. first, amendments to enhance governance, future planning and accountability and update the Constitution for developments since 2011 when it was last amended; and
- b. second, amendments to include a statement of Christian identity, broaden the membership of ACT to reflect the broad range of denominational, interdenominational and other stakeholders of ACT and its Affiliated Colleges and disestablish any special connexion between the of the Anglican Church of Australia and ACT (although it is intended that the Anglican Church of Australia remain an important stakeholder in ACT),

These amendments were approved by the Standing Committee, and subsequently by the members of ACT at the ACT Annual General Meeting in May 2021.

It is anticipated that the second tranche of amendments will be considered by the Standing Committee in the near future and, if approved, submitted to the ACT Annual General Meeting in May 2022.

Prof James Dalziel
Dean and CEO
February 2022