

IEEE Australia Council – 2020 Annual Report

PART A - SECTION SUMMARY

A.1 Executive Summary

- Council Executive Committee Member List

Chair	Daniel Eghbal
Vice Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Fouad Karouta
Treasurer	David Russell
Webmaster	Mike Robinson
Educational/Student Activities	Roba Abbas
Sections Chairs	
Australian Capital Territory	Fouad Karouta
Northern Australia	Melanie Olsen
New South Wales	Colin Elston
Queensland	Nilesh Modi
South Australia	Sherry Randhawa
Victoria	Mehrnaz Shoushtarian
Western Australia	Farhad Shahnian

Council Highlights

- IEEE Australia Council committee meet regularly every second month. Due to wide geographical area covered by the council, all meetings are virtual WebEx meeting. This year due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the traditional face-face meeting before R10 meeting in March 2020 was held online.
- IEEE Australia Council is a representative body of seven IEEE Sections in Australia and does not generally organize events independently rather provide coordination between Australian Sections. However, as majority of the meetings and events were held online, IEEE Australia Council established a seminar series on topics with interest among multiple societies and organized three technical seminars online which were all recorded.
- Due to the strategic importance of WIE, IEEE AC has established a WIE forum to foster collaboration among WIE affinity groups in Australia. The forum was very active while planning for the WIE Leadership Summit.
- Supports Australian Sections to submit a bid for hosting major IEEE conferences.
- IEEE AC conducts a postgraduate student paper contest, an undergraduate project contest, and a student branch competition annually.
- Details for the SAC are available on the website and communicated to student members using social media and e-notices.
- IEEE AC also collaborate with New Zealand Council and ANZSCON (Australia New Zealand Student and Young Professionals Congress) is a typical example.
- All meetings were registered and reported on vTools.
- The Financial report for 2020 was successfully submitted to MGA before the February deadline.

PART B - ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

B.1 Membership Development Activities

- Total number of active members has increased to about 7700 from 6000 in 2019 (7771 as of 11 Feb 2021).
- IEEE AC works with Australian sections rather than implement separate membership development activities.

B.2 Students Activities

- Total number of active student members (as of 11 Feb 2021) is 1490 (%19 of total members).
- Total number of Student Branches in Australia are 42.

While Australia Council does not have an individual student branch, some great effort has been made to improve the student activities. Here is a short summary of the ongoing work:

- Worked collaboratively on IEEE SAC Roles and Responsibilities document, which was approved by AC
- Worked collaboratively on Student Activities Plan, which was approved by the AC
- Created branded material for, and launched, two competitions, both of which close on the 30 March 2020. Winners will be awarded \$500 for first prize and \$200 for second prize for each of these competitions:
 - Undergraduate Student Project Contest
 - Student Branch Contest
- Recruited a student volunteer for the Student Activities Team, which was formed throughout 2020
- Built (and still updating) a database of points of contact to commence social media campaigns, and generate exposure for student activities across Australia
- Created a draft Social Media Specifications Document in collaboration with student volunteer, which was circulated to AC members for comments in March 2020
- Launched social media campaigns, across multiple platforms, notably Facebook and LinkedIn as starting points

B.3 Awards & Recognition Activities

The Student Contests offer IEEE student members an opportunity to exercise and improve written and verbal communication skills via two different competitions.

Throughout an engineer's career, graduates are constantly called upon to communicate their ideas and concepts to others. Researching, writing, and presenting a paper provides students with invaluable early experience in expressing ideas and concepts related to their professional field.

Since the contests' primary function is to improve engineering students' communication skills, all IEEE student members in Australian universities are encouraged to participate in this important contest.

The Student Contests will be conducted for two entrant categories:

- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate students

The IEEE Australia Council Student Branch Awards recognize outstanding student branch achievements by student members engaged in activities conforming to IEEE objectives and purposes.

These include, for example:

- Significantly improving the vitality of each student branch with regard to activities, membership, or finances.
- Effective interaction of each student branch with the local Section or Region, or IEEE technical societies, through seminars, conferences etc.
- Community involvement that benefits local schools and/or the community, the IEEE's image, and the image of engineering in general.

All IEEE student branches in Australia are eligible to enter the competition.

B.4 Communication Activities (Newsletter, Home Page, E-mail etc.)

- IEEE AC website contains all the important information <http://ieee-ac.org/> and is updated regularly.
- IEEE AC mainly communicates with section representatives rather than members directly.

B.5 Industry Relations

- Industry relations is very important and strong partnership with local industry and professional bodies will assist AC to provide more benefits to its members. In that regards, IEEE AC established a position dedicated to coordination with Standards Australia.
- It is also important to note that more than half of the Section chairs (part of the IEEE AC Executive committee) and other committee members have an industry background.
- While most of Australian Sections have some level of collaboration with Engineers Australia (mainly in form of organizing joint technical events), IEEE AC believes the MOU between IEEE and Engineers Australia (that was signed during the IEEE Sections Congress in 2017) is valuable and hence facilitate the renewal process with Engineering Australia and IEEE HQ in 2020. It is a work in progress, led by IEEE HQ now.

PART C - OTHERS

C.1 Special Events

- AC Seminar Series was established in 2020 to provide benefits to members across multiple societies and sections. These are the three events organized as part of this initiative:
 - “Contact Tracing Applications: An Australian Case Study”, 27 July 2020, Prof.Katina Michael
 - “Human-Robot Skill Transfer for Industry 4.0: Research Agenda”, 4 Aug 2020, Dr. Emre Sariyildiz, Dr.Roba Abbas
 - “Why don’t we have portable rehabilitation robots? A case study of Smart Limb Rehab with soft haptics”, 1 Sep 2020, Dr.Rahim Mutla

C.2 Relationship with National and International Societies and Non-Government Organizations (NGO)

- Standards Australia
- Engineers Australia (mainly through joint technical events and conferences)

C3. Collaboration with other IEEE Sections

- IEEE Australia Council is a representative body of seven IEEE Sections in Australia and does not organize events independently rather provide coordination between Australian Sections.
- IEEE Australia Council supports Australian hosting of major IEEE conferences
- IEEE AC also collaborates with New Zealand Council and ANZSCON (Australia New Zealand Student and Young Professionals Congress) is a typical example. The AC committee will have to decide the location for the next ANZSCON in 2021.
- IEEE AC coordinates the visits to Australia of IEEE Distinguished Lecturers.

C.4 Problems anticipated and suggestions for solutions, if any

Success of the council depends on number of factor of which dedicated volunteers is one of the important one. Retaining experienced volunteers and attracting new volunteers are sometime challenging.

PART D - GOALS AND PLANS

D.1 Continuation of project/activity in progress and their implementation plans

In collaboration with the Sections, the Council will continue to pay attention to all students activities at Sections level and student branches.

D.2 Goals and Future Plans

Explore the options to create more revenue to for council to defer collecting levy from Sections and invest the funding toward more activities aiming to create more value for members.

D.3 Any innovative ideas to make IEEE more creative and value added for sustaining the membership retention and recruitment goals.

The Council aims to support all Sections in their endeavor to promote and strengthen IEEE membership.

D.4 Business Plan for Sustainable Growth and Financial Stability.

The Council has maintained financial stability over at least the past 5 or more years, with a maintained reserve, set aside to aid in case of any unexpected issue.