Australian Institute of Architects

ABN 72 000 023 012
The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
trading as Australian Institute of Architects

NSW Chapter
3 Manning Street,
Potts Point, NSW 2011

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14th October 2026

NSW Elections – President, Vice President and Chapter Council

Elections for the NSW Chapter President and Chapter Councillors will open in early November. Ahead of the elections, I would like to reflect on the past couple of years and also explain the roles of the Chapter President, Vice Chapter President and Chapter Councillors, and how best we can, as a group, respond to the membership.

Chapter Councillors represent the breadth and diversity of our profession. Our current Councillors come from large and small practices, regional and metropolitan areas, and bring experience across architectural practice, local government and construction. This range of perspectives has helped Chapter Council understand and respond to the needs and priorities of our members.

NSW has the largest Institute membership in the country and is often at the forefront of government policy changes affecting our profession and the built environment. Over the past six years, these have included the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020, the Building (Approvals and Practitioners) Bill 2026, the Housing Delivery Authority pathways and development control reforms. Chapter Council plays an important role in responding to these changes, helping architects understand and meet their obligations, while advocating for the best outcomes for our communities.

How Chapter Council also supports the Institute's ongoing work, including:

- collaborating with allied organisations such as the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA), the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) and the Committee for Sydney;
- recognising members through Awards and Prizes;
- engaging with universities and the Student Organised Network for Architecture (SONA);
- representing NSW on National Council and National Committees; and
- working closely with our NSW Committees.

This year, following the National Committees Review, our Committees were refreshed. They will have an increasing presence and a stronger focus on the Institute's four strategic pillars of Advocacy, Education, Connection and Recognition.

In my almost two and a half years as Chapter President, the support of the Vice Chapter President and Chapter Council has been essential, particularly in helping us navigate the many policy and advocacy issues affecting architects in NSW.

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A possible Co-Presidency:

We are always looking for ways to improve how we engage with members and broaden who can represent us. As proposed by NSW Chapter Councillors, an option to introduce a shared Chapter President role, or Co-Presidency, is currently being considered by a national Governance Working Group. If adopted, it could help share the workload and responsibilities of the Chapter President and encourage a broader and more diverse range of candidates to nominate. Such a change would require a carefully considered structure and amendments to the Institute's Constitution.

Formalising the Vice Chapter President role:

A Co-Presidency will take time to develop. In the meantime, we propose to formalise the role of Vice Chapter President in NSW. Over many terms, a Councillor has informally supported the Chapter President in NSW. For the past two years, Chapter Councillor Kirby Rees has undertaken this role with great commitment and generosity.

The two models are different. A Vice Chapter President supports the President within the current governance structure. A Co-Presidency would formally share the President's leadership and responsibilities.

How the Vice Chapter President is chosen:

Members vote to elect the Chapter President and Chapter Councillors. Following the election, the new Chapter Council will vote for one of its Councillors to become Vice Chapter President. That person will take on specific delegated responsibilities and provide broader support to the Chapter President.

We have developed a role description to provide greater clarity around the role and recognise its contribution to Chapter Council. The Vice Chapter President will:

• support the Chapter President in leading Chapter Council and promoting respectful dialogue, accountability and collaborative decision-making;
• help prepare for and run Chapter Council meetings, and chair them when the Chapter President is unavailable or delegates the role;
• help Chapter Council identify, progress and monitor its agreed priorities;
• support clear communication between the Chapter President, Chapter Councillors, Chapter Committees and Chapter staff;
• encourage member participation in Chapter programs and activities;
• represent the Chapter at member, stakeholder and industry events, when requested by the Chapter President and agreed with the Chapter Executive Lead;
• represent the Chapter with government, industry and allied organisations, using Institute-approved positions, when requested by the Chapter President and agreed with the Chapter Executive Lead;
• help induct, mentor and develop Chapter Councillors, and contribute to succession planning;

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• lead agreed projects or areas of responsibility for Chapter Council; and
• act as Chapter President during a temporary absence or vacancy, subject to the Institute's Constitution, Regulations and governance arrangements.

Chapter Councillors will continue to represent the Institute at government briefings, in the media and at member events. Through this work, Chapter Council provides an important connection between our members and the Institute, as well as with government, industry and the wider profession.

I encourage all members to take part in the upcoming elections. If you have any questions about the elections or the roles of the Chapter Council, please contact me, our Chapter Executive Lead, Tammy Dickson, or any of the current Chapter Councillors.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carpenter
NSW Chapter President

Tammy Dickson
NSW Chapter Executive Lead