

Australian Psychological Society | Candidate Profile | 2025 Board of Directors Election

All candidate information is supplied by the candidate



Name: Suzanne Chambers

Candidacy: President

CANDIDATE CAPABILITY RESPONSES

Demonstrated interest in working across various professions for the psychological health and wellbeing of the Australian community

I have a lifelong career in service of the psychological health and wellbeing of the Australian community. This has included working for cancer control non-government agencies, universities, and private practice psychology. For more than 20 years in the NGO sector I led the development, evaluation and delivery of a range of community support services for people with cancer across nursing, health promotion and psychology, and in doing so I pioneered the application of rigorous research methods to ensure evidence-based practice. At Griffith University I held the role of Foundation Professor of Allied Health Research supporting research development across all areas of allied health. I was appointed an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) 2018 for distinguished service to medical research particularly in the area of psycho-oncology and to community health through patient care strategies to assist men with prostate cancer. Over the past eight years as Dean of Health at University of Technology Sydney and then Executive Dean of Health Sciences at Australian Catholic University I have had oversight of the tertiary education of psychologists, allied health, paramedicine and nursing/midwifery. In 2025 ACU holds the #1 Times Higher Education Ranking for Psychology.

Extensive and current knowledge of, and good standing within, the APS and psychology

I am a long term member of the APS and a member of the College of Health Psychology and was an invited keynote speaker at the 2015 50th APS national conference. I have an extensive career in psychological research and practice. From 2012 to 2015 I was an Australian Research Council Professorial Future Fellow pursuing a program of research in the psychological care of people affected by cancer. Since 1997 I have published >300 peer review manuscripts; 6 reports; 10 book chapters; 70 published abstracts; and four books. I have 22,251 citations overall and 11,244 since 2020; career h-index of 80 and five year h-index of 54 (Google Scholar January 2025). I am ranked by Stanford as in the top 2% of scientists worldwide for oncology and clinical medicine for career and 2022 and 2023. I am the most published researcher internationally specifically to the cluster of prostate cancer/prostatectomy and quality of life. I recently published an 'ask the experts' cancer survivorship book by invitation of the British Psychological Society and Routledge Press. As not only an academic but a practicing health psychologist I have deep knowledge of the challenges faced by our membership.

Demonstrated understanding of the role of a Non-Executive Director of a NFP company limited by guarantee

I am a Graduate of the Australian Institute for Company Directors (2018). In 2018 I established a not-for-profit organisation Open Eyes Global that is approved by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and has approved tax deduction status. I am currently the President of the Board having responsibility for all reporting functions. Over my career I have been a member of various not-for-profit and government boards and governing committees in the health and community sector. As such I have both recognised training and practical experience in Board and company governance.

Effective leadership of membership teams or organisations that demonstrate a strong, values-based culture

In 2002 I was appointed General Manager of Community Services at Cancer Council Queensland (CCQ) where I was responsible for all state-wide services across patient support and community education, that include a Cancer Helpline (25,000 calls per year); accommodation facilities in Brisbane, Townsville, Rockhampton; a Cancer Counselling Services seeing approx. 1,000 patients per year delivering clinical psychology services; cancer advocacy across state and national boundaries; and a broad range of cancer-related professional and volunteer programs. In 2006-2011 this role expanded to include Director of Research at the Viertel Centre for Research in Cancer Control. CCQ was dedicated to actualising the community vision to eliminate suffering for cancer and so had a deep culture of community service. As the Executive Dean at Australian Catholic University where I lead a large and diverse national health faculty, I work to the values of human dignity and the community good and strive for congruence between my actions and these values.

Experience in, or a thorough understanding of, advocacy expectations and engagement of the community and all APS members

As a long-term member of APS and of the College of Health Psychology, I am acutely aware of the role our professional society plays in the guardianship of our discipline. As a practitioner, I regularly have contact with members of the community who are seeking the aid of psychologists, and their expectations about our role in not only their personal wellbeing, but the community more broadly. Our community expects person-centred care that resonates with their values and hopes for a flourishing life, and it is essential we respond to this. As a psychologist who is involved in the training of the future psychology workforce, I have an understanding of the hopes and aspirations of students starting their career in psychology and the need for us to prepare them adequately, so they are workforce ready and connected to their discipline. Finally, through my experience in private practice, I am acutely aware of APS members' desires for a safe and nourishing workforce where they are appropriately remunerated for their skills and expertise.

Ability and/or aptitude to act as an Ambassador for the APS in the community and in government settings

I have extensive experience (over 20 years) in advocacy in cancer control in the community with reference to legislative change for healthy public policy and the improvement of health care services. As such, I have deep experience in electronic and print media advocating for the health professions as well as seeking improvements in access to health care services for our community, and in particular, disadvantaged groups.

Demonstrated ability to constructively resolve conflict

In the senior cross-sectoral leadership roles I have held, I have invariably been called on to support the constructive resolution of conflict. Such conflicts are frequently derived from competition over resources, perceptions of power and influence, divergent value systems, and conflicting agendas. What is essential in such conflicts is to carefully explore the nature and driver of the conflict, establish respectful ground rules for dispute resolution, and look for solutions that, as far as is possible, meet the needs of all concerned. Underneath all of this is behaving in a way that shows respect for human dignity and a focus on working towards the common good.

Demonstrated ability to conduct fair, respectful and ethical interactions with fellow Board members, the CEO, APS members and relevant stakeholders

Through my career I have advanced to senior roles such as general manager in the non-government sector, research institute director in the non-government and university sector, and more recently as dean of large health faculties in two public universities. These roles necessitate in depth interactions across the health and welfare and government sector and success can only occur if authentic, respectful and ethical interactions are transparently undertaken. I have also led large national and international health research teams that requires fair and ethical interactions with senior health clinicians, leading academic researchers as well as early and mid-career scientists, government and other stakeholders and official bodies, as well as the participants of my research who are the centre of what we do. My success in this over my career with measurable outcomes signals my ability to conduct fair, respectful and ethical interactions with all individuals and groups I work with.

CANDIDATE DISCLOSURES

Declaration of Interests – general

- Founder and President of Open Eyes Global an incorporated association registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission that raises funds to provide customised eye prostheses to disadvantaged children in Nepal with retinoblastoma (eye cancer) 2018 to present
- Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Australian Catholic University (2021 to present)
- Private practice as a health psychologist providing psychological services to people affected by cancer and provision of training to allied and nursing health professionals in evidence-based psychological care in oncology

Declaration of Interests – directorships/committee memberships

- Editorial board for Psycho-Oncology Cultural Practices Subcommittee | TAFE Centre of Excellence Health Care
- Support Sydney North HealthCARE Innovation Precinct Executive Council

Declaration of Interests – APS Member Groups/Committee memberships

- Academic member of the APS College of Health Psychologists

Declaration of Interests – other memberships

- Honorary adjunct appointments at University of QLD, University of Southern QLD, Edith Cowan University
- Honorary fellow at St Vincents Health Network Sydney