

Pall Thordarson



Background:

- I am Fellow of the RACI, having joined the organisation during my PhD days at the University of Sydney in 1998.
- I served as a NSW state representative on the board of the RACI Organic Chemistry Division from 2014-2018 and from 2019, the treasurer of the newly established RACI Supramolecular Chemistry Group. I been involved in many RACI events, including organising the first supramolecular symposia at a RACI Congress in Adelaide, 2014.
- As a Professor and now Deputy Head of School of Chemistry at UNSW I been actively involved in the continuous development of our chemistry syllabus and our research program.
- I have a senior role in the ARC Training Centre for the Chemical Industries (ATCI) which involves three Universities, a number of companies and Chemistry Australia (formerly PACIA). The ATCI has developed a new Master of Industrial Research degree program which may become a blueprint for others to follow in terms of offering industry-targeting chemistry degree programs.
- I served on the ARC College of Experts 2016-2019 and I have been an Editorial Board Member of the Australian Journal of Chemistry since 2008.

RACI Direction:

- The current public health crisis has led to some truly radical changes, including within the Australian chemistry community. The shift to working from home, increasing push for sovereign manufacturing of chemicals and other commodities and the increased emphasis on online learning are immediate examples. I believe that as the President of the RACI I can draw on my experience in academic management, industry collaboration and science communication to ensure that the RACI can maximize how its resources can assist RACI members to respond to this rapidly changing economic, political, scientific and educational landscape.
- The RACI inclusion and diversity policy is a prime example of how a society advances by well-thought out policy changes. I believe that the RACI can lead the way for the benefit of the wider chemistry community in Australia as a whole on many other fronts. If elected, I would prioritise helping chemistry graduates “selling” the value of their degree’s and experiences more effectively to potential employers by promoting the benefits of hiring chemistry graduates to employers in the chemical and allied industries. Building on my experience in industry collaborations and the development of a successful postgraduate program for students in industry, I believe RACI could also help Universities and TAFEs to make their chemistry programs more industry relevant.
- Advocacy is, for better or worse, an increasingly important function of any professional society. While historically RACI has stayed mostly clear of advocacy, I believe we cannot afford to do so anymore. The best way forward is for the RACI to expanding its strategic partnerships with organisations such as Chemistry Australia and like-minded overseas organisation including the NZIC, RSC, ACS and IUPAC. We must also make chemistry more visible in the public eye, be it through conventional or social media and I would be eager to see the RACI supporting our members actively in achieving more visibility for Australian chemistry, promoting the invaluable contributions that the chemical industry and our profession make to our society.
- The RACI could also play a larger role in assisting individual members, industry and educational providers at all levels to understand how chemistry can grow and capitalise on the most recent developments in biology, physics, medicine and data science. Drawing on my inter-disciplinary experience in research, I am well-placed to champion the RACI collaborating with related professional organisations, Chemistry Australia and other relevant organisations on common goals.