



**Australian Institute  
of International Affairs**  
*Victoria*

# Annual Report 2021-22

**ABN: 42 727 001 279**

---

**OFFICE BEARERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS AS AT 30 JUNE 2022**


---

**Visitor**

The Hon. Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria

**Life Members**

Mr. John Brookes  
 Ms. Zara Kimpton OAM  
 Mr. D. Patrick Moore

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****PRESIDENT**

Mr. Richard Iron CMG OBE

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Ms. Kelly MacDonald

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Mr. John Richardson

**TREASURER**

Mr. Christopher Cicutto

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mr. Alastair Roff

**COUNCIL**

Mr. James Carey  
 Mr. Benjamin Freeman  
 Ms. Karla Lockett  
 Mr. Will McEniry  
 Mr. Justin Meyer

Mr. Prakash Mirchandani  
 Dr. Michael Moignard  
 Ms. Asha Reeves  
 Ms. Rae Sharp  
 Mr. Perry Wood

**COMMITTEES**

Finance	Chair: Mr. Christopher Cicutto
Events Program	Chair: Mr. Alastair Roff
South Asia Seminar Series	Chairs: Mr. Prakash Mirchandani & Dr. Michael Moignard
Sir Zelman Cowen Oration	Chair: Mr. Justin Meyer
Study Tours	Chair: Vacant
International Careers Conference	Chair: Mr. Benjamin Freeman
Building, OHS & Library	Chair: Mr. Alastair Roff
Young Professionals	Chairs: Ms. Karla Lockett & Ms. Asha Reeves
Membership	Chair: Mr. Will McEniry

## ABOUT US

The Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) is an apolitical, independent membership-based organisation which promotes the objective study of International Affairs. Founded in 1925, it was established as a Federal organisation in 1933. The Institute now has its National Headquarters in Canberra, and has branches in all States and Territories. Like its sister Institutes in New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and India, it is affiliated with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London.

The AIIA provides a forum for discussion and research on subjects of topical and continuing interest through meetings, study tours, conferences and seminars addressed by distinguished specialists and public figures. Its mission is to help Australians know, understand and engage more in international affairs.

AIIA Victoria is housed in Dyason House in East Melbourne, named after E.C. Dyason, a prominent past member and one of its most generous benefactors.

Membership is open to any individuals who are Australian residents, to corporate bodies, to diplomatic representatives, schools and students.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Ukraine war continues to dominate the international environment. The vast majority of the Western world continues to be outraged by the raw violence and complete injustice of Putin's invasion and our governments have largely reflected our outrage in their diplomatic, economic and military support for the Ukrainian government. The sight of Victorian-built Bushmaster vehicles being operated by the Ukrainian Army is evidence of this, although sadly a number have already been destroyed in battle.



Although we should beware anyone who claims to know how the war is going to end, or even what might happen next, at AIIA Victoria we have tried to keep abreast of what is happening and how to understand it. I hope you have found the talks useful and interesting. We should not underestimate the war's global impact, including in the Taiwan Strait, nor the potential for some form of escalation, whatever that might look like. But it appears unlikely that it will end soon.

Last year, I wrote in this report that

*... (the pandemic) has provided a stimulus for us to think strategically about where we as an organisation are going and what must be done to ensure our long-term viability.*

Since then, we have indeed been thinking strategically and have made some important decisions to safeguard not just our future, but also our ethos and our mission. We've realised that our ambitions - to improve our offer to our members; to be a more important voice in Australia, and to reach a wider audience - are limited by our means, in particular the capacity of our full-time staff in the office. So, we have agreed to advertise for a General Manager (Operations) to support Alastair Roff as our Executive Director and, at the same time, upgrade the position of the Office Manager when Megan Kaiser departs for Cambodia on a New Colombo Plan Scholarship at the end of the year.

This will, of course, increase the salary costs for the Institute, but our intention is that we will be able to expand the activities and reach of the Institute sufficiently to at least cover the additional outlay and, hopefully, make us much more financially secure.

Your Council fully understands that this decision represents a financial risk to the Institute: if we fail to expand our income streams then we will face a loss. But doing nothing was not an option: the impact of the pandemic is still affecting us financially and we could not continue as we are without dipping irresponsibly into the financial pot realised by the sale of Dyason House. To mitigate this risk, the Council is currently establishing a set of targets and metrics against which we can measure our performance over the next two to three years and ensure that we are on course to meet our financial goals, or to take remedial action if we are not.

The sale of Dyason House was settled as planned in August. We are currently leasing back the property until such time as we are ready to move out, as per the terms of the sale. We still fully intend to buy a new Dyason House, but the commercial property market is noticeably slow at present so we have decided to take advantage of historically low rents and will lease a property for (probably) a few years while we find the perfect new home for us. We are not sure when the move will take place, but it is likely to be in the first half of 2023.

In the meantime, the Council has established an investment committee, under the leadership of Council Member Perry Wood, to invest the balance of the cash from the sale of Dyason House which is not earmarked for purchase of our new home. This will help underwrite our increased salary costs in the short term; in the longer term it will be an important contribution to the Institute's continuing viability in its second century ...

... since the Victorian Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs was founded at a meeting in the Mitre Tavern on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1925. Our Centenary is therefore still more than two years ahead but we are already planning how we may celebrate such an extraordinary achievement and give thanks to those who have helped bring us to this point.

My thanks go to the Executive Director, Alastair Roff, our Office Manager, Megan Kaiser, and to the team of interns and volunteers who are so vital to our ongoing operations. Together, they do extraordinary work and have made our Institute as strong and vibrant as it is.

But my particular thanks are for all our members: thank you all for your continuing and generous support for our Institute. Please stay well, keep fit and remain interested in International Affairs. There are exciting times ahead.

**Richard Iron CMG, OBE – President**

---

## **FINANCES**

### **Operating Result**

The company generated a deficit for the financial year ended 30 June 2022 amounting to \$4,793 (2021: surplus of \$31,547).

### **Review of Operations**

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact considerably on the operating activities of the Institute. As was the case with last year, operations were conducted in a COVID-safe manner, including hosting virtual events and presentations particularly in the early part of the financial

year. During the financial year, the Institute received grants of \$43,400 from the State government as our operations were impacted by the pandemic. We thank all our members for their generous donations which totalled \$14,135 for the financial year (\$35,036 for the prior financial year). There were no study tours run for the year due to the pandemic. The sale of Dyason House occurred in August 2021, with settlement in August 2022. At the onset of the sale, the Institute received the initial deposit of 10% which provided cash flow certainty throughout the year.

**Christopher Cicutto – Treasurer**

---

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

With the Financial Year again starting with lockdowns and stay-at-home orders from the Victorian Government in place, it is testament to the hard work of the Institute that we held a record number of events in 2021-22, totalling 54 (eight more than the previous year).

Thanks are due to Richard Iron for his leadership as President, to members of Council for their support and involvement throughout the year, and to Jessica Wayne and Megan Kaiser for so competently helping to run the Executive Office.

Equally, we could not operate without the time and effort so generously given by our many Interns and volunteers, and more details of their contribution are given later. One way that we can give back to them is to provide references to potential employers. It is clear that the AIIA is regarded as an important reference by the number of times we are contacted, particularly by government agencies, and it is very encouraging to see the number of former AIIA interns and volunteers who continue to succeed in obtaining employment even in the current circumstances.

And of course, we sincerely appreciate the interest and support shown by all the Institute's members and their guests at our events, as well as the speakers who so readily give of their time and expertise.

The events held this year covered an enormous range of international issues, in which over 4,000 members and guests participated, both in-person and online. Topics ranged from Democracy and Political Instability in West Africa; Afghanistan; Iran's Foreign Policy; the Future of the European Union; the 2021 Russian Parliamentary Elections, and later, its invasion of Ukraine, to AUKUS and Boris Johnson, 'Partygate' and Johnson-ism. We held a particularly active *Meet the Ambassador* series under the direction of Vice President and former Ambassador to Brazil John Richardson, ably assisted by interns Brendan Sheahan, Riley Maddeford and Evangelia Wichmann. Hosted at Dyason House were variously the Ambassadors of Brazil; the EU; Japan; Lithuania and Norway, and the High Commissioners of Malaysia and Singapore.

Fellow of the Institute Rowan Callick OBE FAIIA ran a series of panel discussions covering the Centenary of the Chinese Communist Party; the Russia-China Alliance and a book launch of *Cadre Country* with Professor John Fitzgerald.



Professor Jacqui True FASSA FAIIA delivered her Fellow's Address on *Navigating Gendered Games in Global Politics*. Richard Iron's acclaimed 'In Conversation' series continued with discussions on the Afghan Army with Tim Wilsey CMG; on the importance of international trade to Australia with the Hon Dan Tehan MP; on the Future of Australian Covert Action with Dr Will Stolz, and it was a particular honour to finally be able to welcome the eminent soldier-scholar Dr David Kilcullen FRGS to Dyason House to discuss *The Causes, Courses and Consequences of War in Europe*.



Richard Iron CMG OBE; Dr David Kilcullen; Allan Gyngell AO FAIIA, AIIA National President

And we were delighted to host The Hon Gareth Evans AC KC FASSA FAIIA to launch his latest book *Good International Citizenship: A Case for Decency*.



Gareth Evans book-signing



My own thanks to Program Interns Marina Daley, Isabella Tersigni and Mynah Iyer for their valuable assistance in researching data, creating flyers, and setting up webinars.

The support and encouragement of the team at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Victoria State Office for our program is greatly appreciated.

A booklet highlighting the 2021-22 Year in Review is available [here](#). We are always interested in suggestions from members on topics to cover or on speakers whom we should consider inviting. A full list of topics and speakers is listed in the Appendix on pages 17-18.

The [Walter Mangold Trust Fund](#) has again in calendar years 2021 and 2022 provided generous support to our young people. Their funding has allowed our Young Professionals members to attend events at Dyason House free of charge and enabled us to keep membership rates at an affordable level.

Once again sincere thanks to all who have been involved in the Speaker Events program in whatever capacity, and we look forward to continuing an equally stimulating program.

**Alastair Roff** – Executive Director

---

## STUDY TOURS

The planned Silk Road Study Tour (to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan) had attracted great interest, but with borders closing, and uncertainty over vaccines it became clear that it was going to be too challenging to proceed. Once there is further clarity over international travel in general, we will review destinations with a view to resuming Study Tours when we can.

---

## South Asia Seminar Series 2021-22

AIIA Victoria held several events associated with South Asia in 2021-22.

A seminar on *The CECA: Roadmaps for the Australia - India Economic Relationship* was held on 16 November, co-hosted with the Australia – India Institute as part of the first series.

A second *South Asia Seminar Series* was held from May to July 2022. The focus of this series was on India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It used the same format as 2021, with four seminars involving multiple speakers.

The four seminars were:

11 May 2022: *Sri Lanka Crisis: Causes and Consequences*

1 June 2022: *The Challenges of the Indo-Pacific: What Awaits the Next Australian Government?*

21 June 2022: *Bangladesh's Growing Prosperity – Implications for Australian Trade, Investment and Security*

26 July 2022: *India Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA). Forging new opportunities – what lies ahead?*



*Prof. Ian Hall, The Hon. Lisa Singh and Richard Iron discuss The Challenges of the Indo-Pacific*

Our pioneering hybrid seminar on Bangladesh received both financial and logistical support from the Bangladesh High Commission with the High Commissioner HE Mr Mohammad Sufiur Rahman flying in with a team from Canberra to deliver the keynote in person.

AIIA Victoria thanks the sponsors of the *South Asia Seminar Series*: DFAT Victoria State Office; Australia – India Institute; Asialink Business, and The Bangladesh High Commission.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the great support we received from our intern, Ben Bayes-Smith, and from Jessica, Megan, and Alastair - without their technical abilities the series would never have happened.

**Dr. Mike Moignard and Prakash Mirchandani – Council members**

## VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

With such a busy program of events we rely heavily on the contribution of our volunteers. We are most appreciative of the time that they so willingly give up, and our sincere thanks to all those who have helped out over the last year.

We equally rely on our interns to fulfil specific roles that support vital functions of the Institute.

Internships awarded throughout the year include:

**Conference Paper Series:** Thomas Hollow

**International Careers Conference 2021:** Anisha Rattan; (Doorgesha) Richa Jheengu; Joud Ghassali; Georgia Lee; Jenny Minh Nguyet Tran; Lachlan Abbott

**International Careers Conference 2022:** Kari Knight; Sam Warner; Matilda Murphy; Michael Badrock; Hamish Williams; Poojanshi Sood

**Meet the Ambassador:** Brendan Sheahan; Riley Maddeford; Evangelia Wichmann

**Operations and Events:** Jessica Wayne

**Program and Event Management:** Marina Daley; Isabella Tersigni; Mynah Iyer

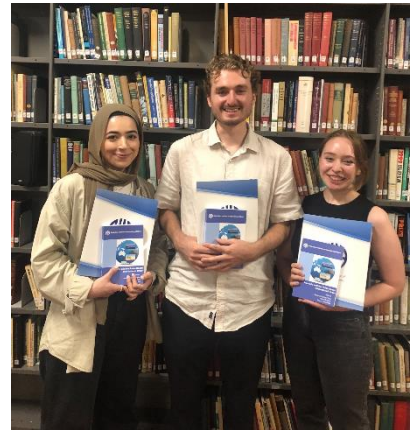
**Podcast Intern:** Elliot Goodyer

**Sir Zelman Cowen Oration:** Kari Knight

**Social Media:** Moemina Shukur; Tessa Minns; Harry Wood; Amy Melleuish; Emma Soper; Dominic Simonelli; Dominique-Dee Jones; Vincent Nittel; Abbey Saxon

**South Asia Seminar Series:** Benjamin Bayes-Smith

**Young Professionals:** Elise Coorey; Ellie Mueller



*Social Media Interns Moemina Shukur; Harry Wood; Tessa Minns*

The following generously volunteered their time regularly to help at evening events:



- Carly Norman
- Jessica Wayne
- Brendan Sheahan
- Asha Reeves
- Elise Coorey
- Adam Puccio
- Daniel Bartos
- Estelle Sutherland
- Jackson Weekes
- Janaki Rajagopalan
- Kari Knight
- Mardi Sutherland
- Michael Badrock
- Parth Sharma
- Robbie Scalpello
- Anushka Chavan

It is encouraging to so regularly be asked to provide references for former interns and volunteers, and more so to see how many succeed in securing employment in their chosen fields.

---

## DONATIONS

We are most grateful to all who contribute to AIIA Victoria. Those contributions enable us to do that little bit extra which makes the Institute such a wonderful organisation.



The following individuals generously donated in 2021-2022

John Brookes	John King
James Carey	Tom Kudelka
Christopher Cicutto	Christopher Lamb
Mary-Ann Cohn	John Lewisohn
Blair Currie	Kelly MacDonald
Prof. the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC	Prof. Robin Marks AM
FASSA FAIIA	Will McEniry
Andrew Farran	Prakash Mirchandani & Susan Green
Barry Fox	Brendan O'Brien
Helen Freeman	Cate Pickett
Prof Stewart Gill OAM	John Richardson
Richard Iron CMG OBE	Alastair Roff
Dr Suzanne Keene	Rae Sharp
Zara Kimpton OAM	Jenny Varcoe-Cocks

---

### THE FRIENDS OF THE AIIA SOCIETY

The Institute owes an enormous debt of gratitude to those who show their support through donations and bequests. Their generosity and forethought is vital for the continued growth and sustainability of the AIIA as an important voice in the promotion of knowledge and understanding of international affairs.

As part of its 75th Anniversary celebrations, the AIIA launched a **Friends of the AIIA Society** under the patronage of National Vice-President Zara Kimpton OAM dedicated to recognising and honouring those individuals who have made an outstanding financial contribution to the organisation. If you donate **\$500** or more or indicate your intention to leave a bequest to the AIIA, you will be recognised as a Friend of the AIIA in the Annual Review. Those who cumulatively donate **\$5,000** or more become Lifetime Friends.

We thank our Friends for this year:

James Carey	Tom Kudelka
Christopher Cicutto	Kelly MacDonald
Mary-Ann Cohn	Prakash Mirchandani & Susan Green
Helen Freeman	Brendan O'Brien
Richard Iron CMG OBE	Alastair Roff
Zara Kimpton OAM	Rae Sharp

We acknowledge the following Lifetime Friends:

Prof. the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC	Richard Morgan AM
FASSA FAIIA	Baillieu Myer AC FAIIA
Helen Freeman	Allan Myers AC KC
The Hon David Harper AM KC	Brendan O'Brien
Hartmut & Ruth Hofmann	Alastair Roff
Zara Kimpton OAM	Joy Selby Smith
Patrick Moore	

---

## AIIA FELLOWS

We are delighted to advise that the following Victorians were appointed as Fellows of the AIIA in 2021:

**Dr Meg Gurry FAIIA** for her excellence in scholarship on Australia-India diplomatic relations.

**Professor Jacqui True FASSA FAIIA**, Professor of International Relations and Director of the Monash Gender Peace and Security Centre, for her excellence in scholarship on international relations and gender, peace, and security.

---

## VALE

**Michael Coultas OAM.** It was with great sadness that we received the news of the death of Michael Coultas OAM on 10<sup>th</sup> August, not long after his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Michael has been a stalwart of AIIA Victoria over many years and in 2006 he was created a Life Member in recognition of his enormous contribution.

Michael had a life-long interest in international affairs. He was proud of the fact that he had been born in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1931 to his English father, William (Bill), and his Australian mother, Freda. Michael's father was involved in the development of the tea industry as a planter, estate manager and superintendent at Pundaloya North in Central Province. Michael spent his childhood in Sri Lanka until being sent to boarding school at Geelong Grammar at the age of nine. He then went on to Trinity College at Melbourne University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1953. After teaching for two years, Michael joined ICI Australia as an Economist. In 1960 he joined the Australian Trade Commissioner Service where he served in nine posts over the next 20 years with his first wife, Diana, and four children. He started in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya (now Malaysia) as Assistant Trade Commissioner which included a relieving post in Bangkok, Thailand. His next appointments were as Trade Commissioner to Christchurch, NZ (1964-67) and New York (1969-1972) where he also provided relief between Trade Commissioners in Port of Spain, Trinidad. He then served in Nairobi, Kenya (1972-1974) before returning to the United States as the first Senior Trade Commissioner in Chicago (1974-1979) and then Senior Trade Commissioner in New York. From here he was head-hunted back to the private sector with Australian Consolidated Industries (ACI) which was at the time one of Australia's leading industrial companies. After ACI was restructured Michael moved to a senior position with Visy Industries before founding his own company Martrex International Trade Marketing Pty Ltd.

Michael was the Founder Chairman of the Australia-Sri Lanka Council which was created in Melbourne in 1994. He led many trade missions, visits and study tours building links with Sri Lanka. Martrex was associated with a number of investment developments, export, marketing and management consulting projects with a diverse range of countries including Sri Lanka, Portugal, Thailand, India, and in particular South East Asia and the Pacific Islands.

In 2000 Michael was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) "For service to the promotion of international trade and the fostering of Australia/Sri Lanka relations".

In 2005 Michael wrote "I think I joined AIIA [Victoria] about 1987 and joined the Council, at the instigation of Dr Grecia Slovisky [President 1974-1977] in the early 1990's". In 1994 he succeeded Dr Joan Beaumont as President and remained in that position until 1999. He was so popular that the council asked him to stay on for a year after his planned retirement. Due to his background as a trade commissioner he instigated an amalgamation of AIIA

Victoria with the Australian International Trade Council which provided extra dynamism to our activities at the time, including the hosting of trade missions. Sadly, this initiative waned over time and by 2006 it was reported that “we are now unable to find anyone on our twenty-eight member council to take on this activity”.

After retiring as President, Michael remained on the AIIA Victoria council until 2005 providing wise advice to us all. Together with his wife, Judy, he had already taken on the role of study tour co-ordinator. They led successful tours to Sri Lanka in 2003 and Laos & Cambodia in 2005. These were then followed by Turkey in 2006, India in 2007 and Timor Leste in 2010. Tours led by Michael and Judy were always popular, not only amongst our members, but representatives of other branches around Australia. They were always well organised and were an example of how the AIIA fulfils an important role in public and citizen diplomacy via people to people exchanges. The voluntary contribution of the Coultas’s also helped us make a profit from these tours - which allowed us to maintain our services in other areas. As well as leading tours for the AIIA and Rotary, Michael and Judy also spent time as volunteers with aid organisations in Sri Lanka, Laos and Cambodia, Timor Leste and the South Pacific.

Michael threw himself into every venture he undertook, including the AIIA, with great energy, enthusiasm, generosity, kindness and ideas. Like so many others before and after him he left AIIA Victoria a stronger and better organisation. He was involved in rebalancing the academic and business focus of the AIIA, in successfully reactivating and reinvigorating a number of programs such as the Study Tours, the Schools Program, and in revitalising, strengthening and re-examining the role of Dyason House. As President of AIIA Victoria he also sat on the National Executive (now the National Board) for five years where he played an important role in addressing the Federal/State structure of the AIIA.

Michael was a renaissance man, an internationalist, a fervent Australian yet with his heart always not far from his beloved Sri Lanka, a Rotarian, a sportsman and also a keen sports follower. In a tribute from his family he was described as “a lover of frogs, butterflies, the mighty Hawks, Fiats, the classics, philosophy, kindness and all things important”. He will be fondly remembered and sorely missed by so many who knew him. He leaves the world a better place.

*Thanks to John Brookes and Zara Kimpton OAM for writing up this Obituary. John Brookes was Executive Director of AIIA Victoria from 1994 to 2004 and was made a Life Member in 2006. He worked with Michael at ACI and was later a Director of Martrex International Trade Marketing Pty Ltd. Zara Kimpton OAM joined the AIIA Victoria council in 1997 and was President from 2003 to 2006. She was made a Life Member in 2008. She is now National Vice President of the AIIA.*

**John Landy AC CVO MBE** died on 24 February 2022 aged 91. John Landy was the second man in the world to run a mile in under four minutes, following his friend and rival Roger Bannister, and represented Australia at the 1952 Helsinki and 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Remembered as a humble man of depth, integrity and honour, John Landy entered Australian sporting folklore when, while running the mile at the 1956 Australian National Championships, he went back mid-race to check on Ron Clarke, who had fallen. Landy then went on to win the race. The moment has since become a symbol of Australian mateship and decency. John Landy worked as senior manager at ICI Australia and had a public speaking career. For eight years (1971–78), he served on the Victorian Land Conservation Council, contributing to debates and recommendations about the balanced use of public land across Victoria. Landy authored two books on natural history: *Close to Nature* (1984) and *A Coastal Diary* (1993). John Landy served as the 26th governor of Victoria from 2001-2006, during which he held the position of Visitor of AIIA Victoria. After he retired as Governor he became a Patron of the Institute. It was during his tenure as Governor that he kindly hosted an evening reception for 120 guests at Government House in 2005 to mark the Institute’s 80th Anniversary.

**Greg Romanes.** The Institute was saddened to learn on 8 September 2020 that Greg Romanes had died after a fall at his home in Mansfield, to where he had recently moved. Greg provided outstanding service to AIIA Victoria as Treasurer over two three-year terms. He had spent most of his career in senior roles in not-for-profit organisations. He was a former Vice President of the Rotary Club of Melbourne and Chair of the club's Community Foundation, and had been General Manager, Fundraising & Community at Anglicare.

*(Zara Kimpton had noted at the 2021 AGM that Greg was not mentioned in the 2020-21 Annual Report. Alastair Roff clarified that it was an unfortunate oversight; Richard Iron proposed that mention of his contribution to the Institute be included as an addendum to the 2021-22 Annual Report).*

**Les Rowe.** It was with great sadness that we received the news of the death of Les Rowe on 28<sup>th</sup> February, as the result of an accident. Les made an important contribution to the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria (AIIAV) particularly as President from 2011 to 2013.

Les was born in Melbourne in 1945. He was a leader from an early age, becoming captain of the three schools that he attended, including Melbourne High School in 1962. He then went on to Ormond College at Melbourne University from where he graduated with an Honours Arts degree with a major in History (1966) and a Diploma of Education (1967). During this time he joined the university's Volunteer Assistance Program with which he visited PNG for the first time.

Les was one of the last of his generation to be conscripted. He spent part of his army service teaching in PNG. Amongst the recent tributes to Les in *The Age* was one from the National Servicemen (called Chalkies) who served in PNG at Igam Barracks in Lae from 1969 to early 1971. It described Les as "a fine teacher and Sergeant Instructor who shared our tasks of educating an Army for independence".

On leaving the army in 1971 Les joined the Department of Foreign Affairs. His first posting was as Second Secretary in Accra, Ghana (1971-1973). He then returned to Canberra where in 1975 he was Private Secretary to the Foreign Minister, Senator Don Willesee.



*Les Rowe (Second from right standing) in official UN New York photo of Australian Foreign Minister Willesee and UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim officially terminating the New Guinea Trusteeship Agreement in September 1975. Others pictured are E.Suy (U.N. Legal Counsel), Ralph Karepa (PNG Permanent Representative-Designate), Ralph Harry (Australian UN Permanent Representative) and Peter Reid (Australian Mission Staff) Photo: United Nations photographic collection.*

Les's next overseas postings were as First Secretary in Lisbon (1977-78) and Chargé d'affaires in Beirut (1978-80). From January to March 1980 he was part of the Commonwealth Observers Group in Zimbabwe. After another stint back in Canberra he spent four years in New York from 1982 to 1986 with the Australian mission to the UN

(starting as First Secretary and later as Political Counsellor). As Counsellor he worked on important issues such as the Antarctic Treaty and the situation in East Timor. In the early 1990's he spent three years as Consul-General in Noumea. From 1999 to 2001 he was the Deputy Ambassador to Indonesia (our largest overseas mission) at a turbulent time in our relationship. His final posting, from 2002 to 2005, was as Ambassador to the Russian Federation.

During his time with the Department of Foreign Affairs (which became the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) in 1987) Les was also seconded from the department to be Private Secretary to Andrew Peacock for part of his time as Foreign Minister (Peacock was Foreign Minister from 1975- 1980). Later he became Senior Private Secretary to Bill Hayden during part of his time as Foreign Minister (Hayden was Foreign Minister from 1983 to 1988). It was unusual for someone to occupy private secretary positions with ministers from different sides of the political divide and reflects the high level of confidence in Les's ability and the respect in which he was held by politicians and the bureaucracy.

Over the years he also held other important positions in DFAT while based in Canberra, including as First Assistant Secretary in charge of the Consular and Passports division.

Les retired from DFAT in 2005 and returned to Melbourne where his partner, Neil, had recently relocated from Canberra. Although Les had not lived in Melbourne since 1971 they bought a house in North Melbourne and those who attended Les's funeral will have learnt of their delight in living in a village surrounded by friends and close to all the cultural and culinary delights that Melbourne now provided. Throughout his life Les was an avid art collector and the North Melbourne house was home to his eclectic collection of art from around the world. He also delighted in working in his garden and started to learn Italian in which he became proficient as a result of regular lessons and trips to Italy (where he could also enjoy all the art and architecture).

In 2006 Melbourne was the host city for the Commonwealth Games and Les took on the role as Chief of Protocol - a position for which he was eminently qualified.

I first met Les at the inaugural Zelman Cowen Oration in August 2006. He was an ideal candidate to join the AIIAV council and I was delighted when soon after he agreed to do so. He made an important contribution from the start and in 2008 was appointed Vice President - a position he held until 2011 when he became President. Les hadn't planned to become President but circumstances meant that there was a vacancy which needed to be filled and he rose to the occasion. I wasn't on the AIIAV council at the time of Les's presidency but I was a regular attendee at events and saw how effective he was at chairing these sessions and making everyone feel that they were welcome at the institute. As President of AIIAV he also served on the national board of the AIIA. As National Vice President I observed his thoughtful contributions to discussions concerning AIIA activities around the country.

The area where I worked most closely with Les was in the organisation of AIIAV Study Tours. The first of these was in 2008 to the Russian Federation. It was only three years since Les had concluded his term as Australian Ambassador so we were fortunate to have a leader who knew the country so well. Les had always had a great interest in art and music and during his time as Ambassador he had developed a deep understanding of Russian culture - which he endeavoured to show us on our tour so that our experience was not just on the political and economic level which we would expect from a tour organised by an international affairs organisation.

It is interesting to read Les's [report](#) of our trip, especially in the light of what is happening at present with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Russia tour had been such a success that we decided to organise another tour the following year (2009) to Indonesia - where again Les had deep knowledge from his time as

our Deputy Ambassador. As usual he put in so much time ensuring that we had an exciting program with visits to Jakarta, Bogor, Bandung, Yogyakarta and Bali. Unfortunately, just a few days before we were to fly up to Indonesia Les was taken ill - so I had to take over. I had only ever been to Bali but not to Java so at times I felt completely at sea. When I had some problems I remember that the agent in Jakarta had to refer to an agent on another island in Indonesia, who then referred to someone in Sydney, who then got onto our Victorian travel agent- who then contacted Les. Luckily by that time he was out of hospital and able to direct things from Melbourne. My mobile telephone bill was large!

It was about this time that Les spent a productive term as Acting CEO of Orchestra Victoria where his love of music stood him in good stead.

Our next AIIAV study tour was to Vietnam in 2011. Although Les didn't know Vietnam in the same way he knew Russia and Indonesia, he visited the country the year before our tour so he had worked out where we should go and who we should see. As usual the participants were able to meet with representatives of organisations where we could learn about the political, economic and cultural aspects of the country. This included a visit to the newly built RMIT campus in Ho Chi Minh City. It was an interesting time to visit Vietnam as described in the [report](#) Les put together at the end of the trip

The final tour that Les (who by then was AIIAV President) led, with me as his deputy, was to China in 2012. We were there in May just before Xi Jinping was set to become leader in October of that year. At that time there was so much optimism about the relationship between China and Australia as Les's [report](#) indicates. So much has changed since then but that doesn't mean that what we saw and hoped for in 2012 isn't relevant today.

The reports which Les prepared for the AIIAV after each study tour reflect all his training as a diplomat and specialist in international relations. They are an important part of AIIAV archives. (Links are included above to the Russia, Vietnam and China reports).

All Les's study tours were popular not only amongst members of AIIAV but from other AIIA branches around the country. These tours are an example of how the AIIA fulfils an important role in public and citizen diplomacy via people to people exchanges. Les' s voluntary contribution also enabled AIIAV to make a profit on these tours – which allowed us to maintain our services in other areas.

Les was not only a leader on these tours - he became a friend of everyone who participated as well as many other AIIAV members. Many of those based in Victoria attended his funeral on 11<sup>th</sup> March at St Mary's Church in North Melbourne, including AIIAV President, Richard Iron CMG OBE, and Executive Director, Alastair Roff. Some of Les's former colleagues came from Canberra and elsewhere for the service, including AIIA NSW President, Ian Lincoln.

During the service we listened to eulogies delivered by five friends who had also spoken to many other people when preparing their remarks about Les. He was described as someone with "warmth that was so genuine" and with "no pomposity or self importance". He was "multi-cultural, cosmopolitan and anti-racist". He was "deeply Australian" and "someone who loved our quirkiness and our achievements", a "decent human being with a sense of humour and the ability to laugh at himself". He was also "genial, witty and good company" and he was "interested in so many things".

*Thanks to Zara Kimpton OAM for this personal reflection of Les's life.*

## SIR ZELMAN COWEN ORATION

On Tuesday 24 March 2022, Dr Alan Finkel AC, Special Adviser to the Australian Government on Low Emissions Technology, delivered the 14th Annual Sir Zelman Cowen Oration speaking on the topic of "Getting to Zero – Pathways, Policies and Partnerships".

Alan Finkel was introduced by Justin Meyer, Council Member responsible for organising the Oration, and the Appreciation was given by Jessica Wayne, AIIA Victoria Administration Assistant.

The 2022 Oration was held at the Australia Club and was attended by approximately 140 members and their guests.

Alan Finkel delivered an insightful and interesting address on a complex topic, leaving guests with a better understanding of what practical action is required as we race to net zero.

The night could not have gone ahead without the contribution of Justin Meyer, Richard Iron, Alastair Roff, Jessica Wayne, and Kari Knight, this year's Sir Zelman Cowen Oration Intern. Our thanks go to the Walter Mangold Trust Fund for providing generous support to our young members.



*Justin Meyer; Jessica Wayne; Dr Alan Finkel AC; Richard Iron CMG OBE; Alastair Roff*

---

## 16<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CAREERS CONFERENCE 2021

Unfortunately the Victorian Government's restrictions on public gatherings meant that we were again unable to hold the International careers Conference in 2021.

---

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

AIIA Victoria's Young Professionals (YP) have hosted eight events this past financial year, including several networking drinks with guest speakers, Virtual Trivia and a Careers Information Evening. We provided New Colombo Plan (NCP) scholars and alumni free entry to all YP events, to help build relationships with a new cohort of Young Professionals. Our membership base has increased by 21% since June 2021, which we believe is due to our increased activity. We have been fortunate to have had the continued support of our wonderful interns, Elise Coorey, followed by Ellie Mueller, who worked with us to bring more frequent and diverse YP events to fruition.



In the upcoming year, we plan to build upon our successes by further developing new events and opportunities for our membership base. We hope to add both a 'YP Debate Evening' and a 'Careers Information Evening' to our annual repertoire. Additionally, we plan to commence a regular 'Careers Professional Development' series (CPD) with the aim of assisting Young Professionals to learn new industry skills. Our YP goals this year are to increase interest in YP events, continue to build our membership base and create profitable events.

**Asha Reeves and Karla Lockett – Council Members**

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership numbers have held up well despite COVID. We are working hard to keep the membership engaged, and to follow up to encourage renewals. We thank all those members who have renewed during the year, and we are glad that we continue to welcome new members.

Membership rates have again been held at the same level with no increase.

Members as of 30 June	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Standard	112	138	116
Premium	57	50	36
Concession	120	114	110
Premium Concession	45	44	25
Young Professionals	115	103	125
Corporate	8	9	11
School	3	8	4
Life Members & Patrons	6	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>431</b>



<b>AIIA VICTORIA 2021-2022 Events</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Speaker(s)</b>
1	7-Jul-21	Party Time! China's Communists Celebrate their Extraordinary Centenary	Rowan Callick OBE FAIIA & Prof. Geremie Barmé
2	8-Jul-21	Book Launch: Our Home in Myanmar	Jessica Mudditt
3	14-Jul-21	Young Professionals Networking	Young Professionals
4	26-Jul-21	Afghanistan: On the Brink of Disaster	Prof. Bill Maley AM FAIIA
5	03-Aug-21	Iran's Foreign Policy under New Leadership	Prof. Shahram Akbarzadeh
6	31-Aug-21	<i>Our Exceptional Friend: Australia's Fatal Alliance with the United States</i> (Book launch)	Dr. Emma Shortis
7	08-Sep-21	Not Always Diplomatic	Dr. Sue Boyd FAIIA
8	13-Sep-21	Women in International Affairs	Jenna Sapiano
9	20-Sep-21	The Future of the European Union	The Hon. Robert Jackson
10	22-Sep-21	Global Terrorist Movements as Global Actors	Dr. David Kilcullen
11	30-Sep-21	Young Professionals Trivia Night	Young Professionals
12	01-Oct-21	Alexei Navalny and the 2021 Russian Parliamentary Elections	Will Partlett/Petr Kuzmin
13	06-Oct-21	Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement: COVID-19 and Overlapping Crises	Amy McLachlan
14	07-Oct-21	Why did the Afghan Army Evaporate?	Tim Wilsey CMG with Richard Iron CMG OBE
15	18-Oct-21	Young Professionals - Careers in DFAT	Young Professionals
16	19-Oct-21	The AUKUS Submarine Deal: Consequences for Global Nuclear Governance	Dr Trevor Findlay
17	26-Oct-21	The Strategic Benefits of the AUKUS Deal	Dr Sidharth Kaushal
18	27-Oct-21	Russia-China: the New Alliance, its Ambitions and its Limits	Rowan Callick OBE FAIIA & Panel
19	03-Nov-21	Ethiopia's Tigray War	William Davison
20	16-Nov-21	The CECA: Roadmaps for the Australia-India Economic Relationship	The Hon Lisa Singh & Panel
21	30-Nov-21	Young Professionals Careers in UN	Ian Howie/Peter Bateman
22	02-Dec-21	Sweden's Feminist Foreign policy	Isabelle Karlsson
23	14-Dec-21	The Importance of International Trade for Australia's Security and Prosperity	The Hon Dan Tehan MP with Richard Iron
24	27-Jan-22	The Biden Administration and Democracy Promotion	Prof. Bruce Jentleson
25	8-Feb-22	What Holds Back Russia from Ukraine	Assoc. Prof. Alexey Muraviev
26	15-Feb-22	Boris Johnson, 'Partygate' and Johnsonism	Dr Ben Wellings
27	21-Feb-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Japan	HE Mr Yamagami Shingo
28	22-Feb-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Singapore	HE Mr Kwok Fook Seng
29	23-Feb-22	Young Professionals Networking	Young Professionals
30	2-Mar-22	Is China a Military Threat to Australia?	Sam Roggeveen

31	8-Mar-22	Australia's Sanctions on Russia	Stefan Romaniw OAM & Petr Kuzmin
32	10-Mar-22	<i>Good International Citizenship: the Case for Decency</i> (Book launch)	Prof. the Hon Gareth Evans AC KC FASSA FAIIA
33	16-Mar-22	Graduate Programs Tips and tricks	Young Professionals
34	17-Mar-22	Gender, War and Militarism in the 21st Century	Dr Sara Meger
35	24-Mar-22	Sir Zelman Cowen Oration & Dinner	Dr Alan Finkel AC
36	29-Mar-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Malaysia	HE Dato' Roslan Abdul Rahman
37	31-Mar-22	The Causes, Courses and Consequences of War in Europe	David Kilcullen with Richard Iron
38	5-Apr-22	Young Professionals Networking	Young Professionals
39	7-Apr-22	Navigating Gendered Games in Global politics	Dr Jacqui True FASSA FAIIA
40	12-Apr-22	Reflections on a United Nations' Career	Ian Howie with Tony Walker AM FAIIA
41	19-Apr-22	Democracy and Political Instability in West Africa	Dr Muhammad Dan Suleiman
42	21-Apr-22	France and the Blue Pacific	Nic Maclellan
43	27-Apr-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Norway	HE Mr Paul Gulleik Larsen
44	28-Apr-22	Cadre Country - How China became the Chinese Communist Party	Prof. John Fitzgerald with Rowan Callick
45	10-May-22	Sri Lanka Crisis: Causes and Consequences	Panel discussion
46	12-May-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Europe	HE Dr Michael Pulch
47	26-May-22	Philippines Elections: the Fall and Rise of the Marcos Family	Dr Andrea Chloe Wong
48	1-Jun-22	The Challenges of the Indo-Pacific: What Awaits the Next Australian Government	South Asia Seminar #1
49	2-Jun-22	Young Professionals Networking	Young Professionals
50	8-Jun-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Brazil	HE Mr Mauricio Carvalho Lyrio
51	15-Jun-22	The Future of Australian Covert Action	Dr Will Stoltz with Richard Iron
52	20-Jun-22	<i>Meet the Ambassador</i> - Lithuania	HE Mr Darius Degutis
53	21-Jun-22	Bangladesh's Growing Prosperity - Implication for Australia's Trade, Investment & Security	South Asia Seminar #2
54	27-Jun-22	Food (In)Security	Prof. Alexander Gillespie