

Jump TO Article



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Jump TO Article

Royal United Services Institute of Australia

Promoting defence and national security

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National President's Column



Now that *United Service*, the excellent journal of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales, is distributed nationally and internationally, the New South Wales Council has generously offered space in the journal for the National President to keep you abreast of what is going on at the national level. I am very pleased to accept this offer.

As this is my first column, a primer on who we are and what we do at the national level might be in order. The Royal United Services Institute of Australia (RUSI) is a federation of seven self-governing, state and territory United Services Institutes, known as “constituent bodies”. The RUSI National Council is the peak body and comprises myself, Vice-President Major General Mike O’Brien, Major General Craig Orme as the Chief of the Defence Force’s appointed Vice-President, National Secretary Air Commodore Peter McDermott, National Treasurer Dr Ian Gardner, and the presidents of the state and territory constituent bodies. The National Council meets formally once a year in September, this year in Brisbane. The National Executive, which consists of the president, vice-presidents, treasurer and secretary, meets three or four times a year and oversees the day-to-day business of the national body.

The only purpose of the national body is to support you and your constituent body. This is done primarily through close liaison with Defence, whose support is vital to RUSI, through maintenance of the national website (www.rusi.org.au) and its administrative capabilities, and by keeping the Royal United Services Institute name (‘brand’) to the forefront publicly.

We think that we have been reasonably successful and a recent indication of our standing came through the Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley, when he asked us to co-host a closed seminar on “Gender in Defence and Security Leadership” held in Canberra on 12-13 March 2013. It was enormously successful, with outstanding speakers from Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand, and representation from all RUSI constituent bodies. The papers were posted to the RUSI website as they became available and RUSI and Defence have co-published the papers as a seminar report, the first time we have shared that responsibility with Defence. It is highly topical and I recommend the papers to those with an interest in the subject. I thank the National Secretary and members of the United Services Institute of the Australian Capital Territory who worked so hard to make the seminar a success.

I look forward to reporting on other successful RUSI contributions in the December edition.

Chris Ritchie AO