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President's Column:

Welcome to the September issue of *United Service* in which we publish the proceedings of our seminar on cyber and space warfare. I hope you find the papers as fascinating as I have.



Since my President's Column in March, the Institute has enjoyed a period of quite extraordinary achievement, in most cases the culmination of vision and much hard work by many people.

Among the highlights was the just-mentioned 2016 Seminar on Military Strategy, an excellent event held in a packed theatre at Parliament House. Then there was our first ever evening lecture – it was conceived and staged by our younger members. We also introduced continuing professional education (CPE) certificates which give defence professionals attending our lectures and seminars formal recognition for the time invested. We collaborated with the Chief of Navy to initiate a CPE programme for naval officers and our members; and were chosen by the Indian High Commission to host a lecture by Ambassador Jayant Prasad, Director-General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. Finally, our social programme culminated in our 128th Anniversary Dinner, a most enjoyable event held in the presence of His Excellency the Governor and Mrs Linda Hurley.

There have been major reforms of governance as well. We have changed the incorporation of the national body formed in 1974 to represent the national interests of the seven, state-based independent united services institutes. It is now a company limited by guarantee, titled the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Australia Limited. The new company has already negotiated a long-term lease enabling us to occupy Defence premises until June 2021.

We also have successfully negotiated a memorandum of understanding with the Trustees of the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park South, Sydney, which will see us transfer our Ursula Davidson Library to a new education centre being constructed at the Memorial as part of a Great War centenary project. The transfer will happen after the centre is opened in November 2018.

Finally, for the second year in a row, we have recorded a healthy financial surplus after five years of losses and carry forward into 2016-17 \$300,000 in assets and cash.

Taken together, these developments secure our future into the medium term, but only if you continue to support the Institute with your membership, your attendance at activities and your generosity as you have so magnificently over the past three years.

This will be my last column as your President as my three-year term will end at the AGM on 26 September. It has been an enormous privilege to lead our fine organisation. Thank you for your support. I ask that you now give my successors the same support in the years ahead.

David Leece