

President's Column:

Welcome to the March 2017 issue of the *United Service*. I hope you find it educational.

At the Institute's Annual General meeting in September 2016, we agreed to change the Institute's name to the ***Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, New South Wales, Incorporated*** to bring it in line with the names our new national body and that of the United Kingdom. Also at the Annual General Meeting, I was elected President which is a great honour but somewhat daunting in view of the extraordinary example set by David Leece as President. I am fortunate that David will continue to be involved in the Institute as Immediate Past President, as editor of *United Service* and as acting manager of the Ursula Davidson Library.



At the end of 2016, we commenced using a shorter trading name for the Institute. This decision elicited concerns by some members. The Institute's Board has revisited this matter and resolved to cease using a trading name and to use the full title of the Institute in future.

The new Institute Board is focused on two significant matters. First, we have to grow our membership base, particularly with current and former Australian Defence Force members, with university students and with members of the public interested in defence and security. The challenge is to deliver a programme of events that is contemporary and relevant to both current and potential members.

Second, we have to plan two moves of our library. The first will be undertaken later in 2017 in order to refurbish Defence Plaza Sydney. The second will be in late 2018 to a new education centre being constructed at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park.

To assist in meeting the challenges of moving the library, we successfully sought a grant from the National Library to engage a consultant to undertake a 'preservation needs assessment'. We are implementing the report's recommendations, including appointment of curators for specialised sections of the library collection and the digitisation of our map collection.

Move of the library to the Anzac Memorial will enable us to provide a wonderful educational precinct and allow members access without the current security access issues. Nevertheless, we have to raise substantial funds to purchase a compactus and essential equipment for the library, and will commence shortly a major fund raising drive.

Finally, congratulations to Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer, one of our Vice Patrons, on being awarded an AO in the Australia Day Honours list.

Paul Irving