

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Australia Limited

Promoting national security awareness

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National President's Column:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Winter 2017 edition of *United Service*. Following establishment of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies – Australia in 2016, the national body has focused on bedding down the new organisation and setting it on a path to future success.



I am very pleased to see our constituent bodies, including New South Wales, embrace the need for change in order to attract a younger membership, be relevant to the contemporary needs of the Department of Defence and our other stakeholders, enhance our reputation and provide an improved value proposition to potential sponsors. I see some evidence of programmes that not only promote an improved understanding of defence and national security issues, but are also of interest to a younger audience of national security professionals.

However, we have only just begun and there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done across the breadth of the organisation. I strongly believe that our membership demographic needs to evolve over time so that we reflect a younger, gender-balanced and multicultural Australia.

I am particularly keen to see all constituent bodies use the new national website to share information and manage events. It is a tool which has been designed for all to use and we need to embrace it to demonstrate to our stakeholders that we are serious about change. We also need to take measured steps to establish a presence in social media where most young (and not so young!) people can be found today. I believe if we establish the correct framework, we can do this while still maintaining the tradition of non-partisanship.

I have recently written to ambassadors and high commissioners in Canberra seeking to identify defence and national security experts who may be visiting capital cities (outside Canberra) and would be interested in speaking to a RUSIDSS-A audience. Obviously, our constituent bodies are not obliged to accept the speaker and they will need sufficient warning time to plan the event, but it may help our smaller constituent bodies strengthen their speaker programmes.

In conclusion, I urge all members to think about how they can help RUSIDSS-A grow and prosper. Your suggestions would be most welcome.

Simon Cullen