

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies – Australia

Promoting understanding of defence and national security

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National President's Column

Welcome to the second issue of *United Service* in 2022 that contains interesting papers on the contribution to be made to improving resilience by the ADF, universities, and Defence.

I recently addressed members of RUSI QLD concerning my views on the future of RUSI. My *vision* is that RUSI, consisting of the National body (RUSI-A) and State and Territory RUSIs, should be an independent, respected think tank that provides recognised value to its members and identified stakeholders in the defence and national security space, and is financially secure.



To achieve this *vision*, we need to commit to several lines of effort, with the first being *governance*. This requires a unified National Board with sound governance structures and good communications; strong and effective State RUSI Boards/Councils; with effective succession planning across all Boards; and with Boards that are more representative of society and with financial, marketing and event management skills. Longer term we need to revise the National Constitution.

We need to minimise and simplify our *administration*, by substantially reducing the cost of running the National office; by adopting standardised reporting systems; and by responding promptly to all external requests.

To be *financially* secure, we need to pursue sponsorship, both nationally and locally; seek donations via our Charitable Fund status; partner with State RUSIs in conducting major seminars and obtaining grant funding; and set minimal capitation fees to run the National office.

We need to substantially increase our *influence* by ensuring the quality of a truly National journal where we monitor the “reach” of our articles within Australia and globally; by publicising an annual program of events conducted by State RUSIs; by recording all lectures and posting videos of those lectures on a new National website; and by significantly improving our engagement with: Federal & State Governments, Defence industry, our competitors, international RUSIs and media defence and security spokespersons.

We must increase our *Membership* by demonstrating value for money via networking, resources, events, benefits; by appealing to wider demographics such as retirees, students, emergency services personnel, academia, defence industry, serving members of the ADF; and we need flexible membership, especially for serving ADF members.

Finally, in respect of *facilities*, we need to explore options with ex-service organisations, universities, industry, benefactor etc to relocate, where possible, from the Defence estate with its inherent security restrictions.

RUSI, as a highly respected, member based, public body that has existed for over 100 years, has had to reinvent itself a number of times. We must continue to do so by maintaining the relevance of RUSI to both our members, to the Australian community and to our international audience. I am determined to play my part in this ongoing revival of RUSI.

Paul Irving AM, PSM, RFD
National President