

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies NSW

Established 1888



BOARD REPORT- (Prepared by PRESIDENT RUSI NSW) **TO RUSI NSW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **14TH DECEMBER 2021**

It is with great pleasure that I provide my first AGM Board report as the President of RUSI NSW, and I again would like to acknowledge and thank all members for the honour of your electing me as your President at the 2020 AGM.

It is an understatement to report that it has been a challenging year of attempting to cope with ever changing COVID restrictions, and I commend all the RUSI NSW Board and our close supporters for their flexibility in responding and coping under ever changing conditions.

Perhaps because of these challenges, we have responded with a very focused effort, and in my opinion produced a very high-quality series of events and products this year. The monthly lecture series was focused around a deliberate theme of *Improving Resilience*, and I believe this usage of a clearly identifiable theme enabled us to assemble an impressive range of monthly speakers, and also provided a focus for the very successful annual seminar we held very recently on Tuesday 23rd November 2021.

A related feature of considerable value and appeal was the reality that due to the hard work and active support from our Webmaster and Tech support person, LTCOL John Howells OAM RFD (Ret'd), we were able to provide each of the monthly lectures as webcasts, except where security implications meant that this option was not feasible for a specific topic. One example of that was the presentation by the Commanding Officer of HMAS Sydney V on the Aegis Weapon System.

One feature of our RUSI NSW year was the strong support provided by our Patron, the Governor of NSW Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC QC, who agreed to sponsor an afternoon tea at NSW Government House in August for our RUSI NSW members and Vice Patrons, and it was unfortunate that the COVID restrictions applied by the NSW Government at that time meant that this Vice-Regal Reception was cancelled. Her Excellency also provided a very thoughtful and challenging commentary as part of her formal opening of the RUSI NSW seminar held very recently. On behalf of all members of RUSI NSW, I express our sincere thanks to our Patron the NSW Governor for her significant support for our Institute.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our Vice-Patrons for their constant support. Our Vice-Patrons are the RAN Fleet Commander, RADM Mark Hammond AM RAN; the Army Forces Commander, MAJGEN Matt Pearse AM; the RAAF Air Commander Australia, AVM Joe Iervasi AM

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CSC; Commander 2nd Division- MAJGEN David Thomae AM; and the Chief Executive of Thales Australia and New Zealand, Mr. Chris Jenkins. They have each responded very readily to any requests for assistance, and their personal attendance and involvement in the recent half-day major seminar was added major appeal to the event.

Another very significant feature of the year was the role that the NSW Board of RUSI has played in re-energizing and reactivating the RUSIDSS-A National Board. We (RUSI NSW) have led a series of Zoom-based discussions involving all the other State/Territory RUSI Presidents and through that network developed a series of action proposals aimed to both re-energize the National Board and also provide some input and energy into the RUSI National Board to become a more active platform to influence Defence and Security policies and practice at the Federal level. I am pleased to report that at the National AGM held earlier in November 2021, all the RUSI NSW recommendations were adopted, and one of our senior RUSI NSW members, MAJGEN Paul Irving AM PSM RFD (Ret'd), was elected National Vice President. We wish Paul well on this important role and thank him for his endless energy and commitment to our Institute that he continually exhibits in so many ways.

A related achievement this year was the agreement by RUSI National to adopt the NSW Journal, ***United Service***, as the RUSI National Journal from the end of 2021. This was a culmination of the high quality 17 Years of editorship under another stalwart of RUSI NSW- Dr David Leece AM PSM, RFD, ED FAIA FRSB who is also BRIG David Leece (Ret'd). David has announced his retirement as Editor and his final edition of ***United Service*** for 2021 has just been released. It is again of the very high standard we have come to expect under David and his editorial team. We again thank David for his exemplary service, and for establishing the excellent standards of editing we now have come to expect from ***United Service***, and also for his commitment to RUSI NSW in many other ways.

I would also like to formally welcome and acknowledge the incoming editor of ***United Service***, COL Joe Matthews (Ret'd), and on behalf of all members and readers we thank Joe most sincerely for accepting this challenging but extremely worthwhile task.

Additionally, I would like to thank our outgoing Office Manager, Mr. Graham Brown, who has given us tireless support for the last 7 years, and for his continued support in being willing to continue-on as Treasurer of our NSW Board until we can organize a replacement for him. Thank you, Graham for your loyalty and dedication.

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I would like to welcome Mr. Phil Wood, who has volunteered to replace Graham as our new Office Manager, and I acknowledge Phil's flexibility and willingness to adapt as he joined us at a very difficult time of COVID restrictions, during which a traditional 'face-to-face' handover was not legal possible. Welcome Phil.

Another very welcome new volunteer is Mr. Greg Stevenson who, after joining RUSI NSW, stepped forward to take on the valuable role of organizing and promoting the sale of our surplus donated books and Greg has taken vigorously and effectively to the task and we welcome Greg and thank him for his strong support.

I want to finish by thanking and acknowledging the hard work and strong support of the NSW Board this Year. We conducted a useful forward planning seminar in February 2021 and have worked steadily to improve processes and codify the strategic plan for 2021-2025. In particular, I want to pay a special tribute to my immediate predecessor Paul Irving, who was not only instrumental in working with David Leece to secure our place in the Sydney Anzac Memorial, but also worked assiduously to plan and implement our removal from the Pitt Street Defence Plaza Building and relocate us into our new and impressive 'home'. Instead of relaxing after handing over the Presidency to me, Paul has provided massive physical and other support since becoming our Immediate Past President, and he puts vast amounts of time into the Ursula Davidson library and maintaining good relations with the Anzac memorial staff. He is a very strong and effective coach and mentor for me, and I thank him sincerely for the many times this year when he has quietly steered me back 'on track' in my 'fast learning curve' as a new President.

I would like to especially thank all those who have made a donation to RUSI NSW in this last Financial Year, and a list of donors is attached to this annual report.

On behalf of the Board and all members please accept our sincere 'thank you' for your generous support of RUSI NSW!

Finally I commend this Year of Achievement by RUSI NSW to you, and I think that as we emerge out of COVID lockdown restrictions that we actually face a very positive future as we re-energize our organization at both the Federal and State levels, take advantage of both the wonderful and very significant venue we are now located within i.e. the Anzac Memorial Hyde Park Sydney, and better utilize the strong networks of support we have created with serving ADF senior officers and Defence Industries in NSW.

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It is very heartening to see some new nominations for the 2022 RUSI NSW Board, and I welcome all who are elected/ appointed at our AGM

Sincerely

Michael Hough
President RUSI NSW
November 2021
On Behalf of the Board