

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies NSW

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REPORT BY PRESIDENT RUSI NSW **TO** **RUSI NSW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **31st OCTOBER 2023**

It is with pleasure that I provide my third and final annual report as the President of RUSI NSW, and I again would like to acknowledge and thank all members for the honour of being your President over the three-year period ending at this 2023 AGM.

In my opinion, we (the RUSI NSW Board and members) have produced a very high-quality series of events and activities which exemplify our mission of contributing to and informing debate about the Defence and Security of our region, and for this Year 2022/23, my selection(s) of highlights are:-

- The very successful Fourth International Dialogue titled:-“**Managing Strategic Tensions In The Indo-Pacific Region**”- held in May 2023 at the NSW Parliament House Auditorium, which presented an attractive quality program of significant speakers including the Blamey Oration delivered by the Assistant Minister for Defence, and supported by a significant audience attendance containing a highly desirable mix of serving ADF personnel and traditional RUSINSW members.
- The strong support that we have received from our RUSI NSW Patron- Her Excellency the Governor of NSW the Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC, and in particular the thoughtful and well researched opening speeches she has made at both opening our International Dialogue, and in welcoming us to the RUSI NSW members’ afternoon teas reception she hosted and held at NSW Govt House in August this year, which commemorated our 135th birthday as RUSI NSW.
- The constant high quality of our monthly lecture and seminar series across 2022/23- which mainly explored the implications of both the AUKUS agreement and the more recent Defence Strategic Review (DSR).
- The continued rapid growth of our online RUSI NSW presence, and when connected to the appeal of our web-based lunchtime lecture series, it is very clear that we have a significant and increasing international audience and interest for our “ virtual” RUSI NSW.
- The strong growth of our “Javelin” monograph series- ably led by Board member Diana Figgis, who in her first year of editing has achieved 11 monographs being available online through our website.
- The key roles and outcomes that RUSI NSW members have taken in RUSIDSS- Australia- especially our Past Presidents- Paul Irving (our current National President)

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and David Leece (Editing the RUSIDSS-A submission to the Defence Strategic Review Panel); Joe Matthews (Editor of *United Service*), and John Howells (Web Master and Secretary)

Another positive feature of our RUSI NSW year was the strong support provided not only by our Patron (the Governor of NSW) but also our Vice Patrons- the RAN Fleet Commander; the Army Forces Commander; Commander 2nd Division, the RAAF Air Commander, and the CEO Of Thales Australia and New Zealand.

One significant outgrowth from this Patronage was the formal agreement reached between RUSI NSW and the Royal Australian Navy, to enable the award of significant achievement prizes to the top graduates of the new RAN officer employment classification courses being conducted regularly at HMAS Watson by the Military Intelligence Officers Wing, and a senior RUSINSW representative has now attended the first two formal graduation events and awarded the prizes in the name of RUSI NSW.

I would also like to welcome and acknowledge two new members of our small but effective RUSINSW admin team- our Honorary Treasurer Mr. David Toose, and our new Office Manager- Major Alan Smith RAAC (Ret'd).

On the representational aspects of RUSI NSW into the community, we are receiving regular invitations to appear at all relevant NSW celebrations and commemorations, to which we attend as a matter of principle, and I wish to thank our senior Vice President - Commodore Mike Flynn RAN (Ret'd) who readily delegates for me at these ceremonies if I cannot attend.

The RUSI NSW Board is working steadily to implement our agreed strategic plan to 2025, and we have worked steadily to improve our administrative processes, make membership of our Institute more appealing, and deliver a quality suite of programs eg monthly lectures /major seminar/ publications and member visits.

A significant but just emerging development is a consortium between RUSI NSW and the Universities of Newcastle and Wollongong, which is aimed at providing an innovative response capability to address the current issues and challenges of the serving ADF units. In developing the format for the consortium, we have made a promising contact and are developing a relationship with the RAAF Air Command's Directorate of Innovation and Improvement, in identifying possible topics and challenges for the Consortium to address.

This project is a very significant one in its implications and the RUSINSW board has requested (and I have agreed) that I will continue to 'drive' this project after stepping down as President.

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Finally, I commend this Year of significant growth and achievements by RUSI NSW to you, and we are increasingly learning how to take advantage of the wonderful venue in which we are now located (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. I again thank all Members of the RUSI NSW Board for their strong and constant efforts and support in making our volunteer driven organization so effective.

To each of our members, I also thank you for your confidence in me by electing me as your President, and I am very proud of what we have been able to collectively achieve over the last three years.

I commend to you this my final President's report.

Sincerely

Professor Michael Hough AM RFD ED
President RUSI NSW
October 2023