

Fellow members

I am pleased to report that the 12-month period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 has once again been a successful one for the ACT Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs.

We have continued to fulfill our core purpose of promoting an interest in, and understanding of, international affairs -amongst, our members and the broader community, by holding a large number of successful events and instigating and collaborating in various other initiatives.

We are in good shape financially and also in terms of membership of the range and quality of speakers we continue to offer.

We have hosted or co-hosted around 30 events in the last 12 months – an average of about 2 per month. The quality of these events has been extremely high. Both in terms of the caliber of the speakers and the audience attendance and indeed participation in lively Q and A sessions. Invariably speakers comment on our highly informed and engaged audiences.

Our speakers have included leading diplomats, academics journalists and even a former Head of State. Our annual dinner, which I instigated in 2013, is now entrenched as fixture in our calendar. I am pleased to tell you that Mr Dennis Richardson AO, Secretary of the Department of Defence has now confirmed for as dinner speaker and guest of honour for a date in November.

Events really are the essence of what we do. There are many people to thank on this front but a special mention must go to Mr Garth Hunt and Dr Natalie Mobini for the role he has planned in the organisation of and forward planning for events. Special thanks must also go to Lawson and Jill for their great work on the catering front.

Our membership as of 30 June 2015 was estimated to be 312. And they are now in fact around 321. This is a steady increase over the last three years. We have experienced some pretty severe IT problems with our membership processing and event registration over the last 6 months. I apologise for the inconvenience this has caused some members. I understand that these technical issues have now been addressed. I have decided not to renominate for the role of President or indeed for a position on Council so my tenure will end here today. After 3 years as

President and 2 before that as Councilor the time is right for me to move on to other challenges. I will step back from the running of the ACT Branch but I will remain a supportive member and I will continue to have a role with the National Office as a Presidential Associate.

It has been an enormous privilege to serve on Council and as President. I owe a great debt of gratitude to everyone on Council, as does the whole branch. This year we are saying farewell to several Council members. Peter Hamburger and Bob Lowry have both served for many years as Vice President and Treasurer. Ingrid Moses has served as Vice President and Kate Winkworth as a Councilor.

I must make a special mention of thanks also to our interns Adelaide and Macgregor and to Jackie in the office. They have been a great support to me as I have juggled the responsibilities of this office with my other duties.

I am pleased to report that our books are in good order and that we have once again ended the year in a financially sound place – thanks to our Treasurer Mr Bob Lowry. I refer you to his full report.

I must also thank our National Executive Director Melissa Conley Tyler, National Office Operations Manager Chris Farnham and Communications Director Niree Creed for their friendship and support throughout the year. Finally I wish to thank all of you as Branch members for your support because without that support we would simply not exist. Let me close by wishing my successor and the new Council every possible success in the future. I am confident that that future will be a bright one. Thank you.

Cameron Hawker
President