



Australian Institute of International Affairs

The History of Australia's Involvement with the United Nations

Outcomes Report

This report summarises the outcomes of a Forum on *The History of Australia's Involvement with the United Nations* (UN) jointly hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) held in Canberra on 1-2 February 2011.

The Forum brought together government officials, academics and other experts to debate and engage with the issues that continue to shape Australia-UN relations today. The object of the Forum was to examine Australia's role in the UN from inception to the present day, including significant issues related to the UN, both past and present.

Highlights of the Forum included:

- High quality presentations of historical research by academic experts and DFAT researchers
- Involvement of prominent Australians with extensive involvement with the United Nations including three former Australian Permanent Representatives to the UN, former Ambassadors, former UN officials and numerous DFAT officials
- Lively opening addresses by keynote speakers sharing their experiences of the UN
- Opportunities for open discussion and social contact.

A book of research is in preparation for release by the DFAT Historical Publications and Information Section in September 2011.



**DFAT Historical Publications and Information Section officials and publication authors
at *The History of Australia's Involvement with the United Nations* Forum
Stephen House, 1-2 February 2011**



Objectives

The aim of the Forum was to improve understanding of Australia's role in the UN to the present day. It was a historical and thematic forum, run jointly by the AIIA and the Historical Publications and Information Section of DFAT.

The Forum brought together authors of chapters for *The History of Australia's Involvement in the United Nations* book to be published by DFAT later in 2011, and gave them the opportunity to present their papers and benefit from comments and questions from an expert audience. Admission to the Forum was by invitation only and discussions were held under the Chatham House rule.

Participants

Speakers and discussants came from a variety of organisations that included:

- Current officials from DFAT and the Attorney-General's Department
- Former DFAT officials including a former Secretary, former Ambassadors and High Commissioners and former Permanent Representatives to the UN
- Former UN officials
- Civil society representatives, including from the UN Association of Australia
- Academic experts from the Australian Defence Force Academy, Australian National University, Griffith University, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Tasmania and the University of Western Australia.



Speakers Ms Robyn Mudie, Professor The Hon Robert Hill, Mr Richard Woolcott AC FAIIA and Mr James Ingram AO FAIIA



Format

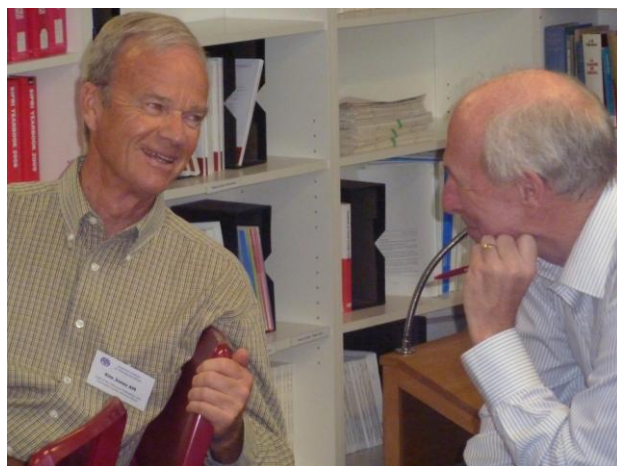
The Forum consisted of research papers which presented the product of historical research and keynote addresses which provided personal recollections and context.

Research papers focused on:

- Australia's Involvement in the Foundation of the UN
- The Security Council and Peacekeeping
- Human Rights and the Environment
- UN Specialised Agencies
- The UN and Development
- Disarmament
- Reform of the UN
- The Role of the Permanent Representative

There were also four illuminating keynote addresses:

- "The UN and Australian Foreign Policy" by Mr Richard Woolcott AC FAIIA, former Secretary of DFAT 1988-92 and former Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN in New York
- "Experiences in Multilateral Diplomacy" by Professor The Hon Robert Hill, former Minister for Defence and the Environment and former Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN in New York
- "The UN – A Dysfunctional Family" by Mr James Ingram AO FAIIA, former Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme 1982-1992 and former Director General of the Australian Development Assistance Agency
- "Governance and the UN" by Professor Charles Sampford, Foundation Dean and Professor of Law, Griffith University and Director of the Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law, a joint initiative of the UN University, Griffith and QUT in association with the ANU.



Lt Gen John Sanderson AC FAIIA and Director of the UN Information Centre Mr Christopher Woodthorpe; Mr Kim Jones AM and Professor Anthony Billingsley.



Acknowledgements

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The AIIA would like to thank all participants in the Forum, particularly speakers and moderators.

This event would not have been possible without the dedication of the following:

- Mr John Robbins, National Deputy Director, AIIA
- Mr Conor Quinn, Research Intern, AIIA
- Ms Ashley Jenkins, Research Intern, AIIA
- Ms Naomi Von Dinklage, Research Intern, AIIA



Professor Roderic Pitty, Dr Moreen Dee and other participants at the Forum