

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

The Beginning of the Beginning

From the President.

Firstly, please let me say that I do hope that you and your families are well and coping with the present circumstances.

After a wonderful lead up to Christmas, we thought AIIA Victoria was sailing along beautifully with terrific speakers lined up for 2020 and an excellently planned Silk Road Study Tour.

Thus, we started the year on a high with several sold-out speaker events with extensive waiting lists for some events. The Institute also hosted an invitation-only roundtable in February on Australia-India relations with the visiting Deputy Head of Mission in New Delhi, Rod Hilton. This special roundtable demonstrates the prominence of the Institute among the diplomatic corps in Australia.



Well! All that came to an abrupt halt. On March 16, prior to government policies and regulations limiting the holding of events, we took the precautionary decision to suspend all events until further notice due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The health and well-being of our members and supporters is paramount.



From this...



...to this!

Nevertheless, we are gifted with some talent amongst our ranks. We are putting into place our ability to bring you podcasts and webinars. Thank goodness for our interns with their talents; all of them working from home.

I will be writing to you soon about our **Annual Giving Appeal**. The most important consideration for our Council is ensuring that AIIA Victoria will come out of the current problems caused by Covid-19 healthily.

To that end we must keep our office staff on but working fewer hours and we must continue to give our interns the opportunity of using their talents in different ways.

We wish you all good health and safety during this time of volatility and welcome your feedback and suggestions on email [here](#) or on (03) 9654 7271.

Stay safe and well!

Patrick Moore
President
AIIA Victoria

The start of something new – Kelly MacDonald

What an exciting year to be a member and Council Member at AIIA Victoria!

Although this is the third year of being a Council Member, Dyason House will always be a special place for me. It was where I first met my husband in 2015. I recall meeting him while attending a dinner with Dr David Malet following David's fascinating presentation on Islamic State's recruitment of foreign fighters, which I grant you is not the most romantic of topics.

We have seen another great start of the year with our popular lecture series. I was particularly excited by the terrific presentation given by Dr Alexandra Phelan of Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre on 10 March 2020. I just hope that we can continue this series on *Women in International Affairs* in the future.



In my capacity of the Committee Chair for the Sir Zelman Cowen Oration, I look forward to arranging another thought-provoking and engaging oration in memoriam of Australia's distinguished statesman, scholar and jurist. In 2019, we saw the Hon Margaret Stone AO FAAL, Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security deliver an oration on "*Ethical Problems in Intelligence Collection*". We are most fortunate in having Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel AO give the oration this year.

For me, AIIA Victoria provides unparalleled insights into global events and issues. It keeps me in touch with what is happening beyond our shores including on issues that get marginal

attention in the mainstream press. I particularly enjoy listening to the Dyason House podcasts on the way home from work, which is very easily accessible through the AIIA Victoria website or iTunes.

Dyason House provides a wonderful space to connect with other like-minded people. Since joining in 2015 after moving from South Australia I have befriended so many interesting and friendly people with incredible and varied backgrounds and ages.

Kelly MacDonald
Council Member

The most important people – our members

You, the membership, are the most important part of the AIIA Victoria! Not only do you support us financially through Dyason House events, study tours, your membership fees and your donations, but it is also for you, the members, that we are working very hard to present many matters of interest and of international affairs.

We know it is frustrating not being able to meet with each other at Dyason House. On the other hand, we are gearing up to produce more webinars and podcasts which will enable you to remain in touch with international affairs.

If you're interested in becoming a member or want to renew your expired membership, [click here](#).

Webinars and podcasts – AIIA Victoria is going digital

While you can stay informed through the *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (members can access both the current issue and the archive when logged in) and the [Australian Outlook](#) weekly blog, we have been working hard to start delivering virtual events to keep you engaged until 'normal service' resumes.

Adding to the successful *Dyason House Podcast*, three interns are currently working on new **podcasts** covering conflicts, international health security, and women in international affairs. An audio-documentary on the Hong Kong protests is nearing completion, and we will shortly publish an interview with Emeritus Professor Gillian Triggs FAIIA, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, at the UNHCR on the impact of the coronavirus crisis on refugees. The *Dyason House Podcast* is available [here](#), iTunes and [Spotify](#).

Our first **webinar** takes place on **Thursday 2 April**, with Associate Professor Matt McDonald of the University of Queensland discussing [Climate Change and National Security: International Responses](#).

Many more are planned, and recordings will be posted on our website for member-only access.

Dyason House events – our contribution to our members



2020 started well with several sold-out events during February and March. The first event for the year was ***In the Shadow of the Cold War: American Foreign Policy from George Bush Sr. to Donald Trump*** presented by Assoc. Prof. Timothy Lynch from the University of Melbourne. This talk coincided with the release of Lynch's new book *In the Shadow of the Cold War*. He discussed the ongoing power struggle between the United States and the rising global Chinese influence, identifying several elements

similar to the Cold War yet also acknowledging the difference between the US-USSR rivalry and the US-China rivalry today.

The second sold-out event for the year was hosted by Council Member Richard Iron CMG OBE in conversation with Michael Bachelard on ***Unrest in the Arab World***. Bachelard provided his insights in to the ever-changing Middle East following his recent return from Syria and Iraq and how the influential regional powers of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey as well as global powers like the US and Russia are still heavily involved in geopolitical power plays and regional political exploitation.



We also hosted the ***Taiwan Study Tour Report Launch*** following a highly successful study tour to Taiwan in November 2019. The launch of the Report launch, which was also attended by the delegates who travelled to Taiwan and representatives of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) outlined the findings from several meetings with representatives from the Australian Office in Taipei; the Department of Economic Affairs; the Institute of National Policy Research; National Taiwan Normal University, and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy.



Together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Victoria State Office, we co-hosted Sarah Storey, Congressional Liaison Chief at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC, to discuss ***The Year Ahead in US Politics: Insights from Washington***.

Note: this was a unique members-only event with limited seating due to DFAT capacity. We acknowledge that some people were unable to attend due to the capacity restraints.

Following the passing of the Brexit Bill in Westminster on January 31, AIIA Fellow Colin Chapman FAIIA presented ***Breaking Up is Hard to Do***. He emphasised that although the UK has symbolically left the Europe Union, it is still currently very much tied to its economic and trade regulations which it will need to negotiate out of in the coming months.

While the Western Balkans aren't often associated with Australia in international affairs, we were pleased to host HE Ms Ruth Stewart, Australian Ambassador to Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia, who spoke about ***Australia and the Western Balkans in 2020***. The region shows immense international potential, especially with several countries seeking EU accession.



To celebrate International Women's Day we hosted a networking event on ***Women in International Affairs*** with the keynote speech delivered by Dr. Alexandra Phelan, a Postdoctoral Fellow at Monash University's [Gender, Peace and Security Centre](#). This unique event promoted the importance of gender equality in international affairs and also brought together a variety of people from

across Melbourne who are passionate about making the world a better and safer place for young girls and women.

Study tours – developing our knowledge and sharing it

We had a terrific Study Tour Taiwan in October 2020. This followed our most successful Study Tour to Indonesia in June 2020.

We were fortunate to have in our delegation (pictured) a number of “old timer Taiwanese hands”. One of the more interesting conversations during the Study Tour was contrasting the Taiwan of yesterday with the terrific country it is today.



We were admirably looked after by the Australian Office in Taipei just as we were by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO), their Ministries of Economic Affairs and of Foreign Affairs.

A few months ago, we started planning our **Silk Road Study Tour** for September/October 2020. That now looks most unlikely because Uzbekistan has recently closed its borders until the end of September 2020; it is likely to be postponed until April 2021.

We had planned meetings in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. These involved meetings with organisations such as Nazarbayev University, representatives from the OECD, UNHRC, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as well as local and foreign journalists and diplomats. Other highlights were to include cultural activities such as visits to the Wedding Palace in Ashgabat, the Darvaza Gas Crater (aka the Gates of Hell), and the Caspian Sea and six UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

If you have not already done so, please register your interest in joining the Silk Road Study Tour for April 2021, [click here](#).

International Careers Conference (ICC) – our greatest contribution to careers

The ICC is one of AIIA Victoria’s major annual events. It is designed to give students and recent graduates access to information and advice that will help them build their own careers with an international component.

The ICC aims to:

- Inspire students to consider a variety of international careers;
- Assist students working towards an international career;
- Provide career-specific advice, and
- Encourage students to engage with international affairs



The 16th annual International Careers Conference is planned to take place on Friday, 28 August 2020 at Arts Centre Melbourne. However in the circumstances there is a strong likelihood that it may be postponed. Our next Council meeting on 20 April will make the final decision.

To find out more about the International Careers Conference, [click here](#).

Sir Zelman Cowen Oration and Dinner – honouring a great contribution

Each year we hold the Sir Zelman Cowen Oration and Dinner to honour former Governor-General and legal expert Sir Zelman Cowen.

This year we are honoured that Dr Alan Finkel AO will be giving the Oration. Alan is Australia's Chief Scientist and formerly Chancellor of Monash University. It is planned be held on **Thursday October 29th**.



Please put that date in your diary and we sincerely hope that by then we will have returned to gather again in numbers.

To find out more about the Sir Zelman Cowen Oration and Dinner including past orations, [click here](#).

The Walter Mangold Trust – a great benefactor sponsoring the young

We gratefully acknowledge [The Walter Mangold Trust Fund](#) for their continued support of our young people engaging in international affairs. Their generous student subsidy initiative allows student members to attend our events free of charge. In addition, the Fund also enables interns to take part in and contribute to our Study Tours.

AIIA VIC Young Professionals Forum – The best networking available

The AIIA Victoria Young Professionals Forum (YPF):

- bring together students and young professionals from a variety of government and non-government sectors to network and share ideas in a professional and social environment; and
- act as a conduit for young people to gain access to experts in government, business, not-for-profits and other international industry groups.

The YPF's first event for 2020, its Networking Drinks planned for March 26, was met with a great response, but unfortunately has now been postponed because of COVID-19. However more YPF events are planned for 2020 so stay tuned.

To find out more about the YPF, [click here](#).

Australia Day Honours

We congratulate the following two members who were recognised in the Australia Day Honours:

- Professor Emerita Joan Beaumont AM FASSA FAIIA (President AIIA VIC 1990-1994)
- Professor John Fitzgerald AM