ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 18 August 2010 at 12:30 pm
at
AIIA Conference Centre, 32 Thesiger Court, Deakin, ACT 2600

MINUTES

1. Welcome
   The AGM was declared open 12:30pm by the ACT Branch President, Ian Dudgeon. Ian welcomed and thanked those present.

2. Members Present

3. Apologies
   Maurice Deveze, Elizabeth Deveze, Raydon Gates, Allison Ley, Bob Lowry, Fiona Peacock, Sam Riordan, Tessa Scrine.

   The apologies were accepted by the Council.

   Moved: Paul Gallagher
   Seconded: Baden Taylor
   Carried

4. Endorsement of Previous AGM Minutes
   The minutes of the previous AGM held 8 September 2009 were passed without amendment as a true and accurate record.

   Moved: Lawson Lobb
   Seconded: John Sullivan
   Carried

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes
   None

6. Correspondence
   None

7. President’s Report
The President, Ian Dudgeon, reported to the meeting on events during the period 1st July 2009 to 30th June 2010. A copy of the President’s report is attached to these minutes.

It was moved that the President’s report be accepted and that members thank Ian Dudgeon for his leadership during the year, thank Mhairi Cowden for her excellent support as Executive Officer, and thank all Council members for their efforts.

Moved: Lawson Lobb  
Seconded: John Salmon  
Carried

8. Treasurer’s Report

Ian Dudgeon reported that due to the unavailability of outgoing Treasurer Siddhartha Chakrabarti, he would be delivering the Treasurer’s report for the Financial Year 2009-10 together with the audit report by KW Knight & Associates.

Ian reported that the Branch finished the financial year in a sound financial position, with a healthy bank balance of $19,890. He noted that as the Branch operates on a cash flow system, money currently sitting in the account did not reflect all income earned or expenses incurred during the period. For example, membership income could cover three different financial periods. Ian also explained that despite expenditure exceeding revenue by $2,149 during the period, this was due in large part by a one-off adjustment to include two major expenses incurred in FY 09/10 being brought to account that year rather than being rolled into the next year’s accounts as was past practice. Those two items totalled $3,060 and were a full year’s rent and one month of the Executive Officer’s salary.

Ian reported that, importantly, the audit conducted by KW Knight & Associates acknowledged our compliance with governance requirements. Notwithstanding this, Ian said there was scope for some improvements in financial processes and we would be working with our new accountant to introduce these as soon as practicable.

Ian asked if there were any questions from members present.

John Murray enquired about the impact on revenue due to the changes in student membership fees early in the reporting year. Ian explained the six monthly membership option for students had been cancelled for administrative reasons. That resulted in new student memberships...
dropping by about half, but revenue remaining the same because the new members paid for a full twelve months rather than six months.

A copy of the audited accounts will be made available on the ACT Branch Website. Hard copies of the accounts were available for members present.

It was moved that the Treasurer’s report and audited accounts be accepted.

Moved: John Murray  
Seconded: Baden Taylor  
Carried

9. Appointment of Returning Officer

Mhairi Cowden was nominated as Returning Officer for the election of the new Council.

Moved: Ian Dudgeon  
Seconded: Paul Gallagher  
Carried

10. Election of new Council

The following nominations were received:

President: Ian Dudgeon  
Vice President: Graham Cooke  
Treasurer: no nomination  
Councillors: Heath McMichael, Brigitte Morten, Sam Riordan, John Sullivan, Peter Hamburger, Paul Gallagher, Robert Lowry.

The Returning Officer noted proxy votes received and moved that as the number of nominations did not exceed the number of vacant Council positions, those above be elected to Council.

Moved: Mhairi Cowden  
Seconded: Paul Gallagher  
Carried

The Returning Officer called for nominations from the floor. Nominations received were:

Councillors: Lawson Lobb, Baden Taylor, John Janke
As these additional nominations did not exceed remaining Council vacancies, it was moved the above also be elected to the Council

Moved: Graham Cooke
Seconded: Paul Gallagher
Carried

The Returning Officer, Mhairi Cowden, handed over to re-elected President Ian Dudgeon to chair the remainder of the meeting

11. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

K.W. Knight & Associates were nominated to continue as branch auditor

Moved: Ian Dudgeon
Seconded: Peter Hamburger
Carried

12. Appointment of Public Officer

Ian Dudgeon was nominated to continue as branch Public Officer.

Moved: Lawson Lobb
Seconded: Peter Hamburger
Carried

13. General Business

None

14. Conclusion of AGM

The AGM concluded at 1:10pm

Mhairi Cowden
Executive Officer
AIIA ACT Branch
AIIA ACT Branch : President’s Report to AGM 18 August 2010

Ladies and gentlemen, I will now deliver the President’s report for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

The principal aim of the ACT Branch, as for the AIIA generally, is to promote public interest in and understanding of international affairs.

I believe that we achieved our aim very successfully during the reporting period through the quality of our events. I base this comment about our success not only on the very positive feedback from our members, but also on the increased number of unsolicited complimentary comments which have reached us from within government, academia, and other similar non-for-profit organisations with international interests.

We held 38 events during the year on a wide range of topical and thematic issues, aimed at meeting the interests of our diverse membership. Of the 38 events, 6 were Youth events and 6 were co-hosted with other organisations. This compares with a total of 28 events for the previous year, and while unintentional, it represents the largest number of events we have ever held. Most events were held at our Deakin conference centre, and most Youth events at ANU. A number of co-hosted events were also held at other locations. There are sound mutual benefits that flow from selective co-hosted events, and I would like to thank AFTE, the Harvard Club of Australia, the Fulbright Alumni, the ANU Japan Association, and the Indonesian and US embassies for their support and cooperation as co-hosts.

My sincere thanks also to Peter Hamburger for his excellent work in coordinating the events program and its related publicity, to the Youth team including Daniel Schuurman, Sam Riordan and Allison Ley for a busy and innovative year, and to Graham Cooke, especially for his transcriptions of those presentations not subjected to the Chatham House Rule.

**Resources:** I would like to prefix my report on other Branch activities during the year, and on proposed future activities, with a comment on resources. Our ability to do what we do depends on the people-resources available to us. Our Executive Officer, Mhairi Cowden, who is part-time only and works 30 hours a month, did a very commendable job, but to properly run the Branch requires drawing on the services of our Council members, and other volunteers, to supplement her work. We started the year with an excellent line
up of Councillors, who collectively had the time and talent to meet our year’s program. Unfortunately, shortly afterwards a rash of job changes, new employment or other unforeseen commitments, impacted severely on the availability of many, and in four cases Council members in leadership appointments either resigned or had to step aside from their responsibilities. This obviously affected our ability to satisfactorily maintain some functions, or commence other planned activities. The worst affected were our Treasurer appointment, membership and secretariat/administrative support. Youth was also affected but less so. Despite this we coped, and did ensure that governance generally, and events, were not affected. However, the very high number of events did stretch our resources to their limit.

I would emphasise that flagging these difficulties is in no way a criticism of any Council member. All gave us their best, as circumstances allowed. Availability problems are all too frequently a fact of life with voluntary organisations. We anticipated that changed circumstances would affect some of us, as it has for past Councils, but more were affected, and more seriously, than anticipated. The implications of this are also clear for our immediate future in terms of matching our activities, including events, to the available resources of our next Council.

I will now address other activities.

**Membership:** serving our members is our main role, and they account for 90 percent of our revenue. We ended the year with 222 members, down from the high of 262 which we reached in the previous year as a result of a very active and focused recruitment drive. Our membership sub committee was very hard hit by the circumstances I mentioned previously, and we simply could not sustain the effort and achievement of the past. On a positive note, however, the 222 reflects our traditional level of membership over recent years, so in that sense we have not gone backwards, and I believe with the right resources we can increase our membership again in future, but in a more sustainable manner. Finally, I would mention that we did observe a notably higher number of non-members attend selected events during the year, which is encouraging in terms of our reach to a wider interested audience in Canberra generally. The challenge is to convert these visitors to members. I would also like to thank Cameron Hawker, and Melissa Conley Tyler, our National CEO, for enabling the successful survey of our membership during the year. An encouraging outcome of that survey was that we are on the right track in terms of what we do and are seeking to do.

**Finances:** We remain financially sound. However, due to the inability of the Treasurer to attend the AGM for compelling work reasons, I will deliver his report immediately following the President’s report. The Treasurer appointment was the hardest hit due to circumstances mentioned previously,
resulting in four different Treasurers during the year, including myself as the default Treasurer for several months. On a positive note, our governance was maintained, we introduced an on-line membership payment system, and late in the period employed an accountant part-time to help with changes to system procedures, including those complexities associated with our Executive Officer becoming an ‘employee’, rather than ‘contractor’, under the relevant ACT legislation. Changes to our procedures are not yet finalised, but I anticipate this will happen shortly.

Publicity: We transitioned to a new and much improved website during the latter part of the year, which is much more user-friendly, more informative about events and branch activities generally, and includes on-line payment and event registration facilities. Some final tweaking of the website remains to be done and will happen over the next month or so. We also produced a new branch brochure during the year to assist with publicity, and our monthly newsletters and event advice notices are now circulated electronically to more than 700 readers. Also, a number of our events have been recorded by the Australian Public Affairs Channel (APAC) and subsequently broadcast on national television. Overall, I think our publicity is very good, but it is also very demanding in terms of both time, especially given the number of events held, and of the IT skill sets now needed to maintain and manage the website as our major vehicle of publicity. We will be requiring more resources in this area during this year.

Youth. As I have already noted, it was an active and innovative year. Our reach to Youth, both students and young professionals, is very important as they will be the strategic leaders of the future. At the student level, our coverage of ANU is sound and I would hope we are able to expand our reach into the University of Canberra in the year ahead.

Mentoring: This program is now ready to run, thanks to the efforts of Heath McMichael and our multi-talented volunteer mentors, and I look forward to Youth members using its services in the coming year.

Secretariat: I would again thank our Executive Officer for her very commendable work in support of the Branch. But there is only so much she can do and priority was given to the increased administrative and publicity demands of events, and membership. Unfortunately, our ability early in the period to provide the additional support required, including a planned and overdue make-over of our administrative processes and records, did not materialise due to circumstances referred to previously. I am pleased to say that Brigitte Morten, who joined the Council in May, has commenced a review of our recordkeeping which I hope will be completed and recommendations implemented this year.
Friends of The AIIA. This program, which enables members to make tax-deductible donations to the AIIA to support its work, originated in early 2009. Dr John Monfries, a former ACT branch President, very generously donated $500 in the 08/09 financial year. I am delighted to advise that two donations of $200 each were also received from members during the period of this report. These donors were Dr Auriol Weigold and myself. This money has been used to improve facilities for members. AIIA member contributions nationally exceeded $34,000 during this past year, most donors being members in Victoria. I commend this program as a way that members can contribute to the financial well-being of the branch generally, or to specific branch needs if they wish.

Council, National Office and Others. In conclusion, I would like to thank the national CEO, Melissa Conley Tyler, her deputy John Robbins, and the many national interns who have also assisted in various ways during the year. My sincere thanks also to those Council members not mentioned above – our two former Treasurers, Alan Barden and Merlin Kong, our out-going Treasurer Sid Chakrabarti, and Councillors Alan Edwards, Paul Gallagher, Bob Lowry, Catriona Murray, Tessa Scrine and John Sullivan for their contribution to our work. And finally, my sincere thanks to you, our members, for your continuing support and encouragement.

Ian Dudgeon
President, AIIA ACT Branch
18 August 2010