



**Australian Institute of International Affairs, Victoria**  
**Promoting Understanding of International Issues**

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## AIA Victoria Newsletter

### March 2018

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Dear AIA Members and Supporters,

We welcome you back to our year of interest, uncertainty and surprising events. We aim to maintain our objective of providing stimulating talks, thought-provoking meetings, unique Study Tours and witnessing the events of the world in 2018.

2017 was a year of upheavals and surprise:

- Former reality TV star and billionaire Donald Trump took hold of the White House
- An upstart called Macron won the French Election
- The divorce proceedings of Brexit became intensified
- Further evidence of Russia's interference in global politics came to light
- President Xi Jinping reinvigorated China's ambitions to dominate global trade and
- Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump compared big red buttons.

So, what lies ahead for 2018?

As Sir Nigel Broomfield's talk on 14 February made clear, the dawning of the New Year brought with it the question of not whether uncertainty will continue to abound in 2018, but how much.



*Sir Nigel Broomfield making a point*

We have already hosted five stellar speakers in February. For those unable to attend, two were under the Chatham House Rule, and as such cannot be discussed. The remaining three covered the Middle East, Brexit and the EU. A fortunate 412 members, guests and students attended speaker events at Dyason House in February.



*Another packed Madigan Room*

I am sure the Middle East and Brexit will come up again during the course



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of 2018. As our Executive Director Alastair Roff says, these issues are the gifts that keep on giving!

**The Chatham House Rule**

You are at liberty to use whatever information you glean from an event held under the Chatham House Rule.

**BUT**

You may not identify any organisation there, where it was held, nor the names of the speaker or anyone present.

Plans continue to ensure a robust Speaker Event Program. Ideas to expand our offerings to members are well on the way. We would like your feedback on speakers and subjects that interest ***you***, and encourage engagement with the Institute.

This year we will issue a quarterly newsletter to update our members, along with friends of the AIIA, of important events and milestones throughout the year.

The office is staffed Monday to Thursday, any time you have an enquiry, please feel free to contact Alastair Roff or Georgia Collins-Jennings during normal business hours.

**TO OUR NEW MEMBERS**

AIIA Victoria would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members. 2017 saw our active membership rise to over 500, and we're confident we'll continue to see growth in our engaged community throughout 2018.

Keep an eye out for news on our New Members evening (available shortly) as well as a Members get-together in the second half of the year. When you come to Dyason House, please introduce yourselves to me and other Council Members.

**EVENTS**

We gratefully acknowledge the ready cooperation and terrific support we always receive from the DFAT Victorian State Office (VSO). We are fortunate to be able to host regular talks by DFAT's Heads of Mission as they pass through Melbourne, and who generously give of their time to brief us on their areas of responsibility.

We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback for AIIA VIC council member Richard Iron's "In Conversation" series, and are looking to continue this program in 2018.

And on 15 March, the Young Professionals Forum (YPF) will be running an interactive Hypothetical on *Confronting a Regional Crisis* in conjunction with ANU's Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs.



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Further events in the pipeline include Chatham House Rule briefings by Australia's Ambassadors to Qatar and Germany; a dialogue on the role of the foreign correspondent between acclaimed journalists Michael Bachelard and Lindsay Murdoch, and a book launch marking 60 years since the cessation of British nuclear testing in the Pacific.

We acknowledge the challenges some of our members have been experiencing with accessing the online membership portal and thank them for their patience. This is a national issue and everybody at AIIA is hard at work on a timely solution.

### **ANNUAL EVENTS**

Each year we hold the **International Careers Conference**. It is supported by the kind sponsorship of La Trobe University and the National Security College at ANU. This year it will be held on Friday August 31<sup>st</sup>, again at the Arts Centre. Please watch our website and spread the word to all those young people who may be interested!

Later this year, probably in October, we will host the **Sir Zelman Cowen Oration**, held in his honour and in the presence of Lady Cowen.

Visit our [website](#) for details of all forthcoming events

### **VALE**

The Council was saddened to learn of the death of Bill Fenner on 21 August 2017, aged 95. Bill was a generous donor, and a regular attendee at Dyason House, until he was no longer able to travel in to the city. His passion for the Institute, and his encouragement of our younger members was particularly valued. He will be missed.

### **Walter Mangold Trust Fund**

We are very pleased to announce the continuation of the Walter Mangold Trust Fund student subsidy initiative in 2018. Thanks to their generosity, all student members can attend any regular Dyason House events free of charge. They also support Interns on Study Tours and attendances at the National Conference in Canberra.

These opportunities provided to the future leaders of our international communities would not be possible without the generosity and support of the Walter Mangold Trust Fund.

### **Dyason House**

Dyason House is a wonderful asset to the Institute, but essential maintenance is required periodically to preserve our historic building. We will soon announce an appeal for a building fund to raise \$20,000. The safety and comfort of our members is paramount and the current aged air-conditioning units in the Madigan Room (lecture room), are unable to



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keep up with the hot weather. We are seeking to upgrade our air conditioning. Additionally maintenance of the roof and guttering can no longer be postponed. Any donations to support this endeavour, however small, will be greatly appreciated.

*“Many a mickle makes a muckle”*  
(Old Scottish proverb!)

If you would like to support AIIA Victoria, we can now accept donations securely online (donations can be made [here](#)). **As a registered charity all donations made to AIIA Victoria are tax-deductible.**

#### **FURTHER PLANS FOR 2018**

We will be conducting a Members' Survey in May to garner your thoughts and comments about AIIA Victoria, so we can continue to improve our offering to you.

In 2017, our volunteers and interns were hard at work expanding our social media and online presence. In 2018, we plan to expand our reach even further, and create a more connected community.

As part of our initiative to produce exciting content, an AIIA Victoria Podcast is currently in development. The podcast will follow a concise conversational format, with most expected to not exceed thirty minutes. It is hoped that podcasts will give our members access to even more influential speakers, who otherwise could not make it to Dyason House.

#### **STUDY TOURS**

##### **Jordan & Israel**

Due to the perception of rising volatility in the region, a decision was reluctantly made to postpone the study tour planned for Jordan and Israel in March 2018, until a later date. It is hoped that a tour may still be possible in 2019.



*Iran Traffic infringement notice*

##### **Iran**

On a positive note, after the success of last year's tour, we are looking forward to returning to Iran in April 2018. We are grateful to H.E. Mr Abdolhossein Vahaji, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his support, as well as for the great assistance provided by H.E. Mr Ian Biggs and his team in Tehran. The 18 participants on the Study Tour are preparing for departure; meetings have been arranged in Tehran, and the Memorandum of Understanding with IPIS is agreed and ready for signing on our arrival.



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*Isfahan*

We will be visiting a number of organisations as well as seeing some of Iran's wonderful UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

It is also a wonderful place to buy carpets. Last year our study Tour Group featured well in the Isfahan Bazaar!



*Welcome to Iran. Home of the carpets!  
Here is your new carpet*

### **Future Study Tours**

In recent years we have recently had very pleasurable and informative Study Tours to Iran, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam and China. It is most important that we receive feedback from you on ideas for Study Tours in the future. We will be covering this in our May survey. Suggestions have been made for the following:

### **Timor Leste**

October 2018 led by Peter McMullin who knows Timor Leste very well. It will be post the May elections and prove most interesting.

### **Oman and UAE**

Oman and the UAE are being looked at as destinations in early 2019

### **Indonesia**

We have had preliminary discussions with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about a Study Tour in late 2019

### **Taiwan**

A Study Tour to Taiwan in late 2019, ahead of likely Presidential elections in January 2020, is under consideration

### **Your feedback!**

What is most important to us is your feedback on your preferences. Please contact [Patrick Moore](#) for information on these destinations, and suggestions for others. Study Tours aim to provide opportunities for members to attend an intensive 14-18 day trip each year, and we are hoping to organise a shorter tour closer to home in the future.

### **Thank You**

I wish to thank all Members and others who make all our efforts worthwhile. Your support gives us the confidence to strive on your behalf for more and more interesting functions. And thank you to all Volunteers who make it possible.

**Patrick Moore**, President AIIA Victoria