**End of Year Message**

Our country has much to be proud of as a difficult year ends and a problematic 2021 looms. Our authorities have handled the Covid crisis skillfully and our people have responded with cooperation and patience. Comparable countries have struggled, with tragic outcomes.

One of the sad features of the Covid travel restrictions is the effect they have had on meaningful international interaction. As we find in our daily lives, “Zoom” and its analogues are useful, but much is missed in the non-verbal aspects of interpersonal relations and consequently in productive outcomes of negotiations.

As a new year begins, you may like to recall our activities during 2020.

* Our program began with an address on 18 February by eminent journalist Peter Hartcher on the issues facing Australia in the year ahead in managing its relations with China.
* Veteran journalist Paul Kelly addressed us on climate policy on 25 February, accompanied by the presentation of his award as a Fellow of the Institute.
* Irish Consul-General in Sydney Owen Feeney addressed us on Ireland, Brexit and the EU on 3 March.
* On 10 March defence analyst Brian Toohey spoke on his September 2018 book *Secret: The Making of Australia’s Security State*.
* We hosted a joint meeting with the Australia-Malaysia Business Council on 12 March, addressed by ASEAN economics expert Greg Earl.
* On 17 March Emeritus Professor John Wong (Sydney University) spoke on “Hong Kong 1841-2019: from a barren rock to a barren rock”.

Summaries of these addresses were published on the News page of our website.

We were scheduled to hear Dr Adam Kamradt-Scott of Sydney University, academic-in-residence at the Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security, speak about the corona virus on 7 April, but by that time our usual live events had become impossible under Covid safety provisions. Instead, Dr Kamradt-Scott address a webinar hosted by AIIA Victoria, made available on line to our members and subscribers.

Throughout the remainder of the 2020, we issued a weekly on-line publication, *Columns from Glover Cottages*, in which councillors and interns recommended and introduced articles, broadcasts and other publications of interest on international issues. *Columns* has reached our members and subscribers and a wider Australian and international audience. For our last two issues for the year, we moved to a different format in which councillors nominated the major items that had particularly stirred their interest during the past year.

Particular thanks are due to the editors of *Columns*, Alexander McManis and Euan Moyle, who joined the Council at the end of 2019. They have created an original, lively publication covering a comprehensive range of international issues.

We conducted our first event prepared for broadcast via the Institute's website on 29 September. The occasion was our 2020 interns’ debate; their subject was the balance in government expenditure between defence and foreign relations. A summary was included in News, and [the debate](https://internationalaffairs.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0e9feb1606f1b4129a8b65828&id=8e99eb5a93&e=4cc02d736b) can be viewed on the Institute’s YouTube channel.

We hosted an [on-line careers evening via Zoom](https://internationalaffairs.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0e9feb1606f1b4129a8b65828&id=090b6f563b&e=4cc02d736b) on 12 October which attracted substantial sign-up numbers. On 1 December we conducted a further event prepared for broadcast, in this case our interns’ presentations on international issues of their choice.

On 9 December we conducted a mixed event prepared for broadcast and simultaneously transmitted via Zoom, addressed by James Curran, Professor of Modern History at Sydney University. His focus was on the dangers of a confrontational approach to China. His address will be available soon on the AIIA YouTube channel.

On 15 December, we conducted our final event for the year, a panel discussion broadcast by Zoom addressing Australia's challenges in the world of 2021. Panellists were Geoff Miller AO FAIIA, Professor Jocelyn Chey AM FAIIA, and Dr Jonathan Symons, global climate politics analyst at Macquarie University. The text of Geoff Miller’s opening address can be viewed here:
<https://johnmenadue.com/the-world-after-2020/>

We have deeply appreciated the support of our members and subscribers during this past year, including a generous series of membership renewals despite the suspension of our traditional live events, with all the pleasures of interpersonal contact that they provide.

It will be great to see you all again at our events if we’re able to reinstate them in the months ahead, and to welcome you online to events broadcast by Zoom and on the AIIA YouTube site.

With very best wishes for the year ahead,

Ian Lincoln
President
Australian Institute of International Affairs NSW