**AIIA Tasmanian Branch President’s Report 2024**

The period covered in this report—November 2023 to October 2024—has been another significant time for AIIA in Tasmania.

Again we have celebrated a number of events with notable and diverse speakers and themes ranging from climate change to international broadcasting, from events in Europe and Asia to the deaths of journalists in war zones, especially Gaza and Ukraine. And highlights are yet to come in the remainder of the year, with the Plimsoll Lecture with Foreign Minister Hon Penny Wong, the Government House Lecture with ASIO Director General Mike Burgess, and events related to the US Presidential elections and Antarctica.

We have also enjoyed maintaining old partnerships and celebrating new ones. We have shared events with Friends of the ABC, the Friends of Palestine Group, IMAS and the Law Faculty at the University of Tasmania, the Alumni Office and the local office of DFAT.

Last year’s Government House lecture, with former Government Minister and US Ambassador to the US, Hon Arthur Sinodinos, was an excellent finale to a busy year. Arthur was an engrossing speaker taking us, among other places, behind the scenes of Trump’s America.

The calendar year started with two lunchtime events, one on democracy in Poland, and the other on the experiences of a Muslim woman MP in Malaysia. These were followed by a joint evening event with IMAS on Antarctica and the future of the Antarctic treaty.

One of the highlights in March was *Dying to Tell the Story*, a presentation by former foreign correspondent Peter Greste on the deaths and injuries of journalists in war zones. This event was co-sponsored by Friends of Palestine and included a summary of the international law pertaining to journalists in war zones by our own Prof Tim McCormack. Members will also remember Peter’s Government House Lecture a few years ago on his time imprisoned in Egypt; Peter’s book *The Correspondent,* has been made into a movie and we are hoping to have a special showing of it in Hobart early next year, with Peter as commentator.

Another highlight was our event focussing on East Timor, and the specialist aid support coming from Tasmania, with eye specialist and East Timor Consul Dr Nitin Verma, and agricultural adviser Dick Warner.

Events following these keynote talks included topics as diverse as climate change, international broadcasting, AUKUS, challenges for the EU, and policies underpinning Australian trade.

I was also fortunate to attend lunches with the Japanese Ambassador to Australia and the British Consul General, so AIIA is high on those diplomatic agendas.

A full list of events is attached.

This year we moved from our joint events with the College of Arts, Law and Education (CALE) at the University to a wider set of relationships. We have tended to focus on in-person events, with some drinks and nibbles beforehand and a chance for members and guests to meet and talk. Most of these events (with the consent of the speakers of course) are recorded and forwarded to the AIIA National Office YouTube channel. Venues are usually at the University (thanks to the Vice Chancellor for that support), and we have found the Law theatres usually the most accessible.

We have been acutely aware that the financial challenges of meeting the costs of bringing high quality speakers to Tasmania are far more substantial than previous years. We don’t pay speaker fees but do usually meet the costs of air fares and overnight accommodation; no need to expand on how much both of those have increased!! As we plan for next year we have to juggle those costs and the state of our budget, which is why this year we are asking for a modest increase in member subscriptions.

This will be my last annual report as President of the Tasmanian branch of AIIA, a position which has proved enormously fulfilling. As many of you know, this has been a really difficult year for me and the significant support I have received from my Council colleagues has been truly wonderful. The AIIA Council in Tasmania has again demonstrated how supportive, talented and enthusiastic they are. They are a great team; they step up and fill gaps in managing our affairs (in spite of their own personal challenges) as seamlessly as our challenging IT platform allows and they serve our members brilliantly. Thanks to them, and to you, our members.

Kim Boyer

October 2024