**AIIA Tasmanian Branch President’s Report 2023**

The period covered in this report—November 2022 to October 2023—has been a significant time for AIIA in Tasmania.

No fewer than four AIIA Fellowships—the highest award bestowed by AIIA—were presented in Tasmania in that period. The first was to Hon Warwick Smith at the Government House lecture in November, the second to our new AIIA National President Heather Smith at the Plimsoll lecture later that month, and the third was in February this year to Nick Warner, one of Australia’s former top diplomats and security gurus. Finally, the fourth Fellowship was awarded in March to our own Prof Tony Press, whose expertise on Antarctica and the complexities of Antarctic treaty implications is recognised internationally.

For our State this fine set of awards, and their chosen presentation venue of Tasmania, demonstrated the high quality and expertise of speakers we host at our events, and how they value Tasmanian input.

While it was excellent to host both then national president Allan Gyngell and Vice President Zara Kimpton at Government House, in retrospect it was a bitter sweet moment as, soon after, Allan was diagnosed with cancer and died earlier this year. His death leaves a large gap in the quality of policy analysis and discussion of Australian foreign affairs. Allan was a huge supporter of the Tasmanian branch and frequently highlighted the value of Tasmanian perspectives and experiences on the national stage.

The calendar year started with a flourish when we hosted Nick Warner in an informal Chatham House discussion of Australia’s role in the world and the importance of sorting the tangle of diplomatic, defence and security arrangements internally and externally and covered topics as diverse as the Malaysian election, climate change economics former Tasmania Premier Will Hodgman on his role as High Commissioner in Singapore and a ‘behind the scenes’ exploration of the International Court of Criminal Justice through the eyes of legal adviser Prof Tim McCormack. And this year’s Plimsoll Lecture with Prof Sean Turnell, released earlier this year after more than 12 months as a political prisoner in Myanmar was a wonderful and informative occasion.

A full list of events is attached, together with proposed events for the remainder of the year, noting especially Hon Arthur Sinodinos at the prestigious annual Government House lecture.

This year has been our second in hosting up to four joint events with the College of Arts, Law and Education (CALE) at the University. Apart from those events (which are hybrid online and in person events), 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 have varied between the University, the RYCT and CCAMLR. We continue to explore venues which are suitable for our events and members, together with present and potential partnerships to enrich and diversify our speaker pool.

In planning for 2024 we are 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 based primarily on member subscription. (As a footnote our National Vice President Zara Kimpton has been very generous in supporting the Tasmanian branch in meeting national communication costs over the past three years, but we realise that support cannot continue)

We have been happy in sharing old and new partnerships in 2023: as well as with CALE we work closely with DFAT (thanks to Tim Ault, his replacement Ruth Baird, and Elisa Cusick), IMAS (thanks to Tony Press and Marcus Haward), the International Law Discussion Group (thanks to Bruno Arpi and Cleo Hansen-Lohrey) , the Law Faculty and the Alumni Office. We hope to spread our wings further next year.

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 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 5 2023