
ANI President's 2022 Annual Report



The financial position of the ANI remains solid. As we came out of the COVID-19 restrictions the Council has tried to return to the core tempo of activities as well as looking new ways to be remain relevant.

This year the highlights have been:

- The release of the 2022-2026 ANI Strategy. This is available at our website. You may recall we brought forward a new strategy one year ahead of schedule because our targets had largely been met.
- The staging of a very successful annual dinner in which Professor William Maley gave the Oration and Mr Jim Cuthill from BAE won the McNeil Prize. This was despite many people contracting COVID in the days leading up to the event. My thanks to the ADFA midshipmen who attended at short notice.
- The awarding of the first Commodore Sam Bateman Book Prize and delivering of the Book Prize Lecture.
- In regard to other prizes we continue to give prizes to New Entry Officer graduates at the Naval College. We now give a complementary 1-year membership to the winner of the new Rupert Long Prize for Maritime Intelligence Officers.
- The creation of the *Saltwater Strategist* podcast series under the leadership of Commander Jen Parker. We will release our 6th episode before the end of the year. It is available on most podcast apps and I commend it to you. The commencement of this podcast series was delayed in starting up and this in part accounts for the operating surplus for the last FY.
- In the 2021-22 FY, the staging of the Goldrick Webinar on *Perspectives on Future Maritime Operations*. On 21 September 2022 the ANI in concert with the University of NSW (Canberra), the Australian Defence Force Academy, the Australian National Centre for Oceans Resources and Security (ANCORS) and the Seapower Centre Australia held the Goldrick Conference on *Indo-Pacific Maritime Strategic in the 21st Century*.
- Soon after becoming Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Hammond asked the ANI if it could update the report on *Protecting Australian Maritime Trade* that arose from the 2019 Goldrick Seminar. This we promptly did and this was feed into the current Defence Review.

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- The *Australian Naval Review* continues to grow in stature and we have two editions this year. My thanks to the editor Ben Page and his advisory panel. Next year we will have a joint Australian-Canadian edition in partnership with *Canadian Naval Review*. The latter journal is published by the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government at St. Francis Xavier University. Both Chiefs of Navy will be providing articles.
 - In regard to our work with other kindred organisations, I can announce I have signed a MOU with the WA Defence Review to work on activities of shared benefit and in the past year we have worked with ANCORS, the University of NSW Canberra, the Seapower Centre and the Fleet Air Arm Association. We have also been in discussion with the British Naval Review on ways to better work together.
 - Perhaps our flagship activity is the ANI website and weekly newsletter. The work of Richard Hart in updating the website and Crispin Hull who compiles the newsletter and articles is most praiseworthy. Crispin is ably supported by Desmond Woods and other councillors in sourcing and writing articles of interest. Some figures are:
 - Over the past year the ANI website has published 781 articles and the usual e-newsletter each week with summaries and links to all the new articles published in the previous week.
 - The newsletter goes to 1600 website subscribers.
 - Much has happened in the military, defence and security fields over the past year. The ANI website has obviously concentrated on maritime and naval issues, but articles on the overall security environment have also appeared. The main themes have been:
 - AUKUS and the development of a nuclear submarine capability for Australia.
 - The Russian invasion of Ukraine, especially the maritime and naval aspects.
 - The rise of Chinese maritime influence and the democracies' response to it.
 - Australian defence posture, especially the review and the shipbuilding program.
 - Weapons and technology advances.
 - ANI and other naval events.
 - Naval history. Book reviews.
 - As a general rule we have about 15 new articles a week. This ensures we maintain relevance and quality and avoid information overload and its associated turn-off factor. The strategy seems to be working as our unsubscribe rate is extremely low.
 - Since migrating from print via the quarterly *Headmark* publication to publishing on the website eight years ago, the ANI has published more than 4,000 articles and the website has developed into a major research resource on naval matters.
 - The website attracts overseas attention, with 15% of hits coming from the US; 6% each coming from UK and India; and about 3% each from Canada and New Zealand.
 - We have continued to exploit the power of social media to provide a forum for maritime matters. As you know the platforms attract different demographic groups and we have Councillors who are active on the major ones. We grow our presence. Some recent stats are;
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- Facebook
 - Twitter – we have 840 followers
 - LinkedIn – we have doubled our followers from 841 to 1649 in the last year. We have made 160 posts which have received 194,00 views with 3,130 reactions, 260 comments & 272 comments. The most popular were:
 - CN handover – 29k views
 - Instagram – 10
 - Membership continues to grow. In 2016 we had 246 members. By the beginning of 2021-22 FY it had grown to 324. At the end of the FY grew further to 363. As of the end of October it is 381. Our target for the current Strategic Plan is 500. The increase continues to be largely underpinned by our events.
 - Our corporate sponsors continue to grow. In the last financial year BAE Australia became a sponsor. Already in this FY we have been joined by Adroitia and the Australian Missile Corporation. As you will know we have a tiered level of sponsorship. The current state is as follows:
 - **Platinum**
 - BAE Systems – who sponsor the new Saltwater Strategist podcast series
 - Lockheed Martin Australia who sponsor the Annual Dinner, Vernon Parker Oration and the McNeil Prize.
 - Thales Australia – who sponsors the Goldrick Series.
 - **Gold**
 - Team Downer
 - Navantia Australia
 - **Silver**
 - Adroitia – who augmented the sponsorship of the 2023 Goldrick Conference.
 - Austal
 - Australian Missile Corporation – who augmented the sponsorship of the 2023 Goldrick Conference.
 - CAE – who recently sponsored the Fleet Air Arm Seminar.
 - CEA
 - QintetiQ
 - Saab
 - **Bronze**
 - Boeing
 - Serco

The strong support of our sponsors has been fundamental to the ANI expanding its activities.

This leads me to our other planned activities in 2023. They are:

- **ANI Annual Dinner.** I am delighted to announce to you that the 2023 Vernon Parker Orator will be Her Excellency Dame Annette King, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia. The dinner will be held on 20 June next year.
- **ANI Scholar.**
 - As mentioned at last year's AGM the Council is investigating the creation of an ANI Scholarship to progress the study and understanding of Australian naval affairs.
 - The ANI Scholar would be studying at the Australian National Centre for Oceans Resources and Security at the University of Wollongong.
 - Our thinking is that we would still keep the equivalent of two years of operating funds in liquid reserves. We would therefore anticipate investing \$90,000 to \$100,000 to be invested to fund the ANI Scholar. This may seem like a large investment but we anticipate the ANI Scholar will deliver a significant contribution to maritime discussion and we will explore options to ensure that we receive regular updates to the Council from the successful
 - The original timeframe was that we would further develop the proposal in the first half of 2022 and that includes providing opportunities in that time for members to provide input. The aim would be for the first ANI Scholar to be in 2025 to coincide with the ANI's 50th Anniversary. We are delayed for two reasons the first has been the recent turmoil in the markets and the second is that our Treasurer has transitioned from the Navy to PWC and felt there was a conflict of interest in taking the lead for this initiative. We will seek another suitably qualified Counsellor to lead on this initiative.
 - The ANI will commence award of a prize to the senior sailors development course as a means of broadening our reach to current serving members. This will see the ANI award up to six courses per year around Australia of the senior sailor assessed to be providing the most impactful delivery of thought on naval matters during their staff development. A further pathway is being developed for a similar award at the twice yearly Lieutenant Commander Promotion Course held in Canberra each year.
- **ANI 50th Anniversary.** The Council has formed a team to lead the 50th Anniversary initiatives and will seek participation by members. You will hear more of this in the New Year.

Council

I would like to thank all the members of the ANI Council for their contribution to the ANI's output. As mentioned it has been a challenging year particularly in the staging of the Goldrick Conference. Each AGM is an opportunity to renew the Council. I would like to thank the outgoing members for their support to me and the ANI. In particular I would like to acknowledge the service of Commodore Allison Norris who has been the Vice President since 2018.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of Sue Hart and Richard Hart at Commerce Management Services in ensuring the crucial administration and organisation is undertaken in a most professional way.