

ANI President's Report to 2020 AGM

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for virtually attending the 2020 Annual General Meeting. Your support is greatly appreciated.

As the Treasurer will report, despite COVI-19 the financial position of the ANI remains solid. The Council has tried with varying degrees of success to keep apace with the COVID-19 restrictions. The ANI, like other organisations, have had to adapt to the conditions of a pandemic. This year the highlights have been:

- The publication of the Report on the *Importance of Maritime Trade to Australia*. This was well received and has set a template for future seminar proceedings. Unfortunately the event to launch the report by CN had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The launch of the new ANI website with its improved functionality and easier access to information. As part of this improvement we now have an affiliation with Booktopia, so anyone who reads a review and orders the book through the ANI hyper-link, allows the ANI to obtain a commission. This year we have posted 700 items totalling over 400,000 words. As fore-shadowed at the previous AGM we have used some of our savings to develop this much improved website. I would like to acknowledge the work of the web designer Daryl Butler, supported by Sue and Richard Hart, Crispin Hull, Desmond Woods and Tim Coyle in bringing the new website to fruition.
- The publication this year of one, and soon to be joined by a second edition of the *Australian Naval Review* for the year. This second *Australian Naval Review* will be the biggest issue to date and has articles from a wide base (industry, academia, Navy and friends of the Institute) and around the world (Russia, US, NZ, Australia). I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Guy Blackburn and Ben Page in stewarding the *ANR* forward.
- The conducting of the ANI's first webinars. On 17 October Desmond Woods did the first one on the *War in the Pacific during World War I*. The Indian Navy asked Desmond to repeat the webinar and he gave it to over 800 junior and senior naval officers as part of their Dilli Seapower Series.
- Based on that experience and because of the COVID restrictions, the ANI transitioned the Goldrick Seminar to the Goldrick Webinar series of eight webinars. Typically, around 60+ people joined each webinar with around 500 viewers for the series. These people were from around Australia and overseas. In addition the video of the webinars was watched by a growing audience.
- The decision to make all ANI webinars complimentary for ANI members has led to an increase in the ANI's membership for the second year running. We are now just about 300 members which is the goal in our Strategic Plan.

It was disappointing we had to cancel the 2020 Vernon Parker Oration. Our planned speaker Sir Peter Cosgrove was very flexible as we tried to reschedule, but then we gave up trying to hold the event

when the second COVID wave occurred. We hope Sir Peter will be able to give the 2021 Oration. There will be much ground for him to cover.

Pleasingly, the 2020 McNeil Prize winner has been selected and will be announced on Wednesday 2 December. This will be via a webinar-style event with details to follow.

Looking to 2021 I would like to flag the following initiatives we have in train:

- The ANI wants to have a regular webinar series throughout the year on diverse topics.
- In concert with this we want to investigate producing a contemporary naval affairs podcast series.
- We will create an ANI Book Award to recognise excellence in writing on naval and maritime affairs. This is part of the ANI's effort to encourage writing on maritime affairs. It will be awarded at the end of each year and be named the 'Commodore Sam Bateman Book Award' in memory of one of our Foundation Year members the late Commodore Sam Bateman. Our thanks to the Bateman family for agreeing to this initiative.

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 and required a degree of innovation. 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. It has been a pleasure working with you. I particularly like to acknowledge the retirement of the former ANI Vice President Rear Admiral Lee Goddard who will be taking up a position in Sydney in January with the Minderoo Foundation. We wish him well.

Our activities are underpinned in large measure by support from our sponsors. I would like to acknowledge:

- **At the Platinum Level.** Naval Shipbuilding College, Lockheed Martin Australia and new this year – Thales Australia.
- **Silver Sponsors.** Austal, CAE, Qinetiq, Saab & Viasat
- **Corporate Sponsors.** Boeing, CEA Technologies & Navantia.

Our sponsors have shown flexibility and great understanding as we have had to deliver a different output during this CIVID year.

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.