InASA AGM: Friday 9th December, 2016

**President’s Report**

In my 2013 report I noted that ‘it would be good to see a broader cross-section of delegates at conferences’, and that there were perhaps opportunities to build stronger links with our fellow associations elsewhere. Although these things take time, it’s very pleasing that to a large extent we have achieved this. Our 2014 conference in Hobart had delegates from Austria, China, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, New Zealand and the UK. The 2016 conference where we are now is similarly diverse. We have forged stronger links with EASA, and with the National Australian Studies Association in China, as well as with cognate associations such as ASAL. While our links with fellow and cognate associations might wax and wane—for they require constant maintenance and everyone is busy—our strength is in our membership, and the continued quality of the *Journal of Australian Studies*.

**Membership**

Our financial position (which is largely derived from our journal royalties supplemented by memberships), coupled with the success of the Western Australian conference in attracting a large number of delegates, has enabled the trialling of 2 year instead of annual memberships. (We looked into the possibility of doing this in early 2014 but we were unable to resource the trial at that stage). Membership will now effectively run from conference to conference. This obviously puts pressure on future conference convenors to do their utmost to ensure that conferences are well attended. While the association is subsidising this first round of 2 year memberships (the standard annual fee is granting a 2 year membership), the incoming committee will need to consider setting the membership fees that will take effect for 2019 – 2020 memberships, taking into account that conference registration fees need to be kept as low as possible. The introduction of a postgraduate / unwaged membership fee should also form part of this discussion. Among other things, the move to 2 year memberships reduces considerably the administrative burden (and the ensuing frustration) of annual renewals, will hopefully see more members returning to our biannual conferences, and lead to a more stable membership base.

**Peter Lang Australian Studies Series**

Our agreement to work with Peter Lang in administering an Australian Studies series followed lengthy and ongoing discussions among the executive and a great deal of correspondence (and negotiation) between Anne Brewster who agreed to be the series inaugural editor, and Peter Lang. This initiative, and there are flyers in the conference packs alerting delegates to it, has attracted a number of quality proposals, both domestically and internationally, and three contracts have been signed (from around 12 proposals). Many thanks to Anne for all her work leading to the introduction of the series and her ongoing work to ensure its success.

**Travel Bursaries**

Our financial position has allowed us to introduce travel bursaries to support HDR candidates to attend our conferences. Although agreed to in 2015 the first applications were in 2016, and we were very pleased by the high standard of applications. So high in fact that the executive supported a recommendation from the committee assessing the applications to increase the number of bursaries awarded from four to six. The recipients are matched with a mentor to assist them preparing their conference paper for a journal article, and the *Journal of Australian Studies* has first right of consideration. Many thanks to the members who are acting as mentors.

**National Australian Studies in China Association (NASCA)**

NASCA has biannual conferences in early July in even numbered years, and this year’s conference was at Peking University. A Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC) conference was held in early November at Sun Yat-sen university, Guangzhou, and InASA members attended both conferences. For four years InASA has been in discussions with the national association concerning developing a reciprocal relationship between our respective associations. At the FASIC conference I met with key members of the association’s executive and an in-principle agreement to collaborate was reached. In short we agreed to the following introductory initiative (as agreed to by the executive when these discussions first commenced). Each association will host a reserved panel session for our respective associations at our conferences. These panels will ideally include one postgrad, a senior scholar, and one other. The proposal is that the ‘visiting’ association would form a panel addressing the conference theme, and that panel would have a single 1.5 hour slot for the three papers, with the panel chaired by a member of the executive of the host association. It is not necessary for the papers in each panel to be cognate, but that they do address the conference theme in some way. InASA and NASCA will jointly submit a funding application to FASIC to assist with airfares, especially for the two postgraduate candidates.

**Bi-Annual Conferences**

To date the process of selecting the convenor and host location for our bi-annual conferences has been a little ad hoc. The executive recognised the need for the process to be a little more structured, and an ‘expression of interest’ form was developed to assist InASA in reaching a decision. We now require intending convenors to provide some basic information (while recognising its indicative nature):

* Expected degree of Institutional Support: eg, contributory funding and ancillary support; whether or not there will be charges for space, room hire, IT provision, etc; administrative support.
* Potential collaborators attached to the university, eg. research centres, institutes etc.
* Size of HDR pool from which to draw?
* Anticipated number of delegates?
* Other relevant information?

***Journal of Australian Studies***

Please see the editors’ report. I note again here however that *JAS* is the flagship of the association. I thank the journal’s editors Maggie Nolan and Julie Kimber; the reviews editor Nell Musgrove; and the copyeditor Michael Lefcourt, all of whom have not only ensured the continued quality of the journal, but whose initiatives have substantially raised the journal’s profile.

**Barrett Prize**

This prize is administered by InASA from a bequest held by La Trobe University, and it is awarded to the best article appearing in the *Journal of Australian Studies* in each calendar year. There is an open and a postgraduate category. A panel of three judges is convened each year for the judging. The prize is important not only for the recognition it brings the recipients, but also for the increased exposure it brings to the journal, and our association. Many thanks to Amanda Nettelbeck who coordinated / chaired the judging panel for the 2015 prize. During 2016 the executive approved the granting of membership as an honorarium to the judging panel each year, and this has been implemented.

**Website**

Julie Kimber has again done much work on tailoring our website, and in addressing longstanding problems. I thank Julie very much for all this work. Kiera Lindsey has kept it up-to-date with regular postings, and I thank her very much for this too.

**Executive**

The executive convened three times throughout the year, and handled many more day-to-day issues by circular. Again I thank the executive for their input and advice, goodwill and the forbearance to withstand the difficulties of long meetings conducted via teleconference calls. I also thank the executive for their prompt consideration and response to issues raised by circular. The executive play a vital role in any association, and the InASA executive have taken their role seriously and contributed accordingly. The office holders have provided considerable support; many thanks to Kate Darian-Smith (Vice President), Kiera Lindsey (Secretary), and Carol Pybus (Treasurer) for their contribution and assistance throughout the year.

Mitchell Rolls, InASA President