President’s Column

by Stephen Connelly,
IEAA President

While the hard data is still to be analysed, early indications are that the program offered at the 25th Australian International Education Conference was as well received as in any previous year. International delegates have been fulsome in their praise, noting the particularly Australian slant on international education in discussions regarding for example what internationalisation means for us and our approach to relations in our region. If this is to be the Asian century, the tyranny of distance will be reversed.

Highlights for me at the conference were the welcome and opening plenary speakers, Feyi Akindoyeni and Michael Kirby, and the fact that we were able to attract both the state and federal Ministers for higher education, the Hon Jack Snelling MP and the Hon Chris Evans MP, to speak. Senator Evans’ address was of particular interest given the release of the Michael Knight recommendations, and while there is a lot of work to do to implement the recommendations, and still a lot of uncertainty, there is plenty of upside for international education in Australia arising from the outcomes of the review. Congratulations go to the AIEC organising committee which as usual did an amazing job putting the program together and making sure the conference ran as planned.

As if the Knight review wasn’t enough good news, the recent announcement that states and territories are to review transport concessions for students across the country is even more remarkable, given the hitherto intransigence of the NSW and Victorian governments in regard to international students.

Following the election for the IEAA board, two members have departed. Seamus Fagan has been a long standing board member and contributor to IEAA, including sub-committees and professional development work. His perspective and advice have always been appreciated and have helped to shape IEAA approach to public policy and debate in many ways. I thank him for his contribution, and we hope we can continue to work with Seamus on some of the IEAA activities he has contributed to thus far. Denise Von Wald was a board member for just two years, but her contribution to and support for IEAA activities have been significant. We were particularly pleased to be in Adelaide twice this year, once for the mid-year board meeting and of course for the AIEC, and Denise’s hospitality was greatly appreciated. We anticipate Denise remaining a supporter and friend of the Association and look forward to continuing to interact with her in her role at Education Adelaide.

We also welcome back to the board Anna Ciccarelli, DVC International at the University of Queensland. Anna has been a board member and Vice President previously, and has remained in close contact with the Association over the past few years.

The balance of the board is still being finalised - members should be aware that the board has at its disposal three nominated positions which are filled in rotation to ensure a balance of sectoral and geographic representation on the board. These positions will be confirmed by the time of the upcoming board meeting in November.

Stephen Connelly