President’s Column

The end of the year is rushing towards us and it seems interest in international education continues to increase. At the Australian International Education Conference (AIEC) I said that I thought the biggest challenge facing the industry at that time was convincing Canberra there was a problem. We appear to now be at a stage where Canberra is actively engaging with industry to find solutions to current problems in international education, which is very positive. We still seem to be operating in a strategy vacuum, however, with little discussion focussing on the place of international education in our overall education system, in our economy or in society and our culture more generally. IEAA should take the lead on this last point in 2011.

Feedback from the AIEC has been very positive, and in many respects IEAA believes the conference program represented a seminal moment in our discussions about international education - in terms of its social impact, student rights, the responsibilities of sending and receiving countries and difficult topics like racism and social cohesion. It was also important in its success at engaging a broad stakeholder audience, including business and human rights groups, with new and effective alliances now in play in discussions with government about our current challenges.

Hopefully wherever you are in the industry the turmoil of the past 12 months will soon start to abate, and you can enjoy a break over the festive season.

All the best,

Stephen Connelly,
IEAA President