This edition’s President’s report is the text from a message read out at the memorial service for Tony Adams at the recent NAFSA conference.

Colleagues, I am truly sorry I can’t be with you to commemorate Tony Adams at the NAFSA conference this year. I would like to thank NAFSA for facilitating this event and AEI for supporting it. Condolence messages over the past few weeks from EAIE, AIEA and the Forum for Study Abroad have also been greatly appreciated.

I have known Tony for almost 20 years - we met when I was Academic Director of RMIT’s program at Metropolitan College in Malaysia and Tony was Dean of International Programs at RMIT. Back in 1992 I couldn’t have been greener going into that role in Malaysia, a country I had never visited previously, and Tony, as has been the case throughout his career, was a willing mentor and advisor while I lived in Malaysia and after I returned to Melbourne. He then went to Sydney to join Macquarie and I joined La Trobe University, and my interactions with him during that remarkable ten years he spent in Sydney related to some important and innovative collaborations that are well known to many - the Hobsons Enquiry Management Service and the so-called Alliance, a collaborative marketing and recruitment project of Australian universities working in Europe and Scandinavia. If Tony suggested a project, regardless of how little detail there might be, you wanted to be involved. He was an innovator and a leader. He was also the most appropriate person I can think of to have been the inaugural President of the International Education Association Australia (IEAA), an organisation that needed someone of Tony’s stature to help guide it through its early years. This means that I am in the unique position of continuing the work Tony began in my two current roles - as Deputy Vice Chancellor (International and Development) at RMIT I am keenly aware of and familiar with the important work Tony did here during the late 80s and early to mid 90s, and as the current President of IEAA, an organisation still very much finding its way being only seven years young.

When I was appointed to the role at RMIT Tony sent me an email which was probably the nicest one I received once that appointment became public knowledge. Suffice to say, because it was a private exchange, I made a point of having lunch with him in my first hundred days in the role, to pick his brains about an organisation he had known for over 20 years. History is important, and Tony is a part of RMITs history and of mine.

Shortly after the news of Tony’s passing became known, a colleague sent me a message. She wrote simply: “That is very sad. He was a mighty man.”

He was.

Stephen Connelly