AUSTRALIA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY... (continued)

body advice, including inputs from IEAA, and has adjusted elements of the strategy so that they have a better chance of success. There are hints that at last we will see better cohesion between the Commonwealth and the States through a mechanism involving a government and industry partnership that will involve all jurisdictions, and reporting at the highest levels.

IEAA has provided quite a number of ideas and practical proposals into COAG considerations and our expectation is that any future government-industry partnership would continue to use the contacts and liaison points that have helped the development of the ISS to date. Otherwise, we are likely to be back to square one. We can only hope our political masters are heeding advice on this one.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

In February the board held its first meeting for the year. Traditionally, this first meeting is the board’s strategic planning meeting, where we identify the priorities for the year. The outcomes of the meeting then become the annual work plan for the secretariat and the board.

This year we continued the theme of engaging with stakeholders, with the four key areas of focus being:

- **Members and sponsors**
- **Government and peak bodies**
- **The student experience**
- **External alliances**

The first two of these are self-explanatory. The student experience is intended to enable IEAA to deal with the lived experiences of international students onshore in Australia, picking up in particular on engaging the Australian community with international education and international students. External alliances refers to our engagement with organisations such as international education professional associations and the business community in Australia. You should see evidence of activity under all four themes throughout the year.

We enter 2010 with active Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in student mobility and marketing just getting started, renewed interest in the TNE SIG, and the ongoing activities of the Internationalisation of the Curriculum SIG and the Research Forum. The activities of the SIGs will be an important way the Association engages with members in particular.

Following face to face meetings of the board we now hold an informal function at which local IEAA members and others can interact with board members. That rarely seen event, a downpour in Melbourne, limited numbers at our function in February, but it was good to see SIG representatives in attendance. The next face to face meeting will be held in Sydney, where we will hold a similar event.

IEAA representatives have also participated in the first planning meeting for this year’s Australian International Education Conference (AIEC) which the Association jointly presents with IDP Education. Already the Conference is shaping up well, and details will start to emerge soon as the planning process gathers momentum. In conjunction with the AIEC, IEAA will host U.S. colleagues at a symposium similar to last year’s event with EAIE. Planning for that event is also just getting under way.

With the outcomes of the Baird ESOS review and the COAG International Students Strategy due over the coming months, and the issues of student safety and college closures still current, it will be a busy and challenging year for the Association, and for international education in Australia.

Stephen Connelly
President