



United Nations Association of Australia

ACT Division

**Annual Report
2006-07**

Report from the President

Russell Rollason



The last year has seen several significant events in the life of the United Nations. Kofi Annan retired as Secretary General after serving for ten years during which he provided outstanding leadership. In his farewell speech to world leaders at the UN headquarters in New York, he outlined three major problems of "an unjust world economy, world disorder, and widespread contempt for human rights and the rule of law". He went on to say that these "have not resolved, but sharpened" during his time as Secretary-General. He also pointed to violence in Africa, and the Arab-Israeli conflict as two major issues warranting attention. His successor, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon took over on 1 January 2007.

Major UN reforms initiated in 2006 include the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council in April 2006. Australia did not seek membership of the Human Rights Council but has been quite active in expressing support for the Peacebuilding Commission and in suggesting improvements to its functioning in 2006.

As ever, the UN needs people in Australia and around the world to support dynamic international cooperation and the vision of the UN Charter.

Over the past year, UNAA(ACT) has organised a wide variety of forums and other opportunities for members and others to discuss and support the work of the United Nations. Activities include:

- **May 15:** The theme of UN Reform with special guest former Australian diplomat Alison Bronowski was the focus of the Annual General Meeting in May 2006.
- **June 1:** For World Environment Day (5 June) a forum was held on "Can we weather Climate Change?" with two guest speakers: The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Heritage, and Bruce Thomas, Sustainability Manager, Asia for Swiss Reinsurance, a Member of the Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change. (Swiss Re is the second largest Insurance company in the world).
- **August 9:** "Aboriginal Customary Law: Justice or an Excuse?" was the focus for a forum on International Day for Indigenous People, 9 August. Guest speakers were George Villaflor, Aboriginal Barrister, Founding CEO of Tharpuntoo Legal Service, Cairns, serving the communities of Cape York peninsular; Aileen Blackburn, National Centre for Indigenous Studies, ANU. A graduate in Laws (ANU) and Arts (SA) Aileen is currently working on the NCIS Indigenous Community Crime Prevention project; and Maurice Walker, Chair, Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the Chief Minister of the ACT.
- **August 12:** the UNAA (ACT) planning day agreed to accept the challenge of strengthening UNAA links with Federal Parliament and work closely with National President John Langmore and National Secretary David Purnell to establish a 'Friends of the UN' in Federal Parliament. Subsequently, Bruce Baird MP and Duncan Kerr MP have agreed to act as co-convenors for the Parliamentary Group.

- **September 21:** “Peacebuilding in the South Pacific” was the focus of a forum held in cooperation with and at AusAID on the anniversary of World Day of Peace, 21 September. Speakers at the forum were:
 - Dr Bob Breen, Research Fellow, Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations Project, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU, since November 2005. Commissioned to write Volume IV Good Neighbour Operations (Peacekeeping operations in Bougainville, East Timor and the Solomon Islands);
 - Federal Agent, Kate Straker, Serving AFP Federal Agent, UN Peacekeeper in Cyprus(2003), Capacity Building in Port Moresby under the Enhanced Cooperation Program (2204-05) Capacity Building in Solomon Islands under RAMSI, currently AFP desk officer for RAMS;
 - Professor John Braithwaite, ARC Federation Fellow, Research School of Social Science, ANU, who is undertaking an ARC funded research project on 'Peace Building and Responsive Governance in Asia and the Pacific'
 - Alan March, Assistant Director General, Humanitarian Coordination and Public Affairs AusAID.
- **October 11:** Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly Mr. Wayne Berry hosted a reception to welcome the United Nations Information Centre and its Director, Mr Abdullah Mbamba to Canberra ACT.
- **October 24:** On UN Day, we were pleased to join with the Australian Federal Police and the Australian War Memorial to celebrate the contribution of Australian peacekeepers serving on UN missions with an impressive service and wreath laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. The UN Representative in Australia, Mr Abdullah Mbamba read the Secretary General’s message for UN Day.
- **November:** Julie McKay, a member of the UNAA (ACT) Executive Committee attended the World Federation of UN Associations (WUFUNA) Assembly in Buenos Aires, Argentina as UNAA’s representative. UNAA is grateful to the Oikoumene Foundation for a grant to enable Julie’s participation.
- **December 10:** “Human Rights and Refugees” was the theme for Human Rights Day, with guest speaker Mr Neill Wright OBE, Regional Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for Australia, New Zealand, PNG and the South Pacific.
- **April 11:** UNAA supported the Canberra launch by the Medical Association for Prevention of War on behalf of the international affiliate the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. The campaign was launched by Dr Kathleen Sullivan, an inspiring disarmament educator from the USA.
- **April 17:** A capacity crowd gathered to hear our new UNAA Vice Patron and High Court of Australia Judge, Justice Michael Kirby reflect on his lifelong engagement with the United Nations at the Zenyai Thai Restaurant in Canberra City. Justice Kirby delivered a warm, inspiring and entertaining address.
- **April 20:** Harold Wilkinson and Margaret Moreton represented the National UNAA at the Queen’s Birthday celebration at Government House, Yarralumla.

The people who keep the UNAA active:

UNAA (ACT) appreciates the support of several related organisations and I would like to thank the representatives of these organisations for their continuing support – particularly, UNIFEM, the Quakers, National Council of Women, Pacific SE Asia Women's Association (PSEAWA) and the ACT Baha'i Community.

The UN Youth Association (UNYA) remains very active in the ACT and we thank Shobaz Kandola the President of UNYA for his leadership and cooperation.

Due to other commitments several Committee members have been unable to participate in Executive Committee meetings and activities during the latter part of the year. These include Sarah Edson, Kate Crowe and Colin Lendon.

All have made valuable contributions and brought new energy and ideas to the UNAA over the time they have been on the Committee and I thank them on behalf of everyone.

Particular thanks go to Margaret Moreton for thorough work as Secretary, Fessehaie Abraham for his attention to detail as Treasurer and to Harold Wilkinson who has been a backbone for UNAA over many years. We have also been especially grateful for the tireless efforts of Julie McKay on behalf of UNAA.

The UNAA Office continues to provide important services to the ACT local community through the provision of a point of call on all UN related issues. A small and committed team of volunteers have staffed this office, in the middle of the day each weekday. We are grateful to Corrie Macchuta, Dorothy Albrecht, Klaus Panne, Julie McKay and Kate Crowe for their commitment and work.

UNAA (ACT) is part of the National UNAA which brings together all state and

territory divisions in Australia. UNAA President John Langmore has been active in communicating with the Australian community and the government on the key international issues that have concerned us all. On a very limited budget, John and the National Administrator David Purnell do significant work keeping the organisation active publicly and in submissions on a wide range of key topics to various bodies and enquiries.

UNAA is a member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), now headed by Australia expatriate Pera Wells. President of WFUNA is former UN Weapons Inspector for Iraq, Dr Hans Blix. Detailed information about WFUNA and other national UN Associations is available on its website: www.wfuna.org



Hans Blix and Pera Wells at the WFUNA Plenary

2007 promises to be a year of significant growth for UNAA(ACT) and we look forward to your active participation. I thank all of those who have been involved in the committee in my time as President over the past year.

Thank you for your support of the UNAA(ACT) over the past year. We greatly appreciate your support and have plans for new high profile activities in 2007.

Financial Report

Statement of Receipts and Payments – 31/12/06

	2006
	\$ Actual
RECEIPTS:	
Membership subscriptions	2,940
Donations:	340
Computer	0
UNAA Conference	0
Other	50
Interest	8
Functions:	
General	270
UN Day	0
National Conference	0
Miscellaneous	154
TOTAL RECEIPTS	3,762
PAYMENTS:	
Rent	2,108
Postage and freight	302
Telephone & Internet	516
Stationery	0
Petty cash (parking, bus tickets, volunteers)	859
Bank fees & charges	41
Functions:	
UNAA Functions	1,458
National Conference	0
Subscriptions	0
Miscellaneous	0
TOTAL PAYMENTS	5,338
CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	-1,576
CASH AT BANK - 31 December 2006	
Operating account:	2,481
Special operating account:	113
CCMT account:	10,510
TOTAL	13,104

Statement of Accumulated Funds as at 31 December 2006

	2006 \$
ACCUMULATED CASH FUNDS	19,926
at beginning of year	
Adjustment to previous year	
CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR	-1,576
Bequest interest	273
ACCUMULATED FUNDS end of year	18,623
Represented by:	
CURRENT ASSETS	
CASH AT BANK	
Operating account:	2,481
Special operating account:	113
CCMT account:	10,510
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	13,104
Half Share 1 Canon photocopier	
Less accumulated depreciation	1,500
Library stands	845
Other assets (at directors valuation 1997)	705
Computer (fair value)	2,500
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	5,550
TOTAL ASSETS	18,654

Executive Committee Members

President - Russell Rollason
Vice President - Harold Wilkinson
Treasurer - Fessehaie Abraham
Secretary - Margaret Moreton

Committee Members

Colin Lendon
Isabelle Potter
Kate Crowe
David Turbayne
Rod Holsgrove

Immediate Past President

Helen Disney

Corporate Members

David Purnell – National Administrator
Libby Lloyd – UNIFEM
Michelle Hawkins – National Council of Women
Doreen Hurst – PPSEAWA
Lettie Thompson – PPSEAWA
Faya Hayati – ACT Baha'i

UNYA Representatives

Tom Colebatch – President
Will Fitzgibbon – Secretary

Office Volunteers

Corrie Machutta
Julie McKay
Dorothy Al
Dorothy Albrecht
Cassandra Webeck
Kate Crowe
Klaus Panne

United Nations Association of Australia (ACT)

ABN 13720 340 622

GPO Box 1570

Canberra

ACT 2600

Tel: 6247 4499