

2025 NZIIA Auckland Branch AGM Minutes

Friday 30th May 2025 | 05:30-06:30pm | Kinder House (in-person)

Present: 15 branch members (no online option)

Apologies (4): *Jodi Johnston, Alexandar Murray, Christopher Tang, Jayden Sul*

1. Minute of previous AGM

No queries or additional comments.

2024's AGM Minutes have been moved and adopted by Sunil Kaushal and Gary Russell.

2. Chair's report

Chairperson Rouben Azizian shared highlights of his chair's report and gave thanks to committee members for contributions to the branch.

- Our branch has hosted 12 different events throughout 2024.
- Membership numbers for both paid members and student members have increased since last year, and as of the end of 2024 stood at 168 members.
- 2024's executive committee was comprised of 10 members (7 males, 3 females)
- Rouben has expressed thanks towards NZIIA's National Director Hamish McDougall for his continuous support for the branch, and to Francesca Long the vice chair, for her help in running the branch while the Chair was away and stepping in as acting chair.
- Rouben also expressed his thanks to Mr Boguslaw Nowak for his continuous help with organising events at AUT's Europe house. In addition, the Chair expressed his gratitude towards all other committee members for their assistance throughout the year.

Chair's report moved by Sunil Kaushal and seconded by Gary Russell

Please see Appendix A for Chair's report and further details.

Please see Appendix B for a detailed list of 2024 branch events

3. Treasurer's report

Francesca the deputy chairperson of the branch read out Treasurer Jodi Johnston's key points of our branch's financial activity for the last financial year.

- There has been a double in number of membership fees and donations in the last twelve months, which is a healthy sign for the branch in its continuous journey of rebuilding.
- Seminar and functions expenses are considerably down compared to 2023 due to lowered catering and beverage costs with the thanks of Francesca Long and Alexandar Murray.
- The ongoing challenge for the branch will be finding the right and cheaper facilities to host our upcoming events with university hiring costs increasing.

Treasurer's report moved by Francesca Long and Gary Russell

Please see Appendix C for full Treasurer's report

4. Election of New Committee

A new Committee has been elected with no objections for 2025. And most previous committee members will continue their role on the new committee. All nominated and self-nominated candidates were elected into the new committee.

We welcome Emily Watts, Jayden Sul, and Sarah Fetuani to the new committee.

Those who have shown interest to serve on the committee and are in the previous committee but were not present at the AGM have been included into the new committee.

NZIIA Auckland Branch Executive Committee 2025 (10 members):

Francesca Long- Chairperson
Rouben Azizian- Vice Chairperson
Jodi Johnston- Treasurer
Jayden Sul- Administrator
Emily Watts- Public Relations Coordinator
Boguslaw Nowak
Sarah Fetuani
Gary Russell
Sunil Kaushal
Christopher Tang

5. AOB

There will be an upcoming event on 1st June with Professor Lise Howard from Georgetown University on Ukraine. Further on the 11th June, there will be an exciting address from the former President of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski via Zoom with live viewing from the Europe House. We welcome all to join both upcoming events.

6. Closing remarks by Executive Director of NZIIA

Hamish McDougall thanked Rouben Azizian and the rest of the committee for their ongoing contributions to the branch and wishes the best for the upcoming new committee. He also shared that the organisation is doing well, with several events across the network throughout the last year, and good financial status including at the branch level.

APPENDIX A:
NZIIA Auckland Branch Report 2024

Branch Office Holders:

Chairperson: Rouben Azizian
Vice Chairperson and Administrator: Francesca Long
Treasurer: Jodi Johnston
Events Coordinator Alan Chan
Public Relations: Maria Batista

2024 was a very successful year for the Auckland Branch, with over 12 events hosted for Auckland members throughout the year on various topics ranging from addresses by the Australian and British High Commissioners, to presentations from various experts and journalists regarding AUKUS, the US elections, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The Branch's success has also been reflected by the increase in membership to 75 paid memberships (30% increase) and 93 student memberships (36% increase). Further, the branch has seen a healthy increase in financial surplus compared to 2023.

The Branch worked in close collaboration with other non-governmental organisations, such as the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, Asia New Zealand Foundation, and New Zealand US Council, participating in various expert roundtables and hosting joint events. Auckland members also gained a better understanding and closer connections with NZIIA's Board, especially after Board member Andrew Wierzbicki's presentation on the Challenges and Misconceptions of New Zealand's Defence policies. The Branch continues to foster its relationship with these different groups, and is also actively establishing new relationships and collaborations, such as with the University of Auckland's Public Policy Club.

The Branch committee, has also grown to include 15 members, with the addition of four new members, two of which are students. Throughout the year the committee worked closely together to ensure that a variety of innovative and interesting events were delivered smoothly to Auckland members. The Branch's Chair, consistently promoted NZIIA and the Branch at various events, including overseas. During the Chair's lengthy overseas trips, the Vice-Chair successfully took over the running of the Branch and organising various events. Boguslaw Nowak helped facilitate the interactions with the consular corps and AUT, while Sunil Kaushal reached out to potential expert speakers in business and trade industries. This year, with the help of Alexander Murray and Francesca Long, many of our events included refreshments and drinks for members to enjoy whilst networking which led to a more relaxed event atmosphere and larger numbers of attendees, especially students. The Branch has also contributed to the Review with the help of Maria Batista's event photographs and summaries. Gary Russell also organised and hosted some events at the Kinder House.

Throughout the year the Auckland branch has also been in close collaboration with the National Office, especially in hosting Auckland-based National Office events. As the Branch worked closely alongside Executive Director Hamish McDougall and Administrator Yvonne Palmer, Auckland members were able to hear insightful presentations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Service of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Honourable Frederick A. Mitchell, from Professor Hugh White, and from various experts around International Politics in the Pacific as a part of 2024's Pacific Symposium. We thank Executive Director Hamish McDougall for providing such opportunities for the Auckland members.

The successful year and growth of the Auckland Branch's committee have been the result of joint efforts by all Branch committee members. The committee is looking forward to working closer together in the upcoming year to provide more events, and new projects, for example, a career's panel for students.

APPENDIX B:

List of Auckland Branch NZIIA Events 2024

8-Feb *Insanity of Modern Warfare* – John Reuwer, Treasurer and a member of the board of directors of World Beyond War.

20-Feb *Two-Year Anniversary of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine* – Ambassadors and various experts from Ukraine and New Zealand.

21 Mar *New Zealand and Australia – A partnership for a changing world* - HE MS Harinder Sidhu AM, Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand.

14- May *Why Standing With Your Friends is More Needed than Ever in an Unstable World* ,- Iona Thomas Obe, British High Commissioner.

26 Jun *International Politics in the Pacific: Navigating geostrategic competition*, expert panel

1 Aug *Crafting New Zealand Defence Policy: Challenges & Misconceptions* - Andrew Wierzbicki, Member of the NZIIA National Board.

5 Aug *The Ultimate AUKUS question: can America solve our China problem?* -Hugh White, emeritus professor, Australian National University.

19- Aug *Our Main in the Pacific* – Peter Mckenzie, NZUS Media Fellowship Winner.

5- Sept *Are We All Realistic Now? Geopolitics and the US-China Competition* -Reuben Steff, Senior lecturer of geopolitics and international relations at the University of Waikato.

1-Oct *Trump or Harris? Where the 2024 US Election is Heading and What it Means for the World* –Todd Belt, professor George Washington University, D.C., USA

29 Oct *Small state diplomacy: climate change, democracy and security*- Frederick A Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama

17-Dec *Industrial Policy Redux: Will it Work?* – Vinod K. Aggarwal, professor, University of California, Berkeley, USA.

APPENDIX C:

Members of the Auckland Branch of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, I seek your forgiveness for not being here in person to present the statements of financial performance and financial position for the branch for the year ended 31 December 2024. My employers decided to hold a team building for this afternoon, and it had already been delayed a week on my account, it was going to be very difficult to change the schedule.

On a positive note, membership fees and donations have doubled in the last twelve months. This is a healthy sign of a branch which is rapidly being rebuilt. Greater membership fees give us the ability to host great events, which you can in turn enjoy. We anticipate a similarly healthy level of membership fees and donations in the coming year.

Seminar and function expenses are considerably down compared with 2023, which reflects two items. Firstly, we have managed to source food and beverages at a lower cost, and we are hoping to be able to continue to do so in the coming years. Secondly, several events were funded by other parties, which has meant no cost to us. Unfortunately, as we move into 2025, we face the challenge of no longer having access to free event facilities at the University of Auckland, which the branch enjoyed for many years. Many options are being explored, and this will reflect in the variety of locations which will be utilised in this coming year.

Overall, we had a surplus of \$1,384, and our current asset balance is \$3,313. The current asset balance is about right in my opinion and gives the branch the flexibility to meet unexpected costs whilst also ensuring that your membership fee is used to fund great events for you.

I have indicated to the committee a desire to run again as Treasurer for the coming year. However, if another suitable candidate puts their hand up, I am willing to yield to that candidate.

If you have any questions, I expect to be present from approximately 6:30pm, subject to the whims of the Inner Link bus.