**NZIIA Auckland Branch Chair’s Report for 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 16 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 whom 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 the 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 NZIIA Review with the help of Maria Batista’s event photographs and summaries. Gary Russell organised and hosted some events at the Kinder House.

Throughout the year the Auckland branch has been in close collaboration with the National Office, especially in hosting Auckland-based National Office events. As a result, the 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 in the NZIIA’s 2024’s Pacific Symposium. The Branch Committee thanks Executive Director Hamish McDougall and Administrator Yvonne Palmer for providing such opportunities and general support throughout the year to the Auckland Branch and Committee.