

UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
STRATEGIC PLAN                      2016-2021

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# Introduction

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## About the Plan

This strategic plan for the United Service Institute of the Australian Capital Territory (USI of the ACT) is for the five-year period from 2016 to 2021.

The plan was developed by the USI of the ACT Council in consultation with the general membership and the Executive Committee of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia (RUSI-A).

The plan's purpose is to provide all stakeholders with a clear view of our long-term development path. Annual business plans will set out the detailed steps we need to take in order to achieve our objectives.

Our strategic plan is a living document. Our Council will review and update it annually prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and a new plan will be issued every five years.

## Foreword

USI of the ACT stands at an important crossroad. We have provided a valuable service over many years, but much of our world is changing around us. Since we were incorporated in 1972, new bodies such as the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the National Security Institute have been established, making the national security debate a more crowded space. Pressures on the national budget have put our government funding under threat. Community expectations now require that we maintain a higher standard of governance. And changing demographics are calling into question our traditional ideas about membership. In response to these and other imperatives, the Kokoda Foundation recently recast itself completely as the Institute for Regional Security. The lesson is clear: we ignore these powerful forces at our peril.

Accordingly, in early 2015, the USI of the ACT Council conducted a comprehensive review of the Institute. Given very broad terms of reference, Councillors were asked to consider every aspect of our circumstances and operations. Critically, the Council concluded that our *raison d'être* remains relevant and important: despite all the competition, there is a clear need for an organisation that promotes understanding of national security and defence issues without pushing any agenda of its own. That's what we do. So there's no need for a Kokoda-like transformation of our essential being.

But the Council found emphatically that we do need to change if we are to survive and prosper. Our speaker program is strong and will remain our flagship output - but in an increasingly technology-based world, we need to explore ways to make sure we are relevant to all audiences. Given an economic situation in which every dollar is precious, we must give our stakeholders great value for money. With growing government and public demand for better management in the not-for-profit (NFP) sector, we need to conform scrupulously with best-practice governance principles. In order to ensure we benefit from the wide spectrum of talent available in the community, we must pursue greater diversity in our membership and our leaders. And to ensure we can continue to operate effectively into the future, we need to develop a stronger focus on business development.

This strategic plan reflects the Council's work to date. It sets out our proposed development path for the coming five years and provides the framework within which all our efforts will take place. While it is central to our thinking and our activity, it is not locked rigidly in stone: the Council will review and update it each year in consultation with the general membership to ensure that it continues to reflect our circumstances and our needs.

We look forward to working with all our stakeholders to deliver compelling, value for money programs that make us a respected contributor to the defence and national security debate in the ACT.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Major General Michael Crane DSC & Bar, AM (Retd)  
President  
United Services Institute of the Australian Capital Territory  
April 2016

# Strategic Approach

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## Vision

- A respected contributor to the national security and defence debate in the ACT

## Mission

- Promote understanding of national security and defence issues

## Values

- Independence – we do not advocate any partisan interest
- Integrity – we canvass the spectrum of issues and views fairly
- Quality – we strive for excellence in what we do
- Teamwork – we work collegiately with each other and our stakeholders
- Respect – we appreciate and harness the diverse ACT community

## Strategic Objectives

1. Present a compelling program of activities
2. Deliver value for stakeholders
3. Model best practice governance
4. Enhance diversity in our membership and leaders
5. Make our business more sustainable

# Supporting Strategies/Actions

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## **Present a compelling program of activities**

- Make the program a core Council focus
- Develop a deliberate process for building the program each year
- Explore non-traditional delivery methods
- Exploit opportunities for collaboration with like-minded groups
- Develop a consistent process for managing activities
- Consult with members to identify and incorporate their program interests

## **Deliver value for stakeholders**

- Identify stakeholders and analyse their requirements
- Identify and deliver an agreed value proposition for each stakeholder
- Communicate with stakeholders regularly and respond promptly to feedback
- Assess the satisfaction of stakeholders on a regular basis

## **Model best practice governance**

- Develop an understanding of best practice principles for governance of NFP organisations
- Design a governance framework that matches these principles with USI of the ACT needs
- Implement the framework in a measured and phased way
- Improve governance arrangements around the Leo Mahoney Bursary
- Communicate plans and progress to stakeholders

## **Enhance diversity in our membership and leaders**

- Analyse the make-up of our membership
- Identify groups that are under-represented
- Develop strategies to recruit members from under-represented groups
- Focus Council succession planning on improving diversity

## **Make our business more sustainable**

- Establish a Business Development position on the Council
- Identify and implement an alternative membership model
- Identify and implement an alternative funding model
- Identify and implement new methods for communicating with stakeholders
- Develop processes for performance review and improvement across all lines of operation

# Strategic and Organisational Context

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## Strategic Analysis

Early in 2015, the USI of the ACT Council was concerned about a number of changes in our strategic environment with potential to have profound impact on the future operations of the Institute. In addition to engaging with the RUSI-A National Executive, the USI of the ACT Council established three working groups to look into the impact of these changes and suggest appropriate courses of action. The working groups concentrated on three main areas:

- Governance
- Memberships and Outreach
- Future Program

The Governance Working Group assessed the structure, operations, responsibilities and role of the Council, leading to a number of recommendations to enhance Council efficiency and effectiveness. It then analysed the external environment using a strategic planning tool and considered key stakeholders using a standard stakeholder assessment model. The strategic plan was developed from these assessments and work undertaken by the other Council working groups.

While this plan concentrates on key issues as they stand in 2015/2016, a number of other important but lower order issues were identified during the assessment processes. These issues will be addressed either as part of executing this plan or in future strategic planning processes. These issues include:

- Enhance organisational management (partially covered in Objective 3)
- Develop the knowledge and skills of Council Members and Members
- Improve our utilisation of technology
- Leverage and embrace innovation
- Increase organisational responsiveness (partially covered in Objective 4)

## Governance Arrangements

USI of the ACT is an independent incorporated association, part of a wider federation of independent state and territory associations under RUSI-A. The President of USI of the ACT is a member of the RUSI-A National Council. At the time of writing, however, the structure and Constitution of RUSI-A are under review, and arrangements are subject to change.

USI of the ACT and its Council are governed by the Institute's constitution. The Council is responsible for managing the business and affairs of the Institute. The Council has nine elected members drawn from the general membership.

The Council meets every second month or as required. The Council engages an external auditor annually to ensure that the Institute's financial statements represent a true and accurate record of its financial position and that the accounts are being maintained in accordance with relevant Australian accounting standards. A tax return is submitted to the ATO each financial year.

This strategic plan and a range of USI of the ACT policies, procedures and templates are available to members and the general public through the USI of the ACT website hosted by RUSI-A. The web address is [www.rusi.org.au](http://www.rusi.org.au).

## Core Business

The core business of USI of the ACT is to promote understanding of national security and defence issues. The Institute does this in three ways:

- Through a program of monthly events harnessing the skills and knowledge of speakers expert in the field of national security and defence;
- Through providing an annual bursary to an ACT-based doctoral scholar; and
- By encouraging networking before monthly events and at an annual dinner.

## Membership

Membership of USI of the ACT is open to all ACT-based persons with an interest in national security and defence issues. Membership categories are set out in the Constitution. Membership subscriptions are set by the Council and reviewed annually as part of the budget process.

## Resourcing

USI of the ACT is funded primarily through membership subscriptions. Elements of the program are supported by a grant from the Department of Defence and corporate sponsorship. Defence also generously makes venues available free of charge for our administrative office, Council meetings and most program events. In response to generational, cultural and economic forces identified during planning, the Council intends to seek further corporate sponsorship to mitigate the risk of declining membership subscription revenues.

## Planning Approach

This strategic plan provides high-level guidance for the development of USI of the ACT. It is reviewed and updated annually and a complete revision is to be issued at least every five years.

Annual business plans translate the strategic plan's guidance into activities designed to achieve the Institute's strategic objectives. Performance will be measured by assessment against key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs are to be developed as part of the activity mandated in the first annual business plan arising from this strategic plan.

Strategic planning is embedded in the Council's annual business program. The annual planning cycle is illustrated in the diagram on page x.

## Annual Planning Cycle

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed each year prior to the development of the annual business plan. This will ensure continuity between documents. The strategic plan will be completely refreshed every five years.



Figure 1 - Annual Planning Cycle and its input into the Strategic Plan