



Happy 2008 from the American Australian Association Limited.

I would like to wish all the members of the American Australian Association Limited and our new members from the former Australian American Association (now in liquidation), and all our friends, a happy 2008. I know some of you have been wondering about the progress in bringing together our two organisations and this is a good time to update you and share the exciting programme of events and activities for the year ahead; all a part of building a closer USA/Australian relationship.

The Australian American Association Amalgamation

The members of the Australian American Association, NSW Division, at their meeting in September 2007 agreed to liquidate and for their members to join as individual affiliate members of the newly established American Australian Association Ltd. Life members would be transferred across and continue with their life membership. It was hoped that all the legalities and paper work would have been completed by this time. Unfortunately there are some outstanding residual issues which need to be resolved, nothing of any great significance, before ASIC can sign off on the liquidation and for the membership and assets to pass to the AAA Ltd. Hopefully the liquidation will be completed shortly and we can then move forward as one organisation. Michael Baume, former President of the Australian American Association and Deputy Chairman of the American Australian Association Limited, and I will let you know when the formal transfer is complete.

Despite the slow process of completing the amalgamation, we are moving forward as one organisation and the committee and board members are planning events for the coming year. We will let you know the detailed programme as it develops and as events are organised by the Events Committee. Some of the events we will hold during the year are:

The Battle of the Coral Sea annual commemoration ceremonies

As in past years, the commemoration will include the Sunday service/tea at St. Stephen's on Macquarie Street on Sunday 4th May, followed by the wreath laying on Monday the 5th of May at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. The evening reception will once again take place at the Australian National Maritime Museum, with a speaker to be determined.

Information sessions of interest.

We will commence a series of briefings on matters for both individuals and business in regard to subjects of business interest and concern. These will include Immigration and visas, taxation, investing across the Pacific and doing business in the USA. The first of these sessions will be held in February.

USA Election briefings

We plan to hold briefings and discussion sessions on the USA Presidential election process leading up to the November 4th Presidential Election. These briefings will include academic input from the United States Studies Centre and commentators from the US. We will provide details later.

Great White Fleet Centenary 1908-2008

A re-enactment of the 1908 Great White Fleet world cruise which visited Sydney, Melbourne and Albany in 1908 is scheduled to take place this year. The original visit was a goodwill tour arranged by President Teddy Roosevelt to mark the Federation of Australia and build closer relations between the USA and her allies around the world. A number of vessels will visit Australia later in the year and we have been asked to join in arranging events to welcome the fleet to Sydney. We will provide more information later.

The AAA Education Fund

One of the most important programmes run by the AAA is our Education Fund. It is the largest privately funded non-governmental programme to fund post-graduate and post-doctoral students between Australia and the United States. Created to facilitate educational collaboration at the highest level, the Education Fund seeks to develop and build relationships between outstanding future leaders from both Australia and the USA. Each year young Australians travel to the USA to work with future leaders in that country and Americans receive scholarships to do similar work here in Australia.

Awards funded directly by the Association are designated the Sir Keith Murdoch fellowships, while other awards have been funded by direct contributions from ANZ Investment Bank, Merck Company Foundation, Qantas Airways, Macquarie Foundation and the Dow Chemical Company Foundation. Association annual dinners and direct contributions from individuals and corporations fund the fellowships.

Hospitality in the Home

We will continue this excellent programme, which is one of several overseen by member Ann Tolman. The *Hospitality-in-the-Home Programme* was initiated by the Australian American Association at the request of Stephen Smith, the former US Consul General, Sydney and the US Navy. Initially simply having the hosts provide a 'meal in the home', the hosts have also put on street parties, weekends away, horse riding, and even a BBQ with a local rugby team.

The programme targets young sailors who may be away from their own homes for the very first time and feeling the pressure of long periods at sea. Local volunteer families are notified when ships are due in to Sydney and their interest in hosting sailors registered. Host family details are sent to the ship, and the facilitator (usually the Chaplain) matches the sailors with each family.

The military personnel are volunteers who have to meet strict standards to be approved for participation in the programme, as they are representing their ship and the USA. For safety reasons the military requires that the personnel on shore leave travel with a buddy, so guests come in pairs. For security reasons, details of the ship visits are provided at the very close to their arrival date.

It is a great opportunity for young sailors to experience our culture and lifestyle, and equally rewarding for the families, many of whom make lifelong friendships.

US Naval Ship Visits

For many years the Association has traditionally held a Welcome Reception for the Senior Chiefs and Officers of the Wardroom of visiting US Navy and Coast Guard vessels. The two hour reception is warmly anticipated by the Wardroom as the ship approaches Sydney. The relatively informal event is an opportunity for many officers to meet their first Australians, obtain information on the best places to eat and visit while in Sydney. It is also an opportunity for the officers to talk amongst themselves socially for the first time since leaving their last port. Since the ships often return to Sydney on a regular basis, many make lifelong friendships. For security reasons, details are provided at the very last minute and invitations to on-board events may be restricted.

Aussie Books on Board

The American Australian Association proudly supplies each US & Coast Guard vessel visiting Sydney with a selection of quality Australian literature for enjoyment in the ship's library. This very successful initiative has also been extended to the Yokosuka Base Library in Japan and, upon request, RAN vessels. Books by Australian authors are obtained from authors themselves and donations from publishers and

distributors. If any member has contacts with publishers who would like to donate books, please contact us.

The initial American Australian Association Ltd Annual Report

Please find enclosed a copy of the first report prepared by our American Australian Association Ltd. here in Australia. It provides information on the organisation, our charter, important fund raising programmes to support the Education Fund and the relationship between our organisation and the United States Studies Centre at Sydney University.

New appointments

We have recently appointed Tatiana Govoni as the Manager of Operations and we are currently advertising for an Events/Membership Manager. Copies of the advertisement for the events/membership position can be found at *careerone.com.au* and *mycareer.com.au*. Applications close on 25 January. Tatiana has been doing a great job for us here in Sydney since last March and we are thrilled to have her on deck as our first appointment.

Fridays at The American Club

Members of the American Australian Association are welcome to attend Fridays@ The Market at The American Club. Cash bar and complimentary nibbles are available. You can reserve online at <http://www.amclub.com.au> (look for it in the *What's New* section on the main page) or call them at 9241-2015. The dress code is smart casual (no jeans) or business attire. The American Club is located at Level 15 131 Macquarie Street and has some of the best harbour views in Sydney. Bring your business cards for the raffle!

We will keep you informed of progress on a regular basis and let you know about upcoming events and activities, well in advance. We welcome those who wish to assist as volunteers for any of our programmes and events. Please contact Tatiana at 9338.6988 or tatiana.govoni@aaanyc.org for any additional information on any of our programmes or if you wish to volunteer at events or contribute in any way. Our website is www.americanaustralian.org.au.

Geoff Gray
Executive Director