

The President's Address to the 2025 AGM

It is a pleasure to welcome members both here at Headquarters and joining us online. I am honoured to present my report as the 34th President of the Institution and Chair of its Board of Trustees. It remains a great privilege to represent you as President.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to those who have generously contributed their time and expertise to the Institution. Over the past year, there have been several new appointments to the Board of Trustees. As part of our ongoing commitment to good governance, the Board proactively reviewed its skills matrix and, in 2024, identified a need to strengthen several key areas.

To support the Institution's financial resilience, we welcomed Adam Pearce, Finance Director of the Maritime Division at Lloyd's Register. Professor Philip Wilson was appointed to help shape the strategic direction of our publications. Niki d'Hubert joined to strengthen our public relations and strategic communications, while Sarah Watts was brought on to reinforce our governance framework. These appointments have effectively filled identified skills gaps and contributed to a more dynamic and well-rounded Board.

The year 2024 marked a significant period of transition and reflection for the Institution. Following the resignation of the Chief Executive in June 2024, the Board appointed past-President, Tom Boardley, as a part-time interim CEO. Tom's primary task was to provide an independent review assessing the organisation's structure and operations. The findings provided valuable insights, enabling the Trustees to work closely with Tom, and the leadership team to refine the Institution's framework and

lay the foundation for a more efficient and effective organisation—ready for the appointment of a new Chief Executive.

With this new framework in place, the Board began the search for a leader who could guide the Institution into its next chapter, bringing visionary leadership and fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. After an extensive search, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Paul Jobson. I am delighted that Paul is able to join us today for the AGM and Annual Dinner. He will formally take up the post of Chief Executive Officer next month.

Paul has over two decades of senior executive experience across professional membership bodies and complex transformation environments, and brings a powerful blend of strategic leadership, financial acumen, and governance expertise. He holds a background in civil and structural engineering and has successfully led multiple organisations through periods of growth, digital modernisation, and stakeholder renewal.

His appointment marks a significant milestone for RINA as the Institution looks to the future after a period of organisational change. Paul's mandate is clear: to lead with vision, build long-term stability, and champion the value and voice of naval architects and maritime engineers globally.

Once Paul is embedded in RINA, we will be looking to review and refresh our strategy which will remain focussed on the Objects of the Institution whilst holding true to our values, having:

- Respect for People and the Environment,
- Professionalism and Excellence,
- High Ethical Standards,
- Integrity, and Innovation.

These values underpin everything that we do, and are reflected in documents like our code of conduct, an update of which is soon to be published.

Although the past 12 months have continued to present financial challenges for the Institution, the organisational restructure has enabled us to identify areas where streamlining and redefining operations can deliver significant cost savings. Our focus now shifts to strengthening and diversifying our revenue streams to support long-term sustainability.

In 2024 the Institution made the strategic decision to capitalise on unused office space by leasing one floor of its Headquarters to the International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners (INTERCARGO), thereby securing a long-term rental income stream.

The appointment of an in-house IT Manager, working in collaboration with the Board's Digital Working Group, has been pivotal in assessing and enhancing the Institution's IT infrastructure, as well as identifying key areas for both savings and future investment. In addition, several staff members have recently completed training in web development and are now actively contributing to the continued development and expansion of the Institution's website. I would particularly like to thank our Trustees

Nick Chrissos and Edwin Pang who have provided invaluable support and insight to the secretariat in our pursuit of modernising our digital systems.

An audit and review of our existing publications model concluded that it was financially unsustainable. As a result, the Institution evaluated all individual titles and made the strategic decision to merge and streamline several into an enhanced version of its flagship magazine, *The Naval Architect*. The first edition of the updated publication was launched in March and received positive feedback from members and subscribers. Although it is still too early to assess the full financial impact, initial signs are encouraging.

The Institution's events offering has also been carefully reviewed, with significant attention given to the 24-month outlook. The annual Warship Conference - held in Australia for the first time in 2024 - proved to be a great success. A new Members Event is set to be launched in November 2025, which aims to bring together all aspects of the Institution's membership and Standing Committees.

Significant efforts have been made to break down silos within the Secretariat and foster greater collaboration across departments, with a strong focus on actively identifying and engaging new industry partners. Now in its 20th year, the Institution's Corporate Partner programme has been enhanced, and the Chief Operations Officer is working closely with the events, marketing, and editorial teams to strengthen support for existing Partners and extend the offering to a broader audience. Efforts have also been made to empower all staff with the skills and confidence to effectively promote and upsell the Institution's products and services.

As always it is of primary importance that I emphasise my personal thanks to all members who have volunteered their valuable time and resources to the continued success of the Institution. Without this contribution RINA would not be able to deliver to either its members or the wider maritime industry.

One significant benefit of membership is the opportunity to meet other maritime professionals at local Branch or Section meetings, offering a full programme of technical meetings and other activities during the year, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Institution, to thank those members who give willingly and freely of their time to serve on the Division Councils, and Branch and Section Committees. It is due in no small part to their efforts that the Institution enjoys its international standing.

Unfortunately, recent months have marked the passing of several longstanding members whose contributions to the Institution deserve special recognition.

We were deeply saddened by the passing of Andrew Blyth FRINA late last year. A longstanding and committed supporter of the Institution, Andrew's contributions were valued across the organisation. His absence is particularly felt by the Safety Committee, where he served as a dedicated and active member for many years.

The Australian Division also suffered a significant loss with the recent passing of both Philip Helmore MRINA and John Jeremy FRINA. Both individuals played key roles in supporting the Division and the New South Wales Section, and were instrumental in the regular production of the Division's long-standing publication, *The Australian Naval Architect*. Their legacy of service and dedication will be long remembered.

The Scottish Branch lost one of the attendees of its first committee meeting, Robert Harley. At this committee meeting the decision was made to inaugurate the branch and he continued to volunteer for a further 22 years including serving as Chair and Branch Secretary.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the passing of David McKenzie FRINA, who died just last week after over 60 years of membership. His son informed the Institution that Mr McKenzie was proud to be part of the organisation and had included a small bequest to the Institution in his will.

The Institution is proud to honour the loyalty, dedication, and contributions of its members, whose commitment continues to shape and strengthen our community.

A major objective of the Institution is to promote its collective expertise and make it available for the benefit of the profession, maritime community, and society and this is achieved principally through the work of the Institution's committees, the IMO Committee, Maritime Safety Committee, Maritime Environment Committee and Maritime Innovation Committee, working alongside the Professional Affairs Committee, Membership Committee, Publications Committee and Developing Careers committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of all the Chairs and members of all the Institution's standing committees.

I would like to thank Prof. Philip Wilson who took over as Chair of the Publications Committee and offer my continued support for the *International Journal of Maritime Engineering (IJME)* and its Editor-in-Chief, Dr Alan Murphy. I would also like to thank

our specialist associate editors and members who volunteer their valuable time to review and work with researchers and authors who submit their papers. The Institution has maintained its reputation for the quality of its international conferences. In the past twelve months, the Institution has organised or co-organised many local and international events, covering a wide scope of technical content, including the hugely successful Warship Conference (held for the first time in Australia), ICCAS 2024, Human Factors, Autonomous Ships, Wind Propulsion, to name a few. We thank all staff and members who contribute and ensure that the conferences are relevant to the challenges facing our industry today.

At the President's Invitation Lecture, I had the pleasure of welcoming Jonathan E. Stephens, Professional Nuclear Engineer and Manager, BWX Technologies Inc. who presented '*Nuclear Technology for Commercial Maritime Propulsion*'. The lecture was very well received alongside a vibrant discussion with a panel including our Maritime Safety Committee Chair Sarah Watts.

The Institution remains committed to promoting high academic and professional standards by recognising the achievements of individuals across both the profession and industry. I would like to recognise the contribution of all members who have acted as professional review interviewers for those members seeking registration. It was also a great pleasure to present the medals and prizes just moments ago.

At the Annual Dinner this evening, the winners of the Maritime Innovation, Maritime Safety and the Eily Keary Award will receive their awards. These Awards reflect the recognition of the industry as well as the Institution, of these achievements. We are grateful to BP, QinetiQ, and Lloyd's Register, for their continuing support of the

awards. This year also marks the launch of the inaugural RINA STEM Awards, a valuable and exciting addition to the Institution's portfolio.

To summarise, this year has been a year of investment and consolidation. We still have an organisational structure that needs to settle and mature but next year will focus on building the strength and sustainability of the institution under the guidance and leadership of a new CEO.

My final thanks go to my fellow Board and Council members for their support, without your valued time, effort, and enthusiasm our success would not be possible.

Thank you and I look forward to receiving your questions.

Hon. Professor Cat Savage
President