

Sheba Nandkeolyar, AIBC National Chair's Speech
AIBC EGM - April 5, 2018

Dear AIBC members

AIBC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of our land – Australia. We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney.

Today is indeed a very historical day in the life history of AIBC. We have got together today for an EGM, which was specifically called to ensure that AIBC becomes a more business-focused bilateral business council.

At the outset, I would like to reiterate that AIBC is a bipartisan body that works inclusively, irrespective of religion, race, gender, political affiliation etc. The only focus AIBC has, and will have, is bilateral business.

The AIBC National team have been actively seeking feedback from Government and Industry on how to strengthen AIBC's core vision of facilitating the bilateral Australia-India trade, business and investment relationship. Based on the invaluable feedback received, the AIBC board has unanimously decided to support the constitutional changes to ensure a more business-focussed direction for AIBC.

In this context, I would like to specifically thank our National Vice Chair Mr Jim Varghese, our Company Secretary Mr John Cox and the AIBC Board members comprising of all State Presidents and our National Treasurer. I would like to thank them all for their single minded support and focus in driving the AIBC business transformation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the huge amount of time and advice that our Chairman Emeritus Mr Neville Roach continues to provide to the AIBC board as well as to any member who approaches him and, more specifically, to myself as the National Chair.

It would be remiss of me not to also thank all our former Chairs – Mr Harish Rao, Mr Brian Hayes, Mr Arun Sharma and Mr Dipen Rughani. All of them have spent a lot of time with me across my tenure as National Vice Chair and more recently as National Chair. Every one of them has staunchly supported the AIBC Board in its endeavours to transform AIBC to a serious business-minded council. May I also acknowledge with gratitude the presence today of Mr Roach and Mr Dipen Rughani, our former National Chairs.

Let me briefly recap what AIBC has achieved and will continue to build on. AIBC will continue to play a strong advocacy and policy role as the voice of the bilateral trade relationship. AIBC has decided to sharpen our focus by concentrating on industry verticals and has launched the following National Industry Chapters led by leaders in their respective fields.

- Ramesh Karnani will lead our AIBC Corporate Chapter
- Barbara Ward will lead our Health Chapter
- Jim Varghese will lead our Education Chapter

- I lead our Women in Business Chapter, which was the first of the National Chapters founded. I am particularly proud that AIBC's first National Chapter recognised the importance of gender diversity.
- Rubal Walia will lead our Young Business Leaders Chapter
- Satyarth Mishra will lead our Digital Chapter
- Param Singh will lead our SME & Start-Ups Chapter
- Nik Senapati will lead our Energy & Resources Chapter
- And finally Sunil Menon will lead our Sports Chapter.

Every one of the Chapter Chairs are leaders in their industry, and have an established career marked by excellence, professionalism and a high degree of commitment to the industry that they are in.

Every AIBC State Chapter – NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA and ACT – has been active and driven the board vision. AIBC National Vice Chair, Treasurer, Company Secretary and AIBC State Presidents work hard in their voluntary capacities to do their very best. I would like to acknowledge the presence of those who are here today – Prof. Adrian Vicary from SA, Nik Senapati from Qld, and Barbara Ward from NSW as well as Jim Varghese and Con Livissianis. With the more recent elections in WA, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Mr Michael Carter in actively reviving AIBC WA.

The AIBC Leadership Council will be launched shortly. This Council will have strong business leaders from Australia and India who will lend their experience and advice to the board of AIBC.

We have established the platform to become an even more influential and capable business council that can make a real difference in progressing the business to business relationship between India and Australia.

In order to do good work in this bilateral space, we need revenue to support these initiatives. The AIBC board realises that our revenue base cannot only depend on membership fees and sponsorships – hence, the board is in the process of finalising a commercial arm for AIBC which will assist in generating income for the Council.

Having said this, sponsorships help AIBC and we owe a debt of gratitude to each and every sponsor. At the National level, I would like to thank CBA and AustralianSuper. I would like to thank all our sponsors and event hosts for their support to AIBC, including nib in NSW. I would today like to welcome our new National Partner, McCullough Robertson Lawyers. I particularly loved their description on their website – “We're a big firm, without the attitude. We unlock new opportunities today, creating meaningful partnerships that endure well into tomorrow.” We are very pleased to have them on board.

I am also pleased to announce today that AIBC has completed interview processes for a new National Secretariat and I take this opportunity to welcome Ms Wendy Farrell as our new National Secretariat. Ms Farrell is an accomplished and experienced professional, and we are confident she will be able to contribute to AIBC's business transformation. Please join me in welcoming Wendy.

Julie Hallifax, our outgoing National Secretariat has played a stellar role during her time with AIBC. Her dedication and hard work was next to none. I would like everyone to join me in thanking Julie, even though she is not present with us today due to her new work commitments.

On the very same note, I would like to thank Mr. John Cox, our Company Secretary for his unwavering support, strategic advice, and hard work for AIBC during his tenure. John will continue to be an integral part of AIBC even as John hands over to the new Company Secretary from today. Please join me in thanking John.

The Company Secretary has received the proxies and scrutinised them according to due diligence. Additionally, we have also requested Mr Neville Roach, Chairman Emeritus as well as McCullough Robertson Lawyers to help in the scrutiny to ensure AIBC's commitment to honesty, transparency and integrity.

We look forward to a positive outcome. Thank you for taking time out to attend the EGM today.