From the president’s desk

You can make a difference – the story of the Canberra Branch

CIMA members can make a difference in Australia, despite some obstacles in their way. You do not have to be a high-flyer, nor do you need to be young and ambitious. You do not need a huge amount of resources nor a large number of members. Still you can make a difference. Here is the story of a retired CIMA member, with no career ambitions, starting a CIMA branch in Canberra which has benefited all CIMA members and students in Canberra.

In 1996, Mr K Mailvaganam (Myl) started the Canberra branch. He was over 70 years old at that time. He has held senior positions in the Sri Lankan government and in African countries and was an author of several (non-accounting) books. By now he was retired. He did not drive and he did not have access to facilities such as photocopiers and faxes. Moreover, he lived in Canberra a small city of about 300,000 people and around 30 CIMA members.

Myl was receiving letters from CIMA Sydney asking them to come for the AGM and other CIMA meetings. So he asked other Canberra members whether they had ever attended CIMA meetings in Sydney. They said, no, so he wrote to CIMA London to approve a Branch in Canberra in order to help members in Canberra to discuss their problems and to develop Management Accounting in Canberra.

Initially when Myl consulted CIMA Australia, they suggested a sub-branch. But CIMA London, more wisely perhaps, asked which would be the sub-branch, Canberra or Sydney, as Canberra was Australia’s capital. After several more correspondence London approved a Canberra CIMA centre with a proviso that if it actively functioned it will be upgraded to a Branch, and appointed Myl as the Canberra centre correspondent.

Then Myl campaigned with CIMA Australia attending the annual meetings in Sydney and Brisbane. In the Brisbane AGM (1998) he demonstrated that the Canberra branch was active and succeeded in making Canberra a Branch.

He was elected as the first President, Paul Blessington as the first Secretary and I was elected as a committee member. At the end of the first term he wanted the younger members to take over and was instrumental in shaping the new Committee, with Paul Blessington as President and myself as Secretary.

More than ten years later all of you can see that Canberra branch has been quite successful. Paul Blessington went on to become President of All-Australia CIMA and is now the Council Member representing Australia and New Zealand. I have been elected as the President CIMA Australia. More importantly we have had regular events. Very senior officials such as the Auditor General and the Tax Commissioner have graced our events.

Mr Mailvaganam did this with no personal benefit in mind. But you can engage in branch activities with your personal benefit in mind, which will also benefit other CIMA members. And I encourage you to do so. So you can make a difference. Go ahead and do it. It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

Sabesh Shivasabesan
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CIMA member survey 2008

The CIMA members survey for 2008 was launched to all members on 6 June 2008. After some time in the design and consultation stage we have established another comprehensive high profile survey to identify the value of CIMA membership, degree of satisfaction and use of our services to support members professional career developments. Further details of key sections within the survey are:

- overall assessment of CIMA
- value of membership
- members Services and benefits
- CIMA publications
- contact with CIMA offices
- ethics, professional standards and conduct
- CIMA website.

It would be greatly appreciated if members could participate in this project, your comments would be highly valuable to us.
Thank you.
A year in office – CIMA DP Aubrey Joachim writes.

A year is not a long time. It seems even shorter when one is the Vice President of CIMA. It seems like yesterday that I stood on the podium at the last AGM in London and had the President place the badge of office around my neck. By the time you are reading this article, I should have moved up the next rung on the leadership ladder or getting close to it.

Although the sense of urgency and pressure has steadily built up, it has been nothing like what I could expect going forward. The organisation itself will be facing interesting challenges in an increasingly competitive global environment for all major accounting bodies. CIMA has a competitive advantage, and for those who have read the CIMA differentiation document (available on the website) it will be very clear.

Last July, at the annual strategy day, the Council was presented with the 2015 strategy document that looks at its growth potential in the context of all the external influences as well as considering all opportunities that would further promote CIMA as the premier management accounting body in the world. Of course underlying it all is driving the course of future finance.

Recent organisational changes have seen an increased focus on business development across large global corporate employers in a number of areas. The transformation of the finance function as well as an increase in finance business process outsourcing (BPO) space has offered CIMA the opportunity to expand into the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economies and major organizations are seeing the benefits of having their finance professionals take up the CIMA qualification. An increased presence in a number of major global locations is taking place. New offices in a number of cities in China, and India as well as an office in perhaps the world’s fastest growing financial hub – Dubai have been opened. Corporate employers even in the Philippines and Brazil have established training partnerships with CIMA.

On a personal note, the year has been an interesting one for me in my role. I have attended a number of events that have given me exposure into the CIMA world. I attended a Financial Reporting Council (FRC) governance session at the residence of the Lord Mayor of London very early in my role. I have begun to meet with my fellow Vice Presidents of the other CCAB (Consultative Committee of UK Accounting Bodies) in order to discuss future direction.

The CIMA annual awards function in London last November was a flagship event that really demonstrated CIMA’s prestige and influence in the business world. Besides the big names like Ford, Unilever and British Aerospace even a major Sri Lankan organisation carried away an award. It would be fantastic if an Australian entry could win an award this year. I am sure you all would have received intimation of the 2009 Awards via email. Please participate.

I also had the opportunity of attending the CIMA students conference in Sri Lanka and it made me feel proud to be a member of an organisation where even the quality of its students is of such a high calibre. My last international CIMA visit was to China where I delivered a presentation on Finance Leadership in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. It was really very enlightening to, first have visited such an exciting and advanced country, and secondly to realise the enthusiasm of the young business and finance professionals. Considering that over 200 attendees packed the three locations, I have no doubt that CIMA has a good future in China.

Finally, I hope all members and students in Australia are appreciating the many benefits that are being rolled out globally via the ever enhancing website and electronic media. Webcasts and other CPD products and on-line e-learning modules have been added and I have no doubt that members will find significant benefit from these offerings.

I look forward to your support in my years ahead and I hope I can put CIMA Australia on the global finance landscape.
Following the National AGM and NEC meeting the following Members have been appointed to the National Executive Committee – including Australia’s first female President;

National President: Karen Huxley (QLD)
National Vice President: Paul Thambar (NSW)
Immediate Past President: Sabesh Shivasabesan (ACT)
Treasurer: Steven Lakotij (VIC)
Council Representative: Paul Blessington (ACT)
Branch Members: Karen Huxley (QLD), Paul Thambar (NSW), Karen O’Duil (VIC), Joanna Stone (ACT), Alan Freeman (SA), Mike Harrold (WA), Adrian Fernando – Co-Opted, Kerry Anne Paynter – Co Opted

A special thank you to our retiring NEC members, Steven Lakotij, Roger Booker and Atul Chandra – also our last three National Presidents.

Our retiring Presidents – Steven with Justine Mills, our three Presidents with Professor Carol Adams and Roger with his wife Beth – our honorary member.
CIMA’s MY JOBS career portal has proven to be a terrific resource for members to enhance their career opportunities. The site not only advertises positions but offers useful information and advice on applying for positions and CV preparation. We now have recruitment agencies here in Australia advertising jobs direct to Australian CIMA members through the MY JOBS site. Members can register for the portal and even receive job alerts when positions are posted for Australia.

If your company has a position available that would be suitable for a CIMA member or student please let us know the details and we can add the position free of charge for Australian members and employers. Some of the benefits and features are listed below.

- Jobs currently available in 12 countries: Australia, Thailand, India, China, Jamaica, Hong Kong, Nigeria, New Zealand, Ireland.
- Clients: PepsiCo, Tesco, Ford, HSBC (Hong Kong), Honda F1 Racing, Cisco Systems.
- Extensive career advice content and features which include regular salary surveys, how to negotiate a pay rise and sample CVs.
- Since launch in February 2007 we have posted in excess of 16,000 vacancies.
- Live jobs on the site – 1,200
- Content and jobs specifically developed for the CIMA audience.

www.cimaglobal.com/myjobs

Free web seminars to your desktop

As a CIMA your can register for our free interactive web seminars to your desktop throughout September, October and November.

The topics to be covered are:

- **Time-based ABC with Robert Kaplan** – September
- **Strategic Supply Chain Management** – October
- **Financial Risk Management** – November

To register your place or find out more simply visit [http://www.cpa2biz.com/AST/AICPA_CPA2BIZ_Browse/Store/Webcasts.jsp](http://www.cpa2biz.com/AST/AICPA_CPA2BIZ_Browse/Store/Webcasts.jsp)
June and July are busy months for the CIMA Council in London.

In June I attended the CIMA Annual General Meeting, held at the famous Café Royal venue in London, where it has been held every year for the past seventy years. Sadly, this is the last time that members will have a chance to meet at this historic venue, as the Café is closing at the end of 2008 to be converted into a six-star hotel.

The AGM is the place where CIMA members vote each year to endorse our new presidential team of ‘Honorary Officers’. Gordon Grant handed over his Global President’s badge of office to Glynn Lowth. Our own Aubrey Joachim (who will become Global President in 2009) took on the Deputy President role, while George Glass stepped on to the bottom rung of the Presidential ladder as Vice President.

Apart from the election formalities, the AGM is also an opportunity for all CIMA members to take an active part in the governance of our Institute. On this occasion, several past presidents attending the AGM spoke against a proposed rule change, which would have made it more difficult for members to get a special resolution put to the membership. The proposed rule change was recalled. I believe that this illustrates that members really do have ‘clout’ over the affairs of our Institute and that we really are, at heart, a member-led body. We have all worked hard to qualify as members of this Institute, and ultimately, its future lies in our hands, so when something about our Institute concerns you, remember you have a voice!

I was back in London three weeks later for the July Council Strategy Day. This is the main opportunity each year for Council representatives to contribute ideas for the long term development of our Institute. As you may know, CIMA’s future depends on it becoming a truly global organisation, representing the management accountancy profession around the world. The accounting world is changing fast, with the rapid growth of outsourcing finance jobs to Eastern Europe and India, and the emergence of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) as future economic super-powers. CIMA needs to be involved in these emerging economies but the path to get there is not straight-forward. So we are looking at ways to collaborate or ‘partner’ with other existing local organisations which may be able to provide new ‘feeder’ routes to eventual CIMA membership.

Supporting the global growth strategy will be a second round of global advertising to raise awareness of the CIMA brand. Based on the theme of ‘In Business Together’, the CIMA ads will feature members and their employer organisation. Two thirds of the marketing spend will be on markets outside the UK. Ads will run in the second half of 2008 and into the first half of 2009. Look out for them in ‘borderless’ publications such as the Economist, CFO Asia and airline magazines.

Lastly, as we grow and the balance of membership becomes less UK-centric, so we must adopt an approach of ‘think global, act local’. To this end, an important milestone was achieved at the July Council meeting, with the approval of an Asia Pacific Regional Board. This will devolve budget and governance of CIMA in our region to a new body, which will bring closer cooperation between Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and China. I will be bringing you more updates on this important development in my future articles.

Paul Blessington
Area 19 Council Representative
CIMA’s Innovation and Development agenda provides a source of visionary ideas and expertise that is rooted in real business experience.

Our website, www.cimaglobal.com/resources, contains resources developed from this agenda to support you.

We focus on a range of topics, from governance and reporting to performance management.

Here are just some of the resources available.

**Improving decision making** could become the key to superior business performance.

Our report, *Improving decision making in organisations: the opportunity to transform finance*, shows how leading businesses have benefited from finance transformation. They have improved the efficiency of their finance and accounting operations, and engaged finance to improve decision making across the business.

Topics covered include finance/business partners, risk management and managing for value.

www.cimaglobal.com/decisionmaking

**Report Leadership** is a coalition between CIMA, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Radley Yeldar and Tomkins, aimed at maintaining the health and relevance of corporate reporting.

The group came together to develop simple, practical ways to improve narrative and financial reporting. We have designed a blueprint annual report, based on a fictitious company, to stimulate debate.

This report also has an online interactive version, demonstrating the benefits of corporate reporting via the web.

www.cimaglobal.com/reportleadership

**Sustainability** is a major business challenge and opportunity.

We hope to assist you with integrating sustainability issues into your organisation’s strategy and day to day operations.

Initially, we are focusing on the issue of climate change and provide ten actions that your organisation can put in place to help you drive sustainable performance.

This is a new topic on CIMA’s Innovation and Development agenda and if you would like to get involved or provide us with insights on how your business is delivering sustainable performance, we want to hear from you.

www.cimaglobal.com/sustainability
The CIMA Strategic Scorecard™ has been developed as a tool to help boards engage in strategy, both in the private and public sectors.

It will enable your organisation to bring all your strategic information together in a summarised and consistent format, allowing the board to balance time spent on strategy and time spent on governance issues.

If you are interested in implementing a scorecard in your organisation, do not hesitate to contact us.

www.cimaglobal.com/strategicscorecard

For more information on CIMA’s Innovation and Development agenda, please visit www.cimaglobal.com/xxxxxxx or contact the Innovation and Development department in London, UK on:

E. innovation.development@cimaglobal.com
T. + 44 (0) 208 849 2275
CIMA snapshots

CIMA Professional Development sessions and don’t just offer useful business information but are a terrific opportunity to meet fellow members and network. Why not join us at your next branch event.

National office staff members Paul Turner and Justine Mills

Justine and NSW member Jasmin Harvey

Most of CIMA’s hard working Victorian Branch committee at the 2008 National AGM
A STATE BY STATE WRAP

Most CIMA branches have held events since the last newsletter including all branches completing their AGM’s. We have updated all branch pages on the CIMA Australia web pages including details of your branch members. We have now dedicated a single web page to listing all Australian Events allowing members to view past events as well as upcoming events for your branch and other state branches. I recommend all members save the events page to their favourites lists and keep an eye out for CPD and social events coming to your branch. Click here to go to the CIMA events page.

The NSW branch committee has continued to deliver valuable CPD sessions and will be holding their always enjoyable mid year drinks event on Friday 25 July with over 100 members expected to attend. The branch committee have been working hard to develop a calendar of events that will soon be loaded on the events web page and includes monthly CPD or social events into March 2009. At the 2008 AGM we were delighted to see well over 100 members as Devika Mohotti continued into the second year of her presidency. Devika has made inroads with NSW recruiters and continues to ensure member and student services are given the highest priority in 2008. Kerry Anne Paynter from the NSW committee has also been co-opted onto the NEC and will bring a positive pro-student experience.

The QLD branch continues to deliver quality CPD sessions for branch members including a session on Bankruptcy in Australia, another on Perspectives on fair tax and the 2008 AGM. During this AGM Branch President Karen Huxley stood down from the role of President to concentrate on the role of National President handing over the badge to James Kendall. James is a Brisbane born local who studied CIMA whilst living in London. I may need to check but I believe James is the first Australian born branch President in Australia – well done James!

The Western Australian branch have also held their highly anticipated AGM with Atul Chandra staying on as Branch President. This year’s AGM was conducting with members enjoying wine tasting on the Swan River. Western Australia has a new NEC representative with Mike Harrold taking up the role at the recent NEC. Mike is from Zimbabwe and was a valuable member of the committee there. The WA branch has delivered a CPD session to members on the topic of Finance leadership, and have a number of events planned for the remainder of 2008. These events are listed on the Australian events page of our web site.

The South Australian branch held their AGM in April and Garry Dando has stayed on as Branch President and Alan Freeman has agreed to continue on as the branch NEC representative. The SA branch has worked hard to offer a number of events for members in the remainder of 2008. A calendar of SA events for 2008 can be found at the Australian events page noted above.

The Victorian branch committee has continued to improve CPD opportunities for members and their committee has grown to 14 after the regent AGM. Already this year the Victorian branch has offered sessions on Balancing risk and performance, the benefits of e-business for Australian SMEs, Personal branding and a labour market update with Robert Half Finance and Recruiting and more recently their famous curry night with almost 50 members and their guests enjoying a winter warm up. Adrian Fernando and his committee have more events planned for the remainder of 2008 which I am sure will be both enjoyable and informative.

CIMA’s ACT branch held this years AGM as a lunchtime session at the National Library, allowing members who aren’t able to attend post work events an opportunity to enjoy one of our events. Members who attended enjoyed a presentation on the findings of the IBM 2008 global CFO study and it’s implications for public sector CFO’s. The next ACT event is likely to be an end of year function and members will receive notice well before the date.

Thank you to all members for your continued involvement and support of your local branch events.