**Notes:-**

Australian Virtual Branch meeting.

7th April 2022

In attendance:

Chris Cobain, Gary Lord, Phil Stubbington, Joel Anderson, Andrew Gray, Douglas Welsh, Andy Devlin, Lois Appleyard, Kate Day

Background

Chris welcomed everyone to this first meeting of Australian members of the Welding Institute, explaining the origins of the meeting and the opportunities online meetings have for bringing people together. Chris felt that while Australia has the largest group of overseas members, members are not perhaps aware of or make use of all the resources that membership can provide which is a missed opportunity.

Phil gave a brief summary of previous networking groups organised through IIW and others but confirmed that there is a need for something along the lines of the UK Branch activities (of which he has been a part) for members in Australia.

Benefits of a local Branch network

The Group felt that being part of a network was a key benefit and something they would like help to facilitate whether this is through virtual or face to face meetings, social or technical talks and activities. Previous attempts by The Welding Institute of Australia (Phil Richardson and Ian Henderson) have fallen silent but perhaps could be reinvigorated.

Suggestions for meeting topics

All felt that **career progression** and a clearly defined path for professional development is a key area for development. A general reluctance to encourage staff and a shortage of skilled welding engineers and inspectors is something that needs to be addressed urgently.

Some participants have attended **online webinars** from The Welding Institute which have been very useful. The Job knowledge resources are also very much valued.

Participants wanted to learn from and support other members through local activities. Some suggested topics are;

Case Studies/personal stories

Fabrication/Structural steel (Andy Devlin)

Hydrogen Cracking (Phil Stubbington)

Welding Automation and Additive Manufacturing (Joel Anderson)

Bar Stool Q & A sessions on specific topics (Phil Stubbington)

Next Steps;

* The group agreed to share email addresses to they could contact each other between meetings
* Kate to send a link to the Webinar Archive to see if any previous talks might be on interest to run again for Australian members
* Group to think about possible topics for talks and meetings to contribute to a short 6 month programme of online events
* Group to meet again in May/June to review progress.