

## Communique from the Branch Chair

Hearty Greetings to fellow members of the Queensland Branch of The Order of Australia Association (OAA).

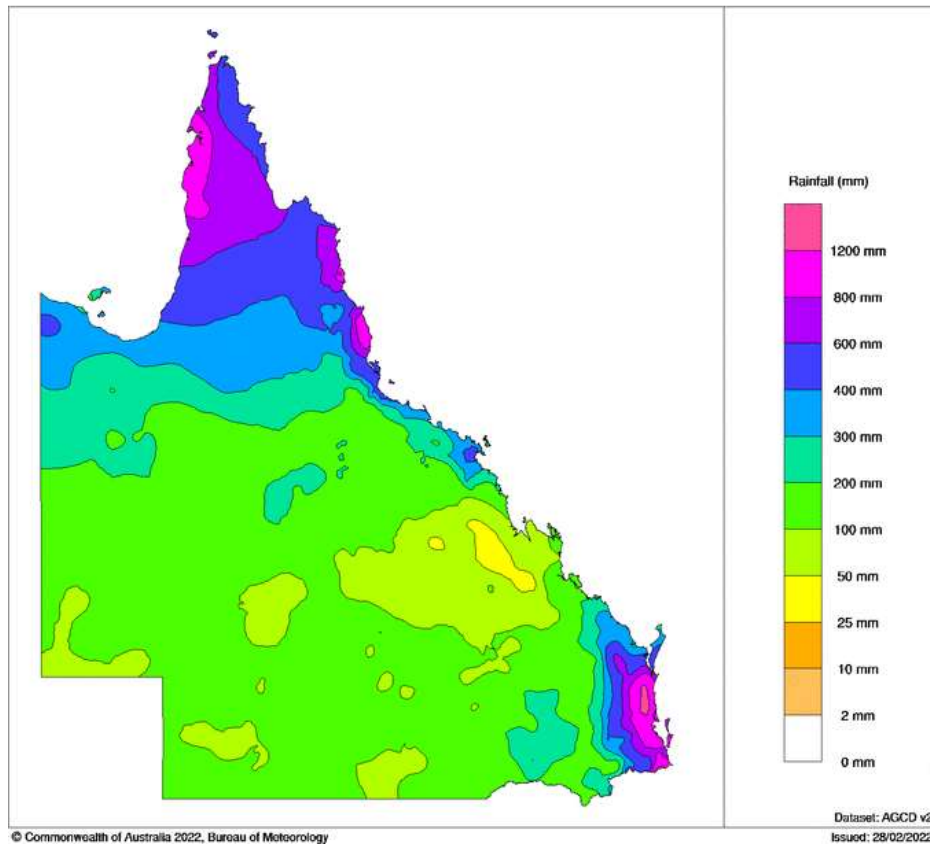
I last communicated to you via this platform some 3 months back. Life these days does not remain steady and constant but throws up noteworthy anniversaries, continuous change and indeed challenges on most fronts.

Firstly, in 2022 we acknowledge that Her Majesty will celebrate 70 years as Queen. What an unsurpassed memorable record of service to her peoples and the wider Commonwealth of nations. I share with you my favourite portrait (it never got included in *The Order* magazine). It is so apt for our Association as the Order of Australia award motifs are balanced with an Australian wattle brooch. In 1975 Her Majesty gave royal ascent to the establishment of the unique system of Australian honours. Since then Australians from all walks of life have been recognised with an Order of Australia award by their countrymen as possessing those personal and community based attributes worthy of recognition. Even so, only about one person in 1100 has been so recognised. Awardees are indeed special and rare Australians.



*Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*

February then brought the rains; buckets and buckets of it! Check out this colour map of the distribution of Queensland rainfall. If you lived in a purple shaded patch then you know precisely what intense cloud dumps can deliver. Mt Glorious about 20km from where I live in north west Brisbane received 1770mm on Sunday 27 February. We were let off with 429mm. February rainfall surpassed our full year quota!



Many were flooded, yet again a short time after the 2011 devastations. Again the Mud Army V2 reappeared and the support offered throughout the wider community direct and indirectly demonstrated the caring community we inhabit. I asked a colleague during clean-up and relocation did he know the 11 people in and about his damaged house. Only two, the remainder just walked in off the street. Food and drink for the workers miraculously appeared from angels wandering by. Public media reported the same uplifting help over all affected areas.

Last Monday 21 March I had the honour of presenting the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Report for the Queensland Branch of the Order of Australia Association as a precursor to the annual black-tie Dinner. This 2021 report will be made available on the Associations web site within the Queensland section. <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/queensland/about-us/>

It was a busy, fulfilling year populated with a diverse array of events across the whole State that the membership well supported. This pleasing outcome was achieved despite imposed constraints, often Just-in-time, on face to face meetings, social distancing and travel. A strong commitment to serving our dispersed membership was maintained by a dedicated and always enthused Branch Committee and Regional Convenors.

Listed in the Annual Report is a commentary on the events that made up a fulsome year and I will highlight a few.

At the combined Welcome Celebratory Lunch, hosted by the Queensland Branch, for both the 2021 Australia Day and Queen's Birthday award recipients, a record number of 65 new award recipients were acknowledged, attended by a bumper gathering of 238 guests.

Both the Queen's Birthday Dinner, co-hosted with the Victoria League, and the Secondary Schools Citizenship awards presentation by the Governor were held after a year's postponement.

Fourteen entertaining and interesting functions were conducted within the regions including the lunch organized by the Central Queensland Regional Group in Rockhampton, which may be the very first regional event organized

within a Branch of the Association where an incumbent serving Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, and Chancellor of the Order of Australia, was guest speaker.

A most satisfying statistic worth recording for this summary is the total number of bookings recorded for all functions across the State. I can report that over 1300 patrons have attend our events from Cairns down to Southport, west to Toowoomba and here in Metro which is a **100 percent increase** over the previous year.

The Committee joined with Queensland Branch regional group conveners in an historic Zoom meeting hosted by His Excellency, the Honourable General David Hurley AC DSC FTSE, Governor-General of Australia, in his capacity as Chancellor of the Order of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley on 6 October 2021. This meeting was useful to hear the themes of enhancement of the Order of Australia under consideration as well as providing an opportunity for the Branch to raise matters directly. We were all pleasantly amazed that the Governor General chaired the meeting himself and Her Excellency sang a hopeful Sunshine song unaccompanied and in fine voice on exit.

It was an honour to represent the OAA Branch at a function to welcome the new Queensland Governor, Her Excellency The Honourable Dr Jeanette Young PSM on her first day of office (1 November 2021) at Government House. Subsequently the Governor agreed to be our Patron for the duration of her term of office. In consequence at a Zoom briefing meeting with the Governor the Branch was invited to participate at an Open House *in situ* event on 13 March to mark the commencement of celebrations honouring the 70th anniversary of the coronation of Her Majesty The Queen. Our 'show and tell' presentations in the Investiture room were well attended.

I place on record my thanks to the members of the Queensland Branch Committee and to the Regional Convenors for their enthusiasm in servicing the members and their interests. They are what I refer to as the Branch's BUNSEN BURNERS or PHOTON EMITTERS.

The year ahead is full of promise with agendas for regional and metro events well into the planning stage. Government House have advised a return to large Investitures and our OAA Branch will be represented.

I am pleased to highlight that 47.5% of this years (2022) Australia Day Queensland awardees are women. This is the highest proportion recorded in the last 5 years at least. This is a splendid result that aligns with the thrust of communiques delivered by our hands-on Chancellor of the Order.

Do not forget the opportunity of nominating for award those fellow Australians who by dint of hard work and sacrifice have convinced you of their worth and acknowledgement.

I draw your attention to the 2022 National Conference, Annual General Meeting (AGM) and associated events planned for 19 -22 May in Canberra. The full program and registration portal can be found at:

<https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/national-conference-2022/>

The whole Branch team, Committee and Regional Convenors, thank you the members for your welcomed support over the whole State and year. We look forward to that same manifest level of support this coming active year.

AGM day was a UNESCO declared POETRY DAY and a UN declared FORESTRY DAY. Today we celebrate a NATIONAL EUCALYPT DAY. I close then with an apt piece written by our icon Australian poet, Les Murray, who left us this year.

## EUCALYPTS IN EXILE

They've had so many jobs:  
boiling African porridge. Being printed on.  
Paving Paris, flying in her revolutions.  
Supporting a stork's nest in Spain.

Their suits are neater abroad,  
of denser drape, unnibbled:  
they've left their parasites at home.

They flower out of bullets  
and, without any taproot,  
draw water from way deep.  
When they blow over  
they reveal the black sun of that trick.

Standing round among shed limbs  
and loose slabbings of bark  
is homeland stuff  
but fire is ingrained.  
They explode the mansions of Malibu  
because to be eucalypts  
they have to shower sometime in Hell.

Their humans, meeting them abroad,  
often grab and sniff their hands.

Loveable singly or unmarshalled  
they are merciless in a gang.

*Les Murray*

QUADRANT MARCH 2008

Keep well

Kind regards



24 March 2022



Dr Gary Bacon AM, Chair OAA Queensland Branch.