

Communique from the Branch Chair

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

It is most pleasing to report the reintroduction of what I call 'traditional' Investitures of Order of Australia awardees at Government House post significant COVID constraints on social gatherings. Investitures were conducted individually during the pulses of the pandemic in 2020 & 2021. In May 2022 large group Investitures were recommenced at Fernberg and Townsville and conducted for the first time by the Queensland Governor, Her Excellency, The Honourable Dr Jeanette Young (now AC) PSM. Our Association was invited to participate at each of the Investiture sessions and we were warmly received by the Governor. It was rewarding on many levels to again be involved with awardees and their families at these signature events.

This uplift was extended when the Queensland Branch hosted a congratulatory lunch for new Awardees at Kedron Wavell Services on 12 May. Though COVID stopped 17 registered attendees, still 125 patrons turned up to acknowledge the 26 new Awardees present. Flexibility with numbers attending our functions is still the nature of the times and our function organisers are complimented on their unflappable modes of operation.

A highly successful joint hosting of the 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Gala dinner with the Victoria League Brisbane for Commonwealth Friendship occurred on 3 June at Parliament House. As befitting the unique occasion the guest of honour was The Queensland Governor and a full house of 166 attendees enjoyed the splendid ambience of the decorated Premier's room and the music delivered by the Royal Australian Navy Jazz Ensemble. I attach my welcome words that hopefully captured the memorable theme of the evening (Attachment 1).

Additional celebratory events were held over that same weekend, including a Garden Reception and Open House both at Government House and a Service of Prayer and Thanksgiving at St John's cathedral. Our Branch of the Association was well represented at each. No doubt many of you were glued to your seats watching the eclectic series of Platinum celebration concerts streamed from Buckingham Palace. Who could ever forget the impressive visuals projected onto the facade of Buckingham Palace and transforming it into a lush bucolic botanic garden.

I think The Prince of Wales summed up the plethora of events and the public response when he paid tribute to the Queen's "lifetime of selfless service in pictures, in words and in light". "Your Majesty, Mummy", he began. "The scale of this evening's celebration – and the outpouring of warmth and affection over this whole Jubilee weekend – is our way of saying thank you – from your family, the country, the Commonwealth, in fact the whole world".

Successful well attended regional events have been held since our AGM in Gympie, Rockhampton, Townsville, Kingaroy and Toowoomba. The range of excellent guest speakers involved cover a plethora of subjects and reinforces the impressive diversity of talent and experience held within the Association's membership. I again 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.

A group of intrepid Queenslanders braved the Canberra cold environs to attend the 2022 National OAA Conference, Annual General Meeting (AGM) and associated events over 19 -22 May. The mercury levels below freezing did not disappoint expectations of the tropical visitors nor did the quality and service themed content delivered by the invited speaker cohort. Highlights of the AGM and the Members Forum are contented within the recent The Order magazine and on the national web site you can view His Excellency the Governor-General's address and read a transcript of the Association Oration by Hon Shane Stone.

<https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Final-Web-version-May22.pdf>

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



Queenslanders attending National Conference dinner

Delegates to National were provided with a most informative take-home reference, *The Arboretum Book, Forests of the National Arboretum Canberra*. For a forester who surveyed the 1917 planted cork trees (*Quercus suber*) as a student in 1969, now included as Forest 1 in the arboretum complex, the gift is a treasure. For those who might be interested in the composition of the arboretum and in particular the world class bonsai collection held at the village centre, you can find coverage on a very recent ABC TV Gardening show (Episode 18, Friday 17 June).

I mapped in the last communique the huge rainfall events that covered the far north and SE Qld in February this year. It made me think of past normal summer rains and the disappearance of petrichor (Attachment 2).

In closing I warmly congratulate the 79 Queensland based notable citizens, including our Queensland Governor and Patron of the Queensland Branch, who were acknowledged by receipt of a 2022 Queen's Birthday Order of Australia award. The Queensland Branch looks forward to meeting Awardees at Investitures and at a following congratulatory lunch, the timing of which will be conveyed after the Government House calendar is known.

Keep well

Kind regards

19 June 2022



Dr Gary Bacon AM, Chair OAA Queensland Branch. gary-bacon@bigpond.com

Attachment 1:

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebration Dinner

Welcome Address

Your Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Dr Jeannette Young PSM, Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD, Ms Fiona Simpson MP, guests all..... A hearty welcome.

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, highlighted in her February Platinum Jubilee message a renewal of her 1947 pledge that "my life will always be devoted to your service".

If ever we needed a descriptor of The Queen's unique reign it is in the word SERVICE and all that it conjures up for each of us personally and as Australians. For most of us in celebration mode this evening the one vital and valued constant throughout our lives in an ever changing world has been our one Sovereign, a role model of stability and service to our nation and fellow citizens.

These are the aspirational characteristics of the human condition manifest in commitment and contribution to our Australian society and communities in our uniquely Australian Honours system.

The Order of Australia established in 1975 by approval of Her Majesty, is a society of honour for according recognition to Australian citizens for achievement or meritorious service. In our country we are fortunate to have an egalitarian system of honours where every Australian citizen whatever their culture or religious beliefs can nominate fellow citizens from all walks and endeavours in life to be publicly honoured. This application has been referred to by the Governor-General, the Chancellor of the Order, as the 'bottom up' approach.

The recipients of awards elevate the concept of giving to others, they heighten our respect for one another and they encourage Australians to think about the responsibilities of citizenship in our democracy. Many are volunteers who seek no remuneration or reward. We are indeed a better country for having altruistic citizens with commendable devotion to the service and welfare of others.

Some 98 Queenslanders were so awarded on Australia Day 2022 of whom a record 48 percent were women.

It was a privilege representing the Order of Australia Association and to witness the reintroduction of the traditional collective Investiture ceremonies by our new Governor and Patron of our Association. Investitures at Fernberg and in Townsville were characterised by awed recipients of medals affixed by a gracious representative of their sovereign.

I acknowledge and thank Dr Dimitri Kopanakis, Chairman, The Victoria League Brisbane, for the ongoing fruitful collaboration of our two hosting Associations and respective planning committees.

Her Majesty finished her Platinum Jubilee address with, "I hope this Jubilee will bring together families and friends, neighbours and communities – after some difficult times for so many of us – in order to enjoy the celebrations".

That is indeed what this unique celebration event sets out to achieve.

Thank you.

Dr Gary Bacon AM

Attachment 2: Poem

Petrichor No More

Over sullen days and with craving appetite
Expanding clouds soaked up the aired moisture
Until the plimsoll line was passed
Then in a drunken chaotic disgorgement
Tons of the stuff curtailed down
Saturated the porous landscapes
Swamped all the old channels
Laid low the unprotected bush
Harvested the fixed and insecure
Within a stained torrent of swirling suspension
Blasting apart tar concrete steel and lumber
Banishing the signature petrichor
That envelops a typical tropical cleansing.

Petrichor is the pleasant smell outside after it rains. Much like perfume, there is a science behind this lovely scent. Nature provides a complicated mixture of many different compounds created by the oily essences emitted from plants, rocks and soils, each unique in its own right. From this amalgam comes petrichor, *in situ* unique.

Gary Bacon

Ferny Grove on Kedron Brook

Post 27 February 2022