



**The Order of Australia Association  
Tasmania Branch**

**'Recognising outstanding service and exceptional achievement of citizens in our communities.'**

**Northern Region February 2023 Newsletter**

We are delighted that at the AGM on February 9<sup>th</sup> Dr George Merridew AM was elected as the new Chair of the Northern Region (Tas.) We also congratulate his wife, Sarah Merridew AM who was recognised in the Australia Day Honours for her significant service to corporate governance, and to the Tasmanian community.



George and Sarah are currently travelling to South America and Antarctica. We look forward to hearing more from George at our next function on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Evandale. We hope you can join us.

***Other functions are planned for July 6<sup>th</sup> and November 23<sup>rd</sup>.  
Details to be advised.***

**2023 Committee:**

**Chair:** Dr George Merridew AM

**Deputy Chair:** Dr Nicholas Chantler AM

**Treasurer:** Rod Fraser OAM

**Committee members:** John Osborne OAM, Gary Carr OAM, Jenny Fraser OAM, Dr Frank Madill AM, Lou Johnson AM.



**INVITATION TO MEMBERS**

**The order of Australia Northern Region Committee  
invites you and a partner to our March Luncheon**

**Where:** The Prince of Wales Hotel, 2 Nile Rd, Evandale.

**When:** Thursday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 12 noon

**Cost:** Select your meal from the à-la-carte menu (Large and small serves available)  
Payment to be made at the venue.

**RSVP:** by March 13<sup>th</sup> to Jenny Fraser OAM

[jenny.fraser444@hotmail.com](mailto:jenny.fraser444@hotmail.com) Ph 0417 160 707

**Come along and enjoy the fellowship.**

**Large medals to be worn and name badges where applicable.**



*Therese Samorzewski recently retired from the committee and was invited to reflect on the past 10 years.*

### **Where have the ten years gone?**



One Friday morning while I was doing my usual volunteer work at St Vincent's Hospital, my volunteer partner Terry Heggaton OAM, said to me "Would you like to come onto the OAA Northern Tasmania Region Committee with me and a friend of mine"?

I answered naively "Yes", not knowing really anything about the organisation or what it would involve. So, Terry said that would be good and added, "You can be the secretary".

I had joined the Association when I had received my award in 1997, but owing to work and family commitments had never been involved or met anyone in the group.

With Terry and his friend Clive Lee AM, I attended the AGM in 2013. We came out of the gathering as the new Executive Committee and the work then started with Clive as Chair, Terry as Deputy Chair and myself as

secretary which also as I came to realise meant treasurer, newsletter writer, and functions organiser. This situation kept on going until just a few years ago for me. The unfolding of the purpose and format for the Northern Regional Group was really up to our initiatives, as all regions really do their own thing. Members of the State Branch were very helpful, and we gradually encouraged other members to become part of the executive. My sincere thank you to those who have helped in this way. Your hard-working commitment has been great.

There were never, very many, dull times as there were always some new challenges to tackle. Terry, Clive and I became members of the Branch Committee as well for several terms and we learnt a great deal about the Association. During the time that the National Board was updating the Constitution and Guidelines, many discussions occurred. Yearly programs for meetings, social events etc were brought into being and input was sought from members by conducting surveys and discussions held at some social events.

An important emphasis was placed on helping members of the local communities understand the nomination procedure, ways to acknowledge new awardees each year, and the importance of raising the awareness of the Order of Australia at Council level in our region, all still ongoing needs. Many thanks to Dr Frank Madill AM for all his efforts to help everyone in this regard, his work at National, State, and local level is remarkable.

The Northern Region's financial situation also improved with time, which was good as I had not been impressed, during the first few years, that I had to organise a raffle to be held at social events. I am glad that this requirement eventually passed. Another part of my involvement was taking the OAA banner to funerals if a request was made by a deceased member's family. There have been many social times to recognise the special people who have contributed so much to the Tasmanian



Northern Region, too many to recall but all achieving one of the aims of the Association to acknowledge and raise the profile of these wonderful people in our communities.

Affiliated membership became another ongoing discussion point for a few years until it was worked through at National and Branch level and it is now an accepted membership category. Time and effort have also been given to ensure that the AGM was a meeting with a required format, to suit the idiosyncrasies of the Association. It is now well formulated with openness and transparency provided. I have also been very pleased that we recruited a member to the committee to be responsible for archival work, thank you John Osborne OAM, I do think that all history is worth respecting and recording for posterity.

All Committee members have assisted me, and I am very grateful for their support, thank you MAJ Dr Nicholas Chantler AM for being a strong member for many years representing the Association on many important occasions. Thank you, Jenny Fraser OAM and Rod Fraser OAM, for all your efforts to keep 'the ball rolling' you are great.

Working with other members for 10 years at this grassroots level has been interesting and never dull. The purpose of the Association 'to foster love and pride in Australian citizenship and to uphold the high principles and prestige of the Order of Australia' is definitely a worthwhile purpose for all Australians. Hoping that everyone will contribute through their own membership to continue to give recognition, acknowledgement and credit to awardees. Awardees through their generous service and uniqueness, add richness, growth and renewed understanding of what it means to be an Australian citizen today.

Some of you might wonder, as I occasionally do, why I stayed on the committee for ten years. The answer is connected to how I won an award myself, against the odds, as a fairly low-profile woman, raised in a working class family and employed in a religious denomination not highly regarded in Tasmania. During my time on the executive, I have pushed for more women to be acknowledged and to be awarded for significant pragmatic achievements. Ever since Gough Whitlam created the Order of Australia in 1975, it was and has been criticised as class and gender based like the politicised British Imperial system. I am so pleased that the share of awards going to women reached 47% in 2022, the highest ever, with 45% for all awards being given for service to local communities. Please keep nominating very special and worthy members of the Tasmanian community and, in particular, highlight the achievements of women.

Thérèse von Samorzewski OAM



***Thank you, Thérèse for your wonderful service and contribution to the Committee over the past 10 years.***



## **Meet two of our new members.**

### **Alison Andrews AM**

Alison Andrews has been a journalist and writer since she started her cadetship at The Examiner Newspaper, Launceston, Tasmania in March 1970.

She has worked for a number of media organisations both locally and interstate, is a published author and has run her own media and public relations company.



Alison worked for many years as The Examiner's chief of staff and as its chief reporter and owned and operated Northern Tasmanian country newspaper, THE Northern Midlands COURIER, for seven years until she retired as editor last month (September) after selling the paper earlier this year.

While at The Examiner, a book of 100 Tasmanian people stories called Ali's People was published, selected from a weekly series by the same name which she wrote for six years. Proceeds from book sales were donated to the Friends of the Launceston Library to help support publication of local history books.

Alison has also served on community boards and organisations including TasDance, as director and chairman and director for Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board and Eskleigh Foundation. She was recently elected as a Councillor on the Northern Midlands Council.

Eight years ago Alison and her husband, Rex Heathcote, moved to live at Longford, in the house in which she grew up. They have five children and six grandchildren.

Alison's AM was awarded for services to the media, particularly print media and to the community.



### **Andrew MacGregor OAM**

Andrew spent the first eight years of his life living in Stanley with his six siblings and English parents. The family moved to Launceston in 1962 where Andrew continued his education at East Launceston Primary School, Queechy High School and Launceston Matriculation College.

After working for several years in part-time labouring positions around Australia Andrew enrolled in a Bachelor of Surveying Degree Course and graduated from UTAS in 1979. He then worked with the DMR in Launceston to gain his surveying licence, moved to Mackay, Queensland, where he was the Senior Surveyor on a major railway duplication project and then relocated to the DMR in Hobart.

Working as the Senior District Surveyor with the DMR in Hobart Andrew realised that he wasn't suited to the Government ethos so, after gaining his Graduate Diploma in Professional Management, he relocated to St Helens with his young family to commence his private surveying consultancy.



Over the next 35 years Andrew became deeply involved with the St Helens community. He was elected as a Councillor with the Portland and Break O'Day Councils and was the last Warden of Portland prior to Council amalgamation.

He is a Life Member of the St Helens and Districts Chamber of Commerce and was their President for three years. Andrew was a founding member of the St Helens Residents and Ratepayers Association and was the founding Chair of the Break O'Day Business Enterprise Board, a position he held for ten years. He was a board member of Medea Park Residential Care and their Chair for nine years. Andrew is currently serving in his fifth year as the inaugural Chair of Break O'Day Community Financial Services (Bendigo Community Bank) and he has completed five years as a Board member with the Tasmanian Community Fund. Andrew has also been a volunteer Property Committee Member with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.

Outside of his professional and community work Andrew is now the proud grandfather of six grandchildren. He loves the outdoors and is always active engaged in his environment. Andrew will be travelling to New Zealand and Africa in 2023 and is looking forward to adventurous times.'

**We welcome both Alison and Andrew to the Order of Australia Association.**

**There are many people in our community who deserve to be recognised for their work in the community.**

**Consider nominating someone for an Order of Australia Award.**

One of the objectives of the Committee is to assist with enquiries on the process to facilitate future nominations. More information is available on the Order of Australia Association website <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/forms>.

Additional information that you may find helpful:

1. Nominations are now done exclusively online.
2. Ensure that all the person's professional and civic activities, paid or volunteered, are included.
3. Select referees who know the nominee personally and can cover specific parts of the person's achievements.
4. Telephone or speak personally to each referee to ensure they will provide a reference and check which area of the subject's activities they will be highlighting.
5. If referees are uncertain, provide them with a copy of your nomination contribution.
6. Explain to the referees that they may not be contacted by the secretariat - that this does not mean that the nomination will not be considered.
7. Be patient it can take up to 2 years for a nomination to be finalised.



Steve's Grill Wednesday 23rd November 2022





**The OAA Northern Region AGM** was held at Glenara Lakes on Feb 9. Lou Johnson AM was the guest speaker. John Osborne OAM, Patricia (Pat) O'Bryan OAM, Robin Chromarty OAM and Thérèse von Samorzewski OAM were presented with their certificates to recognise 20+ years of membership of the OAA.



John Osborne OAM



Patricia (Pat) O'Bryan OAM



Robin Chromarty OAM



Thérèse von Samorzewski OAM

**More members with 20+ OAA Membership.**

Mr E A Cameron AM  
Mr Josef Chromy OAM  
Mr I M Lloyd AM  
Mr David McEwan AM  
SGGT Brian Medcraft OAM  
Mr Leonard Miles OAM  
Hon Peter Rae AO  
Mr Ananias Tsinoglou AM,  
Mr Stephen Tubb OAM  
Em Professor C A O'Flaherty AM

**The next edition of the Newsletter will be in June. Please forward your photos and news items to the Newsletter Editor, Jenny Fraser OAM [jenny.fraser444@hotmail.com](mailto:jenny.fraser444@hotmail.com)**