



Welcome from VIC Branch Chair

Please enjoy reading The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch December 2023 edition of our E-Newsletter, the last for this year. Our thoughts are with members in regional and rural Victoria impacted by current floods; we also take this time to thank the volunteers some who are OAA members who give freely of their time to help those when they are in need

The year that was - 2023 has been an exciting year for the Victoria Branch; we started with our Inspiring Australians Oration at the Melbourne Town Hall in February. When Paul Wheelton AM was the VIC Branch Chair one of his key objectives was to have a 'signature event' created for VIC Branch members; from this objective the Oration was established and continues. This year the Oration was delivered by Chris Leptos AO, yes you may have heard us mention Chris in other editions of our newsletter regarding Ambulances for Ukraine during the year. 2013 OAA Foundation scholarship recipient Tom Crowhurst also spoke at the Oration sharing his motivating journey prior to and post receiving his scholarship ten years ago. Tom's scholarship donor Hugh Morgan AC and his two mentors Chris Leptos AO and COL John Wertheimer AM attended, they are all still an integral part of Tom's life .

Associate Professor Patrick Mahar OAM was the speaker at our annual lunch in March held at the William Angliss Restaurant talking about the 'Inspiring medical innovation in the treatment of burns'.

May 18-21 the VIC Branch hosted the national conference in Geelong, the theme was 'Working Together-Building the Future'. We had the opportunity to proudly showcase the cultural diversity of Order of Australia recipients and Order of Australia Association members living in Victoria. Thank you to members who registered to attend the conference and to those who also volunteered.

Dr Jenny Gray the CEO of Zoos Victoria spoke at our virtual event in July. Post the pandemic the Branch has continued with a virtual event giving members the opportunity to stay connected.

The Pierre Bonnard Designed by India Mahdavi Introductory Talk and Exhibition in August at the National Gallery Victoria was well attended.

In October at the Alex Theatre St Kilda we hosted a Thank You Reception to thank Order of Australia recipients who joined the Association in 2023. Please refer to pages 6 and 7.

Our final event for 2023 was the End of Year Dinner on Thursday November 23 at William Angliss Restaurant with speaker Natalie O'Brien AM and OAA Foundation 2022 scholarship recipient Alex Nair. See pages 8 and 9 for the event wrap-up.

On a personal note, I thank the members of the OAA VIC Branch committee and our Regional Group committees for their work during the year to ensure we stayed connected with our members. Thank you also for the support we receive from the National Executive, staff and contractors when needed.



The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch acknowledges the diversity of cultural traditions over the summer months; please enjoy your festive season and the celebrations.

Trust 2024 brings you and those special to you prosperity, good health and optimism.

Please stay safe and enjoy summer.

Dr Helene Bender AM-VIC Branch Chair

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Frequently Asked Question

How do I order additional or replace Order of Australia Medals or Lapel Pins?

Additional or replacement Order of Australia Insignia and Lapel Pins can be purchased from:

Honours Secretariat

The Order of Australia Government House

Yarralumla ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6283 3533

Email: honours@gg.gov.au

Note the Association Lapel Badge sold in the Merchandise Shop is NOT the official lapel pin Order of Australia recipients receive with the medal pack at their Investiture.

For answers to other Frequently Asked Questions refer to **FAQ's** on the OAA national website

www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au



OAA Merchandise Shop Online summer specials

There are four online shopping specials December 1 to 10, 2023.

For the full range of OAA merchandise items including the new apron and cap please refer to <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart/>





Victoria Branch Events for 2024 including the Annual General Meeting are noted below.

Reminder OAA members and their guests are welcome to attend meetings and events outside their allocated Regional Group.

VIC Branch Regional Group Annual General Meetings for 2024, please refer to OAA VIC Branch Events website: <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/>

All venues selected by the Victoria Branch for events are accessible by members and guests of all abilities.

They are also easily accessible by public transport from metropolitan and regional areas

Inspiring Australians Oration then Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting

Date: Tuesday March 19 Time: 10.45 am for Oration

12.45pm sign in for 1.00pm Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Venue: Melbourne Town Hall Swanston Street Level 3

Cost: \$10 per person GST included + booking fee for Oration includes light refreshments.

If only attending the AGM there is no cost.

Further details will be available soon

Mid-Year lunch

Date: Tuesday June 18

Time: 12noon for 12.30pm seating

Venue: William Angliss Restaurant 515 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne entrance

Speaker: Alaa Elzokm OAM – Order of Australia citation – For service to the Islamic community

Pharaoh Exhibition Winter Masterpieces

Date: Sunday in July or August, subject to NGV confirmation

Time: 10.30am includes Introduction Talk and Pharaoh Exhibition

Venue: National Gallery Victoria

Thank You Reception

This reception thanks Order of Australia recipients who join the Association in 2024

Date: Wednesday October 9

Time: 1.15pm

Venue: Alex Theatre in St Kilda

Cost: There is no cost for the member and guest to attend

End of Year Dinner

Date: Thursday November 21

Time: 6.15pm for 6.30pm seating

Venue: William Angliss Restaurant 515 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne entrance

Hope, Investment, and a Sliding Door



Have you ever experienced a ‘sliding door’ moment in your life, and then later stopped to think, what might have been? For many, that sliding door moment is all too familiar, and depending on which side of the door we walked through, the course of our future lives was altered forever.

When we look back in time, with the clarity of hindsight, these moments always seem incredibly clear. However in the moment, they are innocuous events - part of our everyday lives. Although this might be the case, if we act with intent, we have the ability to create our own sliding doors moments whenever we wish.

At Independent Wealth Partners (IWP) we are privileged to be in a position where every day we facilitate Australian families and businesses plan for a purpose driven life. By purpose driven, we mean a life well lived, a life that prioritises ideas deeper than money. Some may argue that we are deprioritising money, however this is untrue. Our role is to alter the perspective that you view money through, cultivating a different path, where you lead not only a financially secure life, but also a live driven by purpose.

We see many people (*likely a high proportion of this audience*) that find great inner purpose in giving back to their communities. This giving is a planned and intentional part of living lives with purpose. Perhaps, their sliding door moment has been kind, and life has afforded them the opportunity and means to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

Whilst much of the attention in the investment world is spent helping people manage the capital they have accumulated, it is not lost on our business, that there are many people that have not been as fortunate, when (or if) their ‘sliding door’ moment arrived.

It is for this reason, one of our core business values is to use our ‘financial superpower’ as Independent Financial Advisers, to advocate and support those who haven’t had the opportunities we might have had. A purpose driven life should not only be the domain of the more ‘financially’ fortunate.

Specifically, as part of our giving strategy, our advisory team provides independent, pro-bono advice (both financial planning and accounting), particularly to women who have suffered financial abuse.

Our role is to assist them:

1. Understand their current position and what options are available;
2. Commence the journey towards articulating their purpose driven life, so they too can again feel the hope and optimism of a secure future;

Hope, Investment, and a Sliding Door continued

3. Discuss the important tenants of any sound investment plan, including;
 - investment and taxation structuring
 - asset allocation, and the assessment of investment risk
 - assessment of investment opportunities - including return outcomes
 - underlying fees and any other metrics that impact their final outcomes

4. Develop a step-by-step implementation strategy to ensure they can see what their future holds. Hope is a powerful emotion, and it is critically important in rebuilding a life.

Whilst in many cases, the process of working through the above can take time (especially for those who have suffered financial abuse); it is not an area that should be overlooked when we plan with care and intention.

We are inspired by the amazing work of many people in this community. It is incumbent on all of us to raise awareness of the options for those people who might have found themselves walking through the 'other' door.

Whether it be an innocuous moment, or a moment created with intent - we often see that a sliding doors moment has the power to change your life. When you couple this with considered advice, and a slightly adjusted perspective of money, the path to a purpose driven life is clearer.

And that is something we should 'hope' for all of us.

Shane Nicholas
Principal and Certified Financial Planner
Independent Wealth Partners
Website: <http://www.independentwealthpartners.com.au>



National Conference in Perth May 16-19, 2024

Register online via the WA page of the association's website at: www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au.
Conference Program

Thursday 16th May - Welcome Reception at Government House Perth hosted by WA Branch and supported by His Excellency Chris Dawson AC, APM, Governor of Western Australia and Mrs Darrilyn Dawson

Friday 17th May - Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel x Oration by Hon Malcolm McCusker AC, former WA Governor, x 3 Keynote speakers and a Panel of 5 on different topics x Optional Event: Lamont's Boutique Restaurant in Cottesloe for "Best of the West" wine tasting, tapas and freshly shucked oysters. [Suggest taxi sharing]

Saturday 18th May - Annual General Meeting & Members' Forum [Free but registration required] Optional Afternoon Event: Visit to the largest collection of historic pianos at WA Academy of Performing Arts (booking essential) [suggest taxi sharing] or free time to visit other places of interest [suggestions in conference bag]

Conference Dinner and Presentation of six Scholarships at Hyatt Regency Hotel [3 course pre-ordered menu]

Sunday 19th May - 11.00 am Wreath laying Ceremony Kings Park War Memorial followed by Farewell Lunch and handover to NSW at Frasers Restaurant Kings Park
5.00 pm Evangelical Service at St George's Cathedral with supper

Thank You Reception

The OAA VIC Branch hosted a reception at the Alex Theatre St Kilda to say congratulations to new members on their recognition as Order of Australia recipients and the outstanding contribution they have and are making to the community and to also say thank you for joining the Association.



After the National Anthem performed by The Australian Women's Choir led by Founder Wendy Stapleton members and guests watched a video message <https://youtu.be/1ChWuF7y4Yk> from the Association President The Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO filmed at the National Conference in Geelong May this year. The video made reference to the benefits and value of the Association Australia wide.



Then MC David Mann AM read the inspiring citations noting the diversity in recipients and the number members with international connections.

Each member was presented with a gift from OAA VIC Branch Chair Helene Bender AM.

Citations included:-

For distinguished service to the community through medical research administration, the arts, and business roles including current President Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

For distinguished service to primary industry, and to the education of refugee and asylum seeker young women. Foundation Principal The River Nile School and various primary industry roles.

For significant service to the dental industry, and to sport. Office Bearer positions include Chair Australian Dental Research Foundation; Australian Dental Industry Association; Cricket Victoria and Fitzroy Football Club/Brisbane Lions Vice-Chair Historical Society.

For significant service to the accountancy profession, and to the financial sector. Ernst and Young Asia-Pacific Risk Management Leader, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Chair, Asia-Pacific Ethics Oversight Group and Managing Partner, Melbourne. Australian Ballet School Board member. Mount Scopus Executive Member.

For service to the real estate industry. Current CEO Real Estate Institute of Victoria, former CEO Real Estate Institute Northern Territory; Director, International Trade, Government of the Northern Territory and ED Australian Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong.

For service to literacy education as an author and publisher. Keynote Speaker International keynote speaker in Asia, Australia and United States of America. Founder Seven Steps to Writing Success.

Thank You Reception

Churchill Fellow, Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.
International Board Chair, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators.

For service to the community through a range of organisations. City of Melbourne current Manager International Education. Member Victorian Multicultural Commission and AFL Multicultural Focus Group. Ambassador including Melbourne Victory Football Club, Bully Zero Australia Foundation and Mental Health Foundation Australia.

For service to the community through charitable organisations. International volunteer medical team member Kenya and Tanzania. Physiotherapist including Africa and India. COVID Response team member Aged-Care Facility Melbourne.

The Australian Women's Choir was welcomed back to perform an inspirational song of their choice – it was 'I still call Australia home'.

After all the formalities David invited members and their guests to mingle and enjoy refreshments and purchase some merchandise.



End of Year Dinner

William Angliss Restaurant was fully booked on Thursday November 23 for our End of Year Dinner. After the National Anthem Trevor Clark OAM VIC Branch Deputy Chair proposed the Toast to King Charles III and The Order of Australia Association.



The dinner MC Marg Attley OAM introduced our speaker **Natalie O'Brien AM** the Chief Executive of Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), where she is responsible for the strategic direction of the business. She also has oversight of planning and future management of the new Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCEC) opening in 2026. Natalie is a former CEO of Food + Wine Victoria, producers of the internationally acclaimed Melbourne Food & Wine Festival.

Prior to joining MCEC, Natalie ran her own strategic design agency for five years. During this time, she took on part-time CEO roles with Wine Victoria as well as Ballarat Regional Tourism.



Natalie was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2019 Australia Day Honours list for significant service to tourism, wine and the community. Prior to Food and Wine Victoria Natalie spent 12 years between Tourism Victoria and the City of Melbourne in events, marketing, and cultural development roles.

Her passion for food and service goes back a few generations. Natalie remembers during her childhood enjoying many breakfasts, lunches and dinners with lots of relatives sitting round the table sharing their ideas on how to make a difference with food and the important value of service. Those values have stayed with her during her career.

Natalie also made mention of the support MCEC provides annually to the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal and other not-for-profit organisations.

After fielding questions Fred Harrington OAM VIC Membership Secretary thanked Natalie for her informative talk outlining her opportunities, optimism and challenges.

The second speaker was an Order of Australia Association Foundation 2022 scholarship recipient **Alex Nair**.

We also welcomed Alex's mother Kylie Nair and her scholarship mentor Professor Dr David Ball AO and his wife Mary.

End of Year Dinner

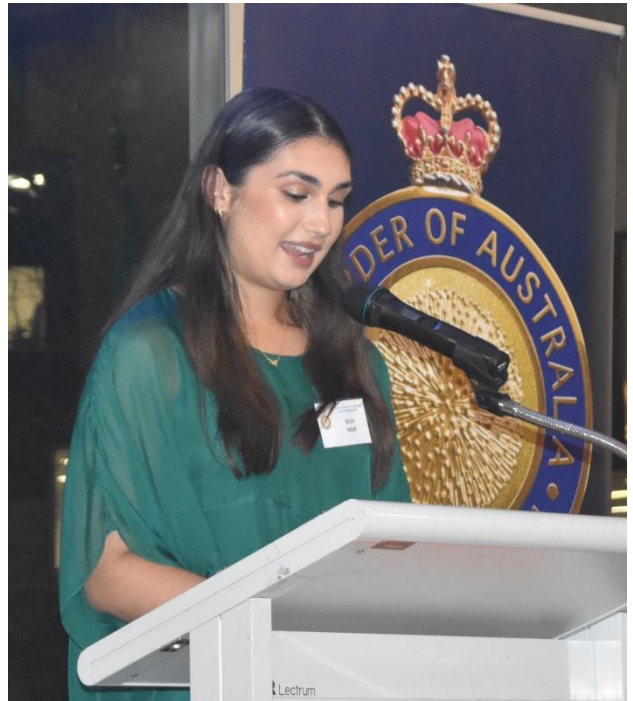
Before introducing Alex we had the opportunity to watch a video <https://youtu.be/SRloJ0ciOwQ> and hear our National Chairman Barry Nunn AO talk about the Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship opportunities. This video was also filmed at the national conference in Geelong May this year.

Alex lives in Sale and attends RMIT University in Bundoora to complete her degree in Medical Imaging. When she is not busily studying, she works three jobs, as well as volunteers at her University and her peak body for Medical Radiation practitioners and students.

She also volunteers locally at her Agricultural society and recently ran an event at their local show.

Alex received an Order of Australia Association Foundation scholarship last and was presented with her certificate May this year at the national conference in Geelong. Her scholarship was generously sponsored by the Associations Victoria Branch from Reserves, some individual members and Regional Groups.

She has been receiving guidance from her mentor, Professor Dr David Ball AO, on how to become the best Medical Radiations Practitioner she can be, and hopes to continue this correspondence as she undertakes a small research project focused on patient satisfaction in rural areas next year, as part of her final year of her degree.



Order of Australia recipients who joined the Association in 2023 unable to attend the Thank You Reception on October 4 at the Alex Theatre were presented with a gift from the VIC Branch after the Citations were read acknowledging the contribution these members make in the community.

In closing the OAA VIC Branch Chair Helene Bender AM thanked the students and staff at William Angliss Restaurant; the students are in the first year of their course; the feedback from members and guests was positive regarding their level of service and quality of the meal. William Angliss is a specialist training provider for food, tourism, hospitality, event and hotel management industries, delivering a range of courses within Australia and Internationally.



Gippsland Regional Group

2023 ANNUAL SIR FRANK MACFARLANE BURNET GALA EVENT

Eighty members and guests met at Dal Mondo restaurant and function centre in Traralgon to participate in the 2023 Gippsland Regional Group Annual Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet Gala Event on Wednesday evening 18th October.

Given the current cost of living difficulties faced by the community the event was considered a significant success despite the attendance number being down on last year where over 100 guests participated.

The speaker for this year's event was Professor H. Miles Price AM a world renowned haematologist who enthralled the audience as he explained how research was working towards eliminating chemotherapy as a treatment for cancer. He detailed the theory behind converting a person's own t' cells to be able to be injected back into the host (after specific treatment) to go about tracking down and destroying the cancer cells causing the deterioration of the patient's health. In other words, empowering the person's own immune system to fight the cancer cells through manipulation of the host's blood.



Included at the dinner were 10 students from Federation University, Churchill Campus whose attendance was wholly sponsored by Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. There were two other students who accompanied their parents to the dinner and, the Regional Group Committee was also very proud to be able to sponsor the Victoria Branch Order of Australia Association Foundation scholarship recipient (Alex Nair) who resides within the Gippsland Region.

Another special guest on the night was Jenny Dexter, who is Sir Frank's granddaughter. Jenny has made the trip down from Melbourne on several occasions now to join in the celebration of arguably Australia's most famous scientist on a date that is very close to the anniversary (20th of October) on which Sir Frank was awarded his joint Nobel prize for medicine.

Photo: Sponsored Federation University Churchill Campus students gather with the 2023 Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet speaker, Professor H Miles Prince AM

Gippsland Regional Group

2023 ANNUAL SIR FRANK MACFARLANE BURNET GALA EVENT

This was the seventh time the gala dinner has been conducted in Traralgon and would have been the ninth year that the function has been held except for a two year break due to Covi19 restrictions.

The Gippsland Regional Group Committee is fortunate to have several local businesses who continued to support the staging of the night and, along with the continued involvement of Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Burnet Foundation, the Committee believes that the concept of the evening will endure into the future.



Photo: At the conclusion of the evening guest speaker, Professor H. Miles Prince AM (centre) was presented with a token of the Gippsland Regional Group's appreciation by Group Deputy Chair Lorraine Bartling OAM and Group Chair Doug Caulfield, OAM RFD

To date the cumulative attendance for this event has exceeded 1,100 participants and provided some 110 students an opportunity to hear from high quality medical research specialists that, quite possibly, under normal circumstances, they would otherwise not have an opportunity to listen to, let alone meet and chat with.

The date for the **2024** Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet gala event has been announced and is to take place on Wednesday 23rd of October in Traralgon (the birthplace of Sir Frank) and all the details of venue, cost and timing are to be announced in due course.

North East Victoria and Goulburn Valley Regional Group

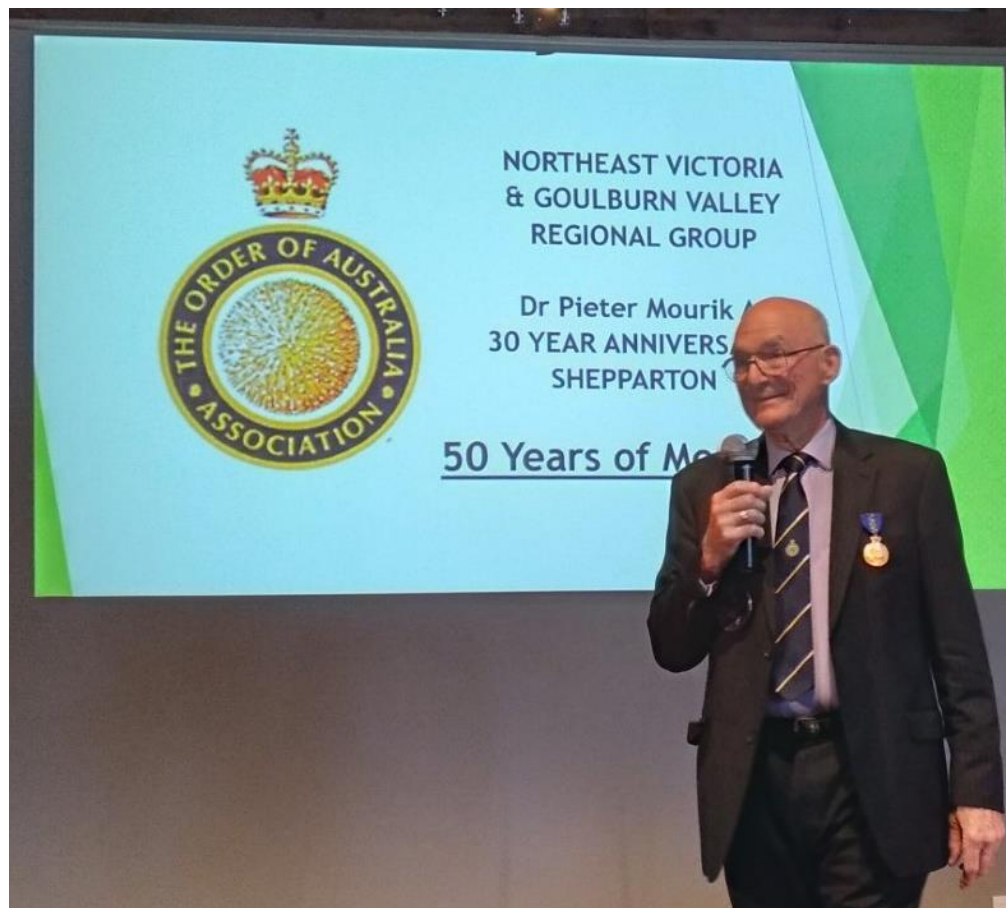
Luncheon Report from Sunday October 8 at The Woolshed @ Emerald Bank, Shepparton

Sixty members and guests attended our October lunch on a beautiful spring day. The setting was picturesque, overlooking a small lake in brilliant sunshine.

Everyone enjoyed a catch up beforehand with savouries and drinks then a sit down two-course lunch.

Guest Speaker Dr Pieter Mourik AM, gave a most entertaining presentation on “Then and Now; Changes in Medicine in My 50 Years”. How much has changed in those 50 years!

More recently Pieter was the Indigenous Culture Town winner in the Keep Australia Beautiful 2023 awards for his work on Aboriginal Ring Trees.



In Northeast Victoria, with “manipulated” red gum trees known as Aboriginal Ring Trees hold significant historical value.

These trees, over 200 years old, were marked by Aboriginal groups to define boundaries and signify important sites. Scar Trees are protected, but Ring Trees are not yet safeguarded.

Collaborating with Dhudhuroa Waywurra Nations, efforts to formally register and preserve identified Ring Trees are underway. Raising awareness is crucial, as many are unaware of their

existence, risking the loss of these historically important sites.

Congratulations to Dr Pieter Mourik AM (photo above) on this award.

Annual General Meeting and March Luncheon 2024

Please put Sunday March 24 in your diary for the North East Victoria and Goulburn Valley Regional Group Annual General Meeting and March luncheon. Guest Speaker will be the Hon Pat McNamara AM. Venue -Memorial Hall 2 Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre, Ovens Street, Wangaratta

South Central Suburbs Regional Group End of Year Dinner

This was held at the Commonwealth Golf Club, South Oakleigh on Wednesday November 22. Following the successful dinner last year, we held this event in the same venue which is a beautiful golf club, set in lovely surroundings with ample parking. The guest speaker was Dr Cheryl Threadgold OAM who delivered a most interesting and informative speech entitled “ Theatre in Local Communities” She engaged the audience with a journey through amateur theatre in Victoria, which commenced in NSW in 1788, to the opening of Melbourne’s first theatre in 1842, through to current times. Cheryl was successful in winning the Public Record Office of Victoria’s Collaborative Community Award 2020 Victorian History Awards for her self-published book “In the Name of Theatre.”



Many new Association members and younger members attended, which was a welcome opportunity to enjoy meeting and chatting with them. In addition Dick Kirby OAM, who is a Life Member of The Victorian Golf Society, shared his fascinating personal golf stories with the members.

Photo above:

Vice Chair Lesley McGurgan OAM, Chair Jill Page OAM, Speaker Dr Cheryl Threadgold OAM

Bursary Presentation to City of Kingston Young Citizen of the Year

Jill Page OAM and Lesley McGurgan OAM were invited by the City of Kingston and joined Mayor Cr Hadi Saab at Platform 81, Mordialloc, during Youth Week. South Central Suburbs Regional Group presents an annual bursary and certificate to inspirational young achievers in the local community.

Kingston Young Citizen of the Year is Josie Thornton who studies robotics at Parkdale Secondary College. She also has an important role in the STEM system and in mentoring year 7 students into the school community.



Photo: All the Kingston awardees with the Young Citizen of the Year, Josie Thornton Jill Page OAM, Mayor Cr Hadi Saab, Lesley McGurgan OAM and Kingston councillors

South Central Suburbs Regional Group

Annual General Meeting and Lunch

South Central Suburbs Regional Group Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 6 at 11.00am. The Bridge Hotel, Nepean Highway Mordialloc followed with lunch option and speaker Geoff Bransbury OAM. Lunch cost is \$40.00 including GST, includes pre-lunch drink, lunch, coffee.

New member Milly Parker OAM

Walking to my seat after her Excellency the Governor presented me with an Order of Australia Medal September of this year, I wanted to remember everything about that moment. How on earth had I, Milly Parker from Bendigo and with a brain injury, wind up being honoured here in Government House?



I owe my life to the volunteers of the Rochester SES who, in 1992, got out of their warm beds at 5am to attend to strangers in a terrible car accident. At just 21, I was one of those strangers.

That day I became a person with a disability, someone with a 'moderate' acquired brain injury, and told was told repeatedly not to expect much from myself career-wise. That was like a red flag to a bull.

For more than 25 years I've voluntarily fought alongside my beloved disability community for basic human rights and dignity in all manner of causes: including at the TAC, the Young People in Nursing Homes Campaign, and employment for people with disabilities and against discrimination of people with disabilities.

For nearly 15 of those years, I also ran Happy Yappers, a business I created

around my disability. I made and sold dog biscuits around the world, including to Harrods.

Of all this, I am most proud of being part of bringing the NDIS to disabled Australians. As my car accident happened in Victoria, the TAC was there to give me the resources to reach my potential as a person with a disability. It was unfathomable to me that this wasn't the case for most Australians with a disability.

I was there when the NDIS was just an idea and campaigned relentlessly for years with the disability community.

I told my story as a TAC client to show why a scheme like that needed to be expanded nationally.

And I sat in Federal Parliament when Prime Minister Julia Gillard made the NDIS a reality.

I am also proud of being part of the 2014 Four Corners program *In our care*, which exposed horrendous sexual abuse at Yooralla and contributed to the creation of many investigations, including the recent Disability Royal Commission. I hope now that this has concluded real change occurs.

New member profile Milly Parker OAM

I was awarded my OAM in 2018 for services to Disability through advocacy roles, but due to health issues, including PTSD, I was only well enough to receive it in person this year. I sincerely thank Wendy Heintz, Investiture co-ordinator at Government House for her kindness and encouragement over those five years.

Now my medal is finally where it belongs, at home with me. I smile every time I look at it and feel such pride at what the medal represents and at what I did to achieve it.

At the Investiture Ceremony, I fought back tears of joy, knowing I owed that moment to my disability - my brain injury. My beautiful brain, which struggles daily but I've learned to live with and love – and I've achieved more than I ever could have imagined because of it.

Milly attended the Thank You Reception in October, her citation read by David Mann AM was: For service to people with a disability through advocacy roles. As a member of the Transport Accident Commission's Disability Advisory Committee, Milly helped implement amendments to Victoria's transport legislation, resulting in more timely services for people injured in accidents and enabling clients to purchase their services directly.

It was lovely to also have Milly attend our End of Year Dinner last month.

The Victorian Multicultural Commission 40 years of service to the Victorian community

Article written by VIC Branch committee member: Dr. Teresa De Fazio OAM

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) was established 40 years ago and since then has provided Victoria with the support and guidance needed to create an inclusive and cohesive community for all.

The VMC was set up following the passage of the inaugural Ethnic Affairs Commission Act in 1982. It's primary role is one of advocacy between community and government, ensuring that the many communities who have made Victoria their home are represented and able to engage on aspects of policy debate as well as take part in all aspects of civic life in Victoria.

Our current appreciation of multiculturalism has not always been present in society. The White Australia policy was particularly damaging and was finally abolished in 1966. It was followed briefly by integration policy before Australia began to understand the social, economic, and cultural benefits that migrants brought to Australia and embrace multiculturalism.

Current Chair of the Commission Vivienne Nguyen is very proud of how far the Commission has come, *since its inception, the VMC has played a vital role in promoting and celebrating cultural diversity within Victoria. It provides the missing piece of the policy puzzle, forging connections and*



The Victorian Multicultural Commission 40 years of service to the Victorian community

giving voice and visibility to communities that might be otherwise marginalised in policy debates and developments.

Recently, the VMC gathered with many former commissioners, community representatives, and agency stakeholders to mark the 40th birthday. Christina Despoteris OAM was a key public servant at Ethnic Affairs at the time and has fond memories of the landmark moment multiculturalism found its voice in Victoria.

At this event, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Ingrid Stitt MP recognised the VMC's contribution to social cohesion, striving to ensure that when one community is uplifted, we are all uplifted.

Recently the impactful work of the VMC under the leadership of Vivienne Nguyen AM has included responses to natural disasters on multicultural communities, such as bushfires and floods for farmers and other victims.

Interestingly, the appointments of VMC Commissioners and Chairpersons over the 40 years reflect the patterns of migration to Australia. Vivienne Nguyen AM herself and her family settled here as refugees fleeing the Vietnam War.

Amongst all that work there are moments of celebration brings many together to enjoy the richness of diversity and the oneness of Victoria's community. These events include Cultural Diversity Week events each year in March, and the much-loved Multicultural Gala.

The Commission also supports a range of festivals and arts initiatives, the Italian Festa, Hispanic Festival, Lunar New Year, African Music and Cultural Festival, amongst others. Look out for the logo and you will see it everywhere.

Thankfully, we have moved on from the relics of the White Australia Policy with the VMC ensuring Victoria's multiculturalism continues to be a defining characteristic of our community.



Further information on the history of the VMC can be accessed through the Social Research Centre's report:

[*Making Multicultural Victoria: 40 years of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, 1983-2023.*](#)

Merchandise Shop

Our Merchandise Shop is taking a short break later this month.

Closing 6.00pm Thursday December 21, 2022 and Reopening Tuesday January 2, 2024.



To our members who purchased merchandise during the year, we appreciate your ongoing support.

OAA logo name badges

A template on the **Name Badges Australia** webpage allows OAA members to order name badges.

To order name badges, please follow the instructions found on the document that you can download from [here](#).



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