



THE  
ORDER OF AUSTRALIA  
ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA BRANCH

## OAA VIC Branch Chair Report for 1 January to 31 December 31 2023

The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch held four face-to-face events and one virtual in 2023 open to members and guests plus a Thank You Reception for Order of Australia recipients who joined the Association in 2023.

Some of our Regional Groups returned to face-to-face events while others opted for virtual events. Hopefully 2024 will see an increase in face-to-face events to ensure ongoing connection with our members.

There were 469 Order of Australia Honours & Awards recipients from Victoria announced on Australia Day and King's Birthday holiday. The percentage of recipients (169) converted to members in 2023 is 36%, a slight increase on the 2022 percentage. Thank you to the recipients who joined and members who encouraged recipients they know to join.

If you know Order of Australia recipients who have not joined the Association, please refer them to the [www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/membetrship-application/](http://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/membetrship-application/)

On 30 June the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC CVO finished her eight year term. On 9 August 2023 the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC commenced her five year term as the Governor of Victoria and accepted the invitation to be Patron of The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch.

We thank both Governors for the invitation to attend the Investitures in April and September recognising Order of Australia recipients for their exceptional achievements and contribution to Australia.

As VIC Branch Chair I extended the invitation to committee members to attend some of the 2023 Investitures.

OAA VIC Branch hosted Events in 2023:

28 February (Tuesday morning): Inspiring Australians Oration at the Melbourne Town Hall delivered by Chris Leptos AO a Director of an 'ASX 100' company that operates in 30 countries and chair of three national charities.

2013 OAA Foundation scholarship recipient Tom Crowhurst shared his motivating journey prior to and post receiving his scholarship.

We were fortunate to have members who were and are an integral part of Tom's 2013 scholarship; the scholarship donor Hugh Morgan AC and his two mentors Chris Leptos AO and COL John Wertheimer AM.

Senior secondary school students also attended.

Event MC Fred Harrington OAM

30 March (Wednesday morning/lunch): Annual General Meeting and Annual Lunch at William Angliss Restaurant with speaker Associate Professor Patrick Mahar OAM a specialist in adult and paediatric dermatology.

Event MC Barb Thomas OAM

5 July (Wednesday twilight): Virtual event with speaker Dr Jenny Gray CEO Zoos Victoria

Event MC Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM.

IT assistance from Michelle Challis

6 August (Sunday mid-morning): Melbourne Winter Masterpieces; The Pierre Bonnard: Designed by India Mahdavi Introductory Talk and Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria.

4 October (Wednesday early afternoon): Thank You Reception for Order of Australia recipients who joined the Association in 2023. This event was held at Alex Theatre St Kilda.

Event MC: David Mann AM

23 November (Thursday early evening): End of Year Dinner at William Angliss Restaurant with speaker Natalie O'Brien AM the Chief Executive of Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)

2022 OAA Foundation scholarship recipient Alex Nair shared her studies, community work and employment with members and guests. The OAA VIC Branch in conjunction with members and some VIC Regional Groups sponsored the scholarship presented to Alex a second year Medical Radiations student from RMIT University at the 2023 National Conference Dinner.

Event MC Marg Attley OAM

There was an opportunity at most VIC Branch events in 2023 for members to purchase OAA Merchandise.

The VIC Branch acknowledges and thanks the Melbourne Town Hall, William Angliss Restaurant and the Alex Theatre for their sponsorship and in-kind support during the year.

We also appreciate the ongoing support we receive from the Australian Women's Choir lead by Wendy Stapleton.

It was a pleasure to attend the North East Victoria & Goulburn Valley Regional Group 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary lunch on Sunday 26 March in Benalla. Congratulations to the RG under Chair Barb Thomas OAM

Victoria Branch hosted the 2023 National Conference in Geelong 18-21 May; this was the first time the national conference has been held in a regional city. The theme was 'Working Together-Building the Future'. Thank you to members who registered to attend the conference and those who also volunteered.

Due to the ongoing unrest in various countries the May/June 2024 Battlefields Tour of Gallipoli and Western Front was cancelled in October.

During the year the VIC Branch committee had the opportunity to provide national with comments on Policies, Procedures, Strategic Plan, By-Laws and Futures Outcomes; thank you to the Regional Groups who also provided comments.

In the 2023 financial year, 11 of our 12 active Regional Groups have arranged with Bendigo Bank to receive their bank statements the second working day of the month. This ensures RGs are able to email 31 December statement/s to the VIC Branch ensuring the Branch complies with the national audit requirement to receive 31 December statements within 21 days of the end of the financial year. This relates to trading account and investment/term deposit accounts.

I acknowledge the support we continue to receive from the OAA National Executive.

Frank Crawley OAM was appointed incoming National Treasurer in November 2023 from 1 January 2024 replacing Muriel Barasso OAM who resigned due to ongoing health issues.

The Branch values the work and guidance over many years of the National Editor *The Order* national magazine Phil Morrall AM who retired December 202 plus the service received from National Membership Officer (Heather) and staff in the office of the Governor-General.

On behalf of the VIC Branch I thank committee members for their input during the year including William Lye OAM KC the Branch Nominated Director on the National Board.

## 2024 VIC Branch Event dates:

### **Date: Tuesday 19 March**

Inspiring Australians Oration then Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting

Time: 10.30am for 10.45am Oration

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

Venue: Melbourne Town Hall Level 3. 90-130 Swanston Street Melbourne

**Oration:** Will be delivered by Fiona McLeod AO SC – Order of Australia citation - for distinguished service to the law, and to the legal profession, at the national and international level, and to women lawyers.

2018 OAA Foundation recipient Hannah Gandy will also speak at this event

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

No cost to attend the AGM.

### **Date: Tuesday 18 June**

Mid-Year lunch

**Time:** 12noon for 12.30pm seating

**Venue:** Melbourne CBD venue

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

There will also be an OAA Foundation scholarship recipient speaking at the lunch

### **Date: Wednesday 24 July**

Virtual Event via ZOOM

**Time:** 5:30pm to 6:45pm

**Venue:** Via ZOOM

**Speaker:** Ian Carson AM Co-founder of SecondBite

**Cost:** There is no cost to attend this event

### **Date: Sunday 4 August**

Pharaoh Exhibition Winter Masterpieces

**Time:** 10.45am includes Introduction Talk and Pharaoh Exhibition

**Venue:** National Gallery Victoria

### **Date: Wednesday 9 October**

Thank You Reception

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

**Time:** 1.15pm

**Venue:** Alex Theatre in St Kilda

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

### **Date: Thursday 21 November**

End of Year Dinner

**Time:** 6.15pm for 6.30pm seating

**Venue:** Melbourne CBD venue

**Speaker: Pamela Clark AO** - Order of Australia citation - For distinguished service to the dental profession, particularly through a range of roles with national and international associations, as a supporter of research and technical dental standards, and to manufacturing.

Look forward to seeing you at OAA events during 2024; please refer to OAA VIC Branch website:

[www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/](http://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/)

In closing thank you from me personally and from the Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch committee for the support received from members during 2023.

Dr Helene Bender AM

Chair OAA VIC Branch

Current 31 January 2024