



Dated February 2024

Vision Impaired Accessible Document



On the front cover is a photo of a Student Citizenship medallion awarded by the South Australia Branch of the OAA in 2023 and a memorial to SX8150 Private Keith (Chook) John Fowler, a WW2 veteran of active service in North Africa and Java with the 2/3rd Machine-Gun Battalion AIF, and a prisoner-of-war sent to work on the infamous Burma-Thailand railway. 'Chook', also pictured, received a Medal of The Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours List 2023 at the age of 102 and kindly donated funds for the medallions. He sadly passed away in December.

## NOTICES & EXCLUSIONS:

This version of our national magazine is not intended for general distribution to the wider public but is prepared as a service to those of our members who require the use of vision-impaired screen-reader technology. Thus, certain pages of the hard-copy version involving complex graphics or page layout have been omitted.

## GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION.

National Office – Email: [oaasecretariat@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:oaasecretariat@theorderofaustralia.asn.au)

National Secretary – Graham Hyde OAM Email: [natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au)

## MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

**HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL THE HONOURABLE DAVID JOHN HURLEY, AC, DSC (RETD)**

In my final Australia Day address as Governor-General, I reflected on my favourite line from Dorothea Mackellar's iconic poem, My Country:

‘For flood and fire and famine,  
She pays us back threefold’.

Knowing the character of Australian people, I agree with Ms Mackellar. Australia does pay us back threefold – and that's because of the character of our people. For all the challenges thrown our way, I can't help but be optimistic for our future. We're a good people, united and bound together.

There is, as I've said before, no better snapshot of our national character than an Honours list. Individually, recipients' stories are inspiring. Collectively, they speak to the strength of our communities.

The Australia Day Honours included 759 awards in the Order of Australia. Recipients come from all parts of the country. They have served and made an impact in just about every field you can imagine; their stories and backgrounds are diverse.

I'm pleased that for the second consecutive Honours list the majority of recipients in the General Division are women. I am confident that the work to encourage nominations for outstanding Australians from across our community, regardless of their background or field of endeavour, will ensure that the Order is inclusive, diverse and reflects the full breadth of Australia.

I hope that each recipient enjoyed being celebrated and their recognition on Australia Day. I have met enough recipients to know a few things for sure: first, that most are humble and will try to deflect praise. Second, that receiving recognition will be a milestone, not an end point to their service and contribution to our community. They will go on working hard, giving selflessly of themselves and making a difference at the local, national or international level.

To that end, I hope that many choose to join The Order of Australia Association and contribute to the Association's many and varied impactful contributions to our community. Each of you reflects those characteristics that define us as a nation. Thank you for what you have done, continue to do and will do in the future in the service of our nation.



## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION** **VICKI O'HALLORAN, AO, CVO**

Happy New Year to all. May 2024 bring you good health and happiness and an opportunity to nominate a fellow Australian for an Order of Australia. We all know there are countless examples of selflessness and dedication by many in our communities that are deserving of recognition. I continue to encourage all members and friends to consider making a nomination. Receiving recognition at the highest level in our country significantly changes our lives and can be instrumental in uniting, inspiring and uplifting our family, friends and the broader community.

I was reading today that it is 460 years since Shakespeare's birth on 23 April 1564 and this led me to thinking that this time next year, we will be looking forward to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On 14 February 1975 The Order of Australia was instituted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for the purpose of according recognition to Australians for achievement of meritorious service. Over the course of the past 49 years, more than 43,000 Australians have been recognised in the General Division. The positive impact within our communities is immeasurable.

In December of last year, I met with our Patron, His Excellency General, the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), to provide an update of the work undertaken by the Association and Branches throughout 2023. This meeting was very positive and encouraging, offering heartfelt recognition of the significant work undertaken in each State and Territory. It was a pleasure



also to be hosted by Paul Singer, Official Secretary to the Governor-General, Rob Ayling, Director Communications and Creativity, and Sharon Prendergast LVO, Director Honours and Awards, and to meet the Honours and Awards Secretariat teams and learn about their day-to-day responsibilities and operations and, in particular, to view the engraving workshop. Each medal is impressively individually and painstakingly engraved with remarkable precision and tender care.

I am very much looking forward to meeting up with many of you at our National Conference in Perth, 16- 19 May. The theme *Giving Service Beyond Self* is fitting and a good reminder about the value of making a positive contribution that can enhance the quality of life of others. There are many events, inspirational speakers and pre- and post-conference tours, and of course the Conference Dinner will be a highlight where six Foundation Scholarship recipients will be recognised.

I extend my best wishes to all. Go well and take good care.

## MESSAGE FROM THE OAA CHAIRMAN

Barry Nunn AO

I hope that all members have had a successful festive season, have been able to enjoy time with family and catch up with friends.

We enter 2024 with little improvement in either the international or the domestic scene. The threat of widening conflicts in both Europe and the Middle East is a cause of great anxiety. At home many of our members face the pressure of increasing costs of living, without the benefit of significant income increases.

It was with great satisfaction that we were able to make a small contribution to easing financial stress among members by reducing membership fees from 1 January 2024. We have passed on to members the benefits of significant reductions in the costs of running our Association. We are confident that the lowered fees will encourage more new recipients to join us and reduce the loss of existing members.

There have been some changes on the National Board, with both our Deputy Chairman, John Archer OAM, and our Treasurer, Muriel Barasso retiring because of ill health after an extended period of valuable service to the Association. We thank them, were pleased to welcome Frank Crawley OAM as our Treasurer in December 2023 and look forward to appointing a Deputy Chairman soon.

Branches are in the process of holding Annual General Meetings and electing new members to Branch Committees. I thank those committee members who are retiring in 2024 for their service and congratulate those who have taken up the challenge of committee membership. The combination of experienced members and new appointments with fresh ideas in our management teams should generate plans for continued stability and growth.

At the end of February there will be only 46 sleeps until the opening of the National Conference in Perth. I encourage all to take advantage of early registration, secure both accommodation and transport, and be ready to enjoy a stimulating conference from 16 to 19 May. Attend the

National AGM and Forum on Saturday 18 May and contribute by asking questions of your Board and giving us ideas for improvement.

I look forward to catching up with friends of long standing and making new ones in Perth in May.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO HEATHER WILLIS, NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Heather Willis is the only “official” member of staff of The Order of Australia Association (OAA). All the officials in governance and executive at all levels are volunteers, but Heather provides the ongoing and very necessary administrative support that serves as a backdrop to their work and guarantees continuity of processes as elected officers rotate.

Heather’s (part-time) work includes:

- Maintaining the database for the Association, including updating membership records;
- Managing all aspects of the introduction of new members into the database for Australia Day and King’s Birthday, including processing new membership applications and payments and troubleshooting;
- Ensuring smooth membership administration, sending out invoices, reminders, and following up on payments;
- Handling all questions, information requests and complaints regarding membership;
- Producing and mailing all the Congratulation Letters from the National Chairman to new recipients after each Honours List announcement;
- Over recent Lists, producing and mailing by hard and soft copy Congratulation Letters on behalf of some Branches.

Heather was born in Pretoria, South Africa and, on migrating to Australia, worked for the law courts in Brisbane, Queensland, as a court reporter, working for the late Mr Earle Rawlings OAM, who was then the Chief Reporter. Heather moved to the Federal Department of Parliamentary Services, working as a Hansard reporter/Senior Editor/Assistant Director, and then to the Political Section of the South African High Commission before joining the OAA in June 2016.

For more than seven years, Heather has kept the membership machine oiled and running!



## EDITORIAL

I want to use this first Editorial to introduce myself but, before I do that, I want, on behalf of all the contributors to and readers of *The Order*, to thank Phil Morrall OA JP for looking after the magazine for seven years. Phil also spent several patient months online guiding me through the many processes involved in taking *The Order* from disparate items in the National Editor's inbox to a four-colour finished product in your mail. Thank you, Phil.

So I am the new Editor, June Kane AM. I "belong" to the Western Suburbs Regional Group of the Victoria Branch and received my award for my work with the United Nations in child protection. I have been involved with research, writing, editing and publications generally since my early childhood. My first book, when I was nine years old, was called "A Dark, Stormy Night" and the bloody dagger hand-painted on the cover foreshadowed a gruesome tale of murder and mayhem. My second book was an edition, in French, of the poetry of King Francis I, the Renaissance king of France. My latest work – 45 books and research studies later – is a chapter entitled, "Making money out of misery" in a book on human trafficking.

I have also been Publications Manager at BHP, Director of Information at the International Red Cross and, briefly, news producer at the ABC. Now, though, I am working for you, the readers of *The Order*. Please do not hesitate to send your comments on the magazine to me at: [NatEditor@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:NatEditor@theorderofaustralia.asn.au).

THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION LTD

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Thirty-Eighth Annual General Meeting of The Order of Australia Association Limited will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 99 Adelaide Street, Perth, WA on **Saturday 18 May 2024 at 9.00am (AEST)**.

### DRAFT AGENDA

1. Opening.
2. Apologies.
3. Proxies.
4. To confirm the Minutes of 37th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 20 May 2023.
5. To receive, consider and adopt the Annual Report including Directors' Report, Financial Report and Auditor's Report for The Order of Australia Association Limited for the period ended 31 December 2023\*.
6. To note the Directors' Report and the Financial Report including the Auditor's Report for The Order of Australia Association Foundation and The Order of Australia Association Foundation Limited for the period ended 30 June 2023.
7. Advise of the election of the National Secretary.
8. Approve the appointment of Auditors for the year ended 31 December 2024.

**By Order of the Board**

**Graham Hyde OAM**

**National Secretary**

**24 January 2024**

\* The Annual Report will be available on the Association website under Governance-AGM from Wednesday 24 April 2024.

Members requiring a hard copy should contact the National Secretary at [natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au).

## ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE NATIONAL BOARD.

Members are invited to consider nominating for a position on the Executive Committee of the National Board.

For 2024 there will be an election, with the National Secretary, Graham Hyde OAM completing a three-year term. Graham is eligible to stand for the position.

The new appointment will be for a three-year term.

A member of the Association is any member who is currently financial, in accordance with the Constitution (Clause 13.1). The Nomination form is to be completed by two members and the nominee.

Nominees are requested to provide a resume of no more than 400 words noting their skills and experience relevant to the responsibilities of the position.

Nominations are to be lodged with the Chairman of the Nominations Committee on or before 5pm (AEDT) 28 March 2024 as follows:

Mr Peter McMurtrie AO. KStJ

Postal Address

Chairman Nominations Committee

The Order of Australia Association Ltd

5 Lee Street, PIMPAMA QLD 4209

Email

[dirqld@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:dirqld@theorderofaustralia.asn.au)

Ph 0408 887 923

**Note**

The Board Charter includes a Position Description and Application Form for Executive Director positions and is on the OAA website at: <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/G2-Board-Charter.pdf>

or is available from the National Secretary at [natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au).

Intending nominees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the statutory and legal requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC): <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/factsheets/responsible-people-board-or-committee-members>

## NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN JAMES MEIN A.M.'S REPORT

We congratulate each Australia Day New Awardee on your achievement and welcome you to the ever-increasing list of inspiring Australians to be so well recognized. Each of you has been acknowledged for making a positively impacting contribution to the well-being of Australia.

The diversity of the latest awardee citations is very like a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle but we need more nominations to at least reach that 1,000 in January and in June each year.

Can you imagine what such puzzle would look like and the many messages which could be drawn from it?

It is not just the individual faces but the impacts they accumulate together. The diversity of service is so broad: hands on care for individuals; research of medical, legal, dental, structural, academic, educational, environmental and scientific kinds; social justice adversarial and advisory; support, care and empowerment of young, disabled, disadvantaged and aged people; cultural, cross-cultural and faith related; performing arts, writing and entertainment; sport; public service, emergency and military services; social welfare; and community services. The list goes on and on, for there are so many opportunities to make Australia a better place for all.

As a Branch Committee member, I have found the investiture ceremonies are so uplifting for they highlight so many amazing and inspirational people. We need to nominate many more such people, including younger Australians, for The Order is not just for long service.

And we need all awardees to become members of the Association so together we can advance the importance of The Order of Australia. We do much together as members through activities and continue to learn from each other for Australia's benefit.

As this is my last report as NSW Chairman, as my term comes to an end at our AGM in March, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the NSW Branch Committee for their support, hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank our members around all our regions of



NSW as well as in metropolitan Sydney for your support in my years as Chairman of this prestigious organization.

## NSW EVENTS

### **Christmas Luncheon a great success!**

The Order of Australia Association NSW 2023 Christmas Luncheon was held at the Kirribilli Club on the 2 December 2023. More than 80 members and guests gathered to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season but also importantly to raise money for The Order of Australia Association Foundation.

The Foundation supports our next generation of leaders by helping promising young Australians to achieve their potential for the benefit of future generations of Australians. The NSW Deputy Chair and Events Manager, Dr John Gullotta AM, welcomed guests and introduced guest speaker Dr Helen Nugent AC, Chair of the Order of Australia Association Foundation.

The audience was entertained by the operatic voices of tenor Gaetano Bonfante and soprano Julie Lea Goodwin, who transported the audience into a magical journey of opera and musical theatre with a Christmas themed twist!

Gaetano Bonfante is an Italo-Australian tenor who has been on the classical concert stage for many years. He has performed in 15 productions for Opera Australia and also toured with *La Traviata* (as Alfredo) to 18 Cities in China. Julie Lea Goodwin is a principal soprano with Opera Australia. Aged only 19, Julie Lea was invited to sing the leading role of Christine Daae in the national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*, starring Anthony Warlow. The following year, she played Maria in *West Side Story* across Australia.

It was a very successful event with more than \$7,500 raised towards a NSW Branch Foundation Scholarship which will be presented at our National Conference in Sydney in 2025.



## **Commemorating *Reflect, Respect and Celebrate on Australia Day 2024***

The Story of Australia began 60,000 years ago. New chapters are written every day. On 26 January, we reflect on our history, its highs and its lows, and the need to respect the stories of others. We celebrate our nation, its achievements and, most of all, its people as we are all part of the story.

This year a capacity crowd of 165 NSW members and guests enjoyed the Australia Day Harbour cruise and luncheon, a longstanding annual event for our Branch.

It was a most enjoyable, relaxed day on Sydney Harbour aboard the Captain Cook III on a picture-perfect summer day. Everyone enjoyed the atmosphere with good food, drinks and importantly stories and life experiences exchanged with other Order of Australia recipients from all walks of life and different cultural backgrounds. All aboard had front row seats to the 21 Gun Salute, Australia Day Ferrython, Air Force Roulettes flying display, Navy Seahawk Helicopter flag display, Maritime Mayhem water show, Australia Day Harbour Parade, Tall Ships Race and the Working Harbour Display.

In the theme of the Australian spirit, the charity we supported this year was the Rev Bill Crews Foundation which has been caring for the homeless and those in need for almost 40 years. Our very generous members and guests raised \$4,000 on the day.

## **NSW BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

DATE: 19 MARCH 2024

VENUE: To be confirmed.

Further details will be on our website and all financial NSW members will be emailed with the required information package 21 days before the AGM.

## **FEATURED MEMBERS**

### **CAROLYN STEDMAN OAM and DAVID STEDMAN OAM**

In 1976 Carolyn was in her kitchen with her two children at the time and heard a call on the radio calling for foster parents. "I think God spoke to me in that moment," she says. "I knew I liked staying home and looking after kids, so I thought, 'that's something I could do'".

Four decades later, Carolyn and her husband David have cared for more than 75 children, as well as raising six children of their own and supporting 26 grandchildren. Their home has become a safe place for so many children in need.

David adds, "At one point we had nine children living under our roof! That happened to be when the census man came along," he said. "He gave us one form, and it only had enough room for six people. So we had to chase him and get another form. And he said, what have you got there, a commune?"

"I didn't plan to foster so many children but felt like I had a gift for caring," Carolyn says.

Over their forty years of fostering, Carolyn and David have cared for newborn babies up to 17-year-olds. However 75% of their placements have been babies and toddlers. They are certainly not too old as they have just taken up caring for another 4 week-old baby!

Carolyn and David both received a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours List "*for service to children particularly as foster parents*".



**SAVE THE DATE: 1 - 4 May 2025**

The Order of Australia Association National Conference 2025, Sydney

Thursday 1 – Sunday 4 May 2025

SOFITEL Sydney Wentworth – 61 Phillip Street, Sydney

The theme of our 2025 conference will be:

**CELEBRATE | MOTIVATE | NOMINATE - “Inspiring Australian Achievers”**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA BRANCH**

**CHAIRMAN BETTINE HEATHCOTE A.M.'S REPORT**

2024 will be a busy year for the WA Branch and, on behalf of our members, I wish all members across the nation a very Happy New Year.

As always, the early part of the year has a number of important events. The AGM followed by a Brunch will be held overlooking the Swan River at Matilda Bay Restaurant in February, then the Australia Day Reception, hosted by the City of Stirling in March. We have arranged a visit to a Boutique Organic Vineyard in April. Of course, a major focus will be the National Conference in May, and preparations are well in hand to welcome members to what is

promising to be a memorable Conference. To register, go to the Order of Australia website where you can also access a video we have made to encourage members to register.

A sharp rise in the cost made it necessary for us to find an alternative venue for our Christmas Lunch. Holding it at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where the Conference will take place, gave members a chance to visit the hotel, and the committee an opportunity to experience working with the hotel staff which will ensure smooth running of the Conference.

We look forward to seeing many members from other Branches in Perth in May.

## NSW EVENTS

### **Government House Open Days October 2023**

Each year the Governor, His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM, and Mrs Darrilyn Dawson, open Government House and Gardens to the WA public. The Order of Australia Committee WA is invited, with other non-for-profit organisations, to display their activities. On two occasions this year we were able to discuss nominations with the passing public, many of whom did not understand that Order of Australia awards are nominated by the public and not government.

### **OAA WA Branch Christmas lunch**

At lunchtime on 8 December 2023, 120 members and guests gathered in the ballroom of the Hyatt Hotel. It was an informal, enjoyable time in preparation for Christmas, with turkey and Christmas pudding. It is always a lovely way to start the festive season with the inevitable crackers containing jokes and hats that many wore. Our Chairman, Bettine Heathcote AM, welcomed us and wished everyone the compliments of the season. Once again Barry Nunn AO and Margaret Nunn OAM prepared a Christmas Quiz that was not as easy as the Quiz Master, Barry Nunn, suggested!

## FEATURED MEMBER

### **Dr Mi Kyung Lee OAM, BSc, GradDipHSc,MA,PhD**

Dr Mi Kyung Lee OAM was born in Seoul, South Korea. At the age of 18 she migrated, with all her family, to Perth, Western Australia, where she fell in love with the space, warm weather, the endless blue skies and the ocean. Mi Kyung studied nutrition at Curtin University because she loved food and the idea of helping people through an understanding of Nutritional Science. After graduation, she worked in the Federal Department of Health in Canberra, developing national nutrition policy and dietary guidelines.

When she returned to Perth, Mi Kyung Lee studied for a PhD and later taught nutrition at Murdoch University for 20 years.

She has volunteered with the WA group of the Nutrition Society of Australia, and was Chair of the WA Chapter of KASEA, the Korean Academy of Scientists and Engineers Australasia, a not-for-profit academic organisation that focuses on the dissemination and exchange of knowledge and research relating to science, engineering and technologies across South Korea,

Australia and New Zealand. She became their Finance Manager, then Vice-President and finally President of KASEA.

Mi Kyung is Chair of the Wesley Congregational Meetings in Perth. Her childhood hero was Mother Teresa, whom she met in India in 1996. Mother Teresa said, “Wherever God has put you, that is your vocation. It is not what we can do but how much love we put into it – not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love”. Her life has been Mi Kyung’s inspiration.

Mi Kyung is supported by her husband, Professor Colin Binns AO, and two dogs!



## Upcoming WA Branch Events

AGM and Brunch: Sunday 25 February 10am at Matilda Bay Restaurant.

Australia Day Awardees Reception: Wednesday 13 March at the City of Stirling

Visit to Hainault Boutique Organic Vineyard and Winery in the Bickley Valley for a wine tasting, two-course lunch and a talk by the owner at 12.00 noon Saturday 13 April.

The National Conference of the Order of Australia Association will take place in Perth from 16 to 19 May. Full details can be found on the Order of Australia website.

## ACT BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN ANDREW PHELAN A.M.'S REPORT

Following approval by the National Board of the closure of the dormant Southern Tablelands Regional Group, the NSW and ACT Branches agreed that members in that region would be offered membership of the ACT Branch, which is more suitable for them than any one of their adjoining NSW regions. Over the past month or so, I have had the pleasure of welcoming 10 members of the former Southern Tablelands region to the ACT Branch. Members who live in areas adjacent to the ACT have always been welcome at our events and we look forward to catching up with our newly transferred members in the near future.



On behalf of all members, I congratulate all of the honours recipients announced in the 2024 Australia Day Honours List, in particular the 36 recipients from the ACT and region. Congratulations are also due to Branch member Ebenezer Banful OAM, volunteer and multicultural advocate, who is the 2024 ACT Senior Citizen of the Year.

Branch events for 2024 began on an ACT self-government theme with Mr Gary Humphries AO, a former Senator and Chief Minister of the ACT, giving the presentation at the Branch's well-attended Australia Day Breakfast at the Hyatt Hotel Canberra. One point he made was that it took 166 years for self-government to come to every community on this continent – the last being the national capital. We look forward to our 2024 AGM next month, at which Dr Michael Moore AM, former Minister in the ACT Government and internationally regarded public health advocate, will speak. Over the next few months, we shall be holding a morning tea and the annual Order of Australia Association – Defence Force Oration, details of which will be available in the next few weeks.

## ACT EVENTS

### **OAA-ANU Lecture, November 2023**

Professor Kiaran Kirk AM, Dean ANU College of Science, delivered the 2023 OAA-ANU lecture on the topic *Humanity's ongoing battle with infectious disease* at the ANU Kambri Cultural Centre, following an introduction by ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Schmidt AC.

In his address, Professor Kirk dealt with a complex subject in a way that the audience could easily understand the issues regarding the development of vaccines, and how vaccine-resistant and drug-resistant pathogens are continually emerging, necessitating the ongoing development of new vaccines. He also reflected on the significant contribution that the ANU has made, and continues to make to the development of measures to prevent and treat infectious diseases, including bacterial infection, viral diseases such as smallpox, and the parasitic disease, malaria.

Professor Kirk was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in January 2023 *for significant service to science education and research, and to professional organisations.*

Following the lecture, a lively Q&A session with Professor Kirk was facilitated by Branch Chair Mr Andrew Phelan AM. A post-event reception was held in The Gallery, Kambri Cultural Centre.

The Branch is particularly appreciative of the strong support that the retiring ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Schmidt AC has provided for the OAA-ANU Lecture over many years.

### **2024 Australia Day Breakfast**

We were privileged to have Gary Humphries AO as the guest speaker for the annual Branch Australia Day Breakfast held at the Hyatt Hotel. Gary was a senator for the ACT from 2003 to

2013, Chief Minister of the ACT from 2000 to 2001, and a member of the ACT Legislative Assembly from its inception in 1989 until 2003.

In his presentation, Gary explored some of the research he has undertaken as part of his PhD thesis at the ANU. He is writing a history of ACT self-government, describing events in which he was sometimes a participant. He explained that it took 166 years for self-government to come to every community on this continent – the last being the national capital. He discussed the reasons for this and, in particular, the fears of local residents that self-government would mean the end of generous Commonwealth spending in Canberra. This was evident in the referendum for ACT self-government held in 1978 and rejected by 63.75% of the voting residents.

Gary described the fractious result from the first ACT election, where anti-self-government MLAs made up almost a quarter of the parliament! He outlined the machinations that led to the formation of the first ACT government in May 1989: a group of new MLAs gathered on the morning the government was to be elected in an attempt to elect Liberal leader Trevor Kaine as the first chief minister but, when Kaine stormed out of the meeting in a huff, the plan broke down. Instead, ALP leader Rosemary Follett was elected Chief Minister later that day – the first woman to lead an Australian Government.

Gary said that he considered the real purpose of studying history was to understand human nature better and guide us in making better decisions by understanding how well our predecessors made similar decisions. He said that one question his thesis (also soon to be a book) would try to answer was whether, in light of all the original anxiety about self-government, it has been a success or whether people's fears of 1989 been realised?

Gary's presentation was well received by the 82 attendees, most of whom have been keen observers of the ACT self-government process over the years, and they appreciated the detailed insights that Gary was able to give them.

A branch member, Gary was appointed an Officer of The Order of Australia in January 2019 *for distinguished service to the Parliament of Australia, and to the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory.*

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN TONY METCALF O.A.M.'S REPORT

As we begin this new year, on behalf of all SA Branch members I would like to extend our congratulations to everyone who has received an award in the 2024 Australia Day Honours List.

We look forward to meeting you at your investiture, and hope you will take up the opportunity to be formally acknowledged at our New Recipients' Reception. You are of course always welcome to join one of our honours recipients' fellowship luncheons, regional group gatherings or Branch events, and I hope you will see the value in becoming a member of the SA Branch of the Order of Australia Association.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks our Branch Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, and Mr Rod Bunten for hosting our annual Student Citizenship Awards presentation ceremony and reception late last year.

Other events we have held since then have included our Christmas Morning Tea, and our *Celebration of Australia Day* luncheon.

On behalf of the Branch Committee and members of the SA Branch, I wish you all a fruitful and meaningful new year.

## S.A. EVENTS

### STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AWARDS

In a ceremony held at Government House Adelaide on Monday 27 November 2023, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia and SA Branch Patron, presented plaques to the Top 10 students in the Order of Australia Association SA Branch Student Citizenship Awards.

The Student Citizenship Awards program is conducted annually as the flagship program of the SA Branch. We present awards to year 11 and/or 12 students who have been nominated by their schools to acknowledge the outstanding voluntary service and contributions given by the student for their school and/or local communities.

Each of the Top 10 awardees also received a 'With Distinction' certificate signed by Her Excellency and SA Branch Chairman Mr Tony Metcalf OAM.

Her Excellency announced Thomas Oxford from Parafield Gardens High School as the 2023 South Australian Student Citizen of the Year. Thomas has kindly agreed to be guest speaker at our Branch AGM in March.

A further 29 students – 20 of whom were rated as 'Highly Commended' –received a framed signed certificate and a cased medallion, presented by a Branch member at a school presentation. The initiative of including a medallion with every award was made possible through a generous donation from one of our members, Mr Keith 'Chook' Fowler OAM.



## CELEBRATION OF AUSTRALIA DAY LUNCHEON

The luncheon was held on Saturday 20 January 2024. The Guest Speaker, Dr Tony Cocchiaro AM MBBS FRACGP, gave a balanced historical perspective and thought-provoking address on the topic, *Australia Day, should we change the date?* Tony was a member of the SA Australia Day Council for 10 years, five of them as Chairperson, and on the National Australia Day Council for five years.

## CHRISTMAS MORNING TEA

We were pleased to host some 70 members and guests at our annual Christmas Morning Tea on 1 December. Chairman Tony Metcalf OAM welcomed guests and led the singing of the National Anthem. We had an entertainment interlude by Dr Rob Wight OAM who played a selection of Christmas and personal favourites, and we thank him for personally arranging and funding the installation of the piano for the event.

Our Guest Speaker was Mrs Anne Bachmann OAM JP on the topic, *Making our courts and prisons kinder*. Anne was appointed Special Advisor to the Adelaide Women's Prison in 2013 but had been serving as a volunteer mentor since 1987. Anne was awarded the Department for Correctional Services Meritorious Service Medal in 2014: "*For outstanding contribution and dedication to the Department for Correctional Services and the special needs of women in*

## Upcoming SA Branch activities:

Friday 23 February: South East Regional Group meeting at Beachport

Thursday 29 February: Honours recipients fellowship luncheon meeting

Saturday 2 March: Annual General Meeting

Friday 22 March: Riverland and Mallee Regional Group luncheon meeting

Thursday 25 April: Honours recipients fellowship luncheon meeting

Sunday 28 April: Yorke Peninsula Regional Group luncheon meeting in Ardrossan

Friday 3 May: Fleurieu Regional Group luncheon meeting

Saturday 1 June: King's Birthday Luncheon

## QUEENSLAND BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN RONDA L NIX O.A.M.'S REPORT

Despite the weather bureau's advice that El Niño would be touring Queensland this summer, he must have missed his flight, as we have had devastating floods and severe weather events from the tip of Cape York in the North to our border in the South. On behalf of the Queensland Branch Committee, I offer my sincere sympathy to all who have been affected, not only here in Queensland, but throughout Australia.

Congratulations to all our Queensland recipients of well-deserved honours in the Order of Australia awards announced on Australia Day, and a special thank you to all the wonderful people who took the time to nominate them. Unfortunately, there are many citizens who have gone above and beyond in their service to other Australians who are not acknowledged with an award. This is simply because no-one bothered to submit a nomination for them. I encourage you to nominate at least one person this year.

Planning is already under way for Branch events in the first half of this year such as our Annual Dinner and AGM on 18 March and the King's Birthday Dinner on Tuesday 11 June. A Celebratory Welcome Lunch for 2024 Australia Day Award Recipients will be held in Brisbane in May during the week of investitures at Government House, provided the investiture dates do not clash with the OAA National Conference in Perth from 16 to 19 May. Our Regional Group Convenors are also busy planning functions in their regions. I look forward to catching up with members during the year at either a Queensland Branch or Regional Group event, or at the National Conference in Perth.

## QLD EVENTS

### **Townsville Regional Group news**

The Townsville Regional Group of the Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch, will be starting to make arrangements in the near future for their first function for 2024, in the hope of giving early warning to members of the luncheon event and its date and times to encourage increased attendance.

While the Group committee was pleased with initial registrations for the annual dinner in August 2023, it was disappointing to see attendance drastically reduced by the effects of sickness on many of the prospective attendees and their guests, including the planned guest speakers. That disappointment was also increased by the fact that the Group was welcoming the attendance of new State Chair, Ronda Nix OAM, making her first visit to Townsville in her new position.

However, those who attended recorded a positive result for the dinner, with Mrs Nix speaking at length on her role and the activities and decisions of the State Branch and how they affect members in the Townsville Region.

The Townsville Group committee will soon meet to decide on a venue, date and guest speaker for the first event of 2024, which will be a luncheon at a venue to be decided, in March or early April. It is hoped that the current wet season events that are drenching northern areas will be over and done with by that time so that they do not interfere with the planned activities.

Townsville Group Convenor David Jackson OAM said he would be happy to hear from any award recipients from the Townsville region who would be interested in being a guest speaker at a future event.

We have a large region and there are numerous people who have received awards and who also have tremendous stories to tell of the reasons behind their awards. We are happy to hear from



any award recipients from the Townsville region who would be interested in being a guest speaker.

Advice will be sent out to all members in the Townsville Region in early February advising the date, time and venue of the first event for the Group for 2024.

### **Cairns Regional Council Mayoral Lunch**

Far North Queensland is unique for many reasons but one is that the Cairns Regional Council likes to give recognition each year to all individuals that have been awarded an Order of Australia.

Mayor Bob Manning OAM hosted a lunchtime gathering at their function room in September 2023, recognising all the new 2023 FNQ Order recipients. The 60 people present included Regional Group members and non-Association members.

In turn the Mayor, Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chairman OAAQ and I addressed the group. My topic was *About the Order and nominating deserving Australians for an award* and Mrs Nix then addressed the group on Association activities.

All present were then treated to a good lunch in a social atmosphere. This event proved to be a last hurrah for the Mayor, who announced his resignation for medical reasons on 17 November 2023 after nearly 12 years in office. He served his council well just as he served his country well as an Army Officer in Vietnam.

### **Gold Coast Regional Group Spring Luncheon**

During Covid and later with the bad health of the Convenor, the Gold Coast Group was inactive.

With the appointment of a New Convenor, Sandra Doumany OAM, came the first function: a Spring Lunch in September 2023 at the Sanctuary Cove Golf Club.

Delighted attendees were happy to be renewing friendships and making new ones. The vista of the golf course and very good buffet helped to make a very successful function.

The Guest Speaker was Professor Michael Good AO who heads up the Malaria Vaccine Research Project at the Glycomics Institute at Griffith University Gold Coast. The success of this vaccine will save the lives of approximately 630,000 children a year. I chair the fundraising arm of the project.

We look forward to more functions in 2024.

### **Toowoomba Regional Group visit to the Qantas Group Pilot Academy**

The Toowoomba Regional Group hosted a visit to the Qantas Group Pilot Academy (the Academy) located at the Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba. In partnership with Flight Training Adelaide (FTA), the Academy was established to help meet the increasing need for skilled aviators in one of the fastest growing global industries. The Academy is committed to providing a high standard of training delivered in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Wellcamp Airport offers state-of-the-art navigation aids and access to uncongested airspace. Located in Toowoomba, a thriving regional city with connections to major cities, it's the perfect place for students to learn how to fly.



## VALE

FREYLING Wallace OAM

Mc CONNELL Dr David Henry OAM

VIERTEL Elma (Janet) OAM

GEOBEL Wensley Frances OAM

OLSEN Dennis Fredrick OAM

JENNINGS Stanley Earl AM RFD ED

THOMPSON Frank Waldren (Major)

BAILEY Earle OAM

Hon AHERN Mike AO

## VICTORIA BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN HELENE BENDER A.M.'S REPORT

On behalf of the Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch, we hope you are having a wonderful start to 2024.

Our last event for 20223 was the end-of-year dinner at William Angliss Restaurant with speakers Natalie O'Brien AM and Order of Australia Association Foundation 2022 recipient Alex Nair. Please refer to the December 2023 edition of the VIC Branch e-Newsletter on the OAA website

Australia Day brings a diverse list of outstanding Order of Australia honours and awards. We value and respect the diversity of the recipients recognised for excellence, achievement or meritorious service and contributions at the local, national and/or international level. Congratulations to the 205 new recipients in Victoria, 121 of whom are women, and thank you to members who took the time to prepare successful nominations. These recipients have received a letter of congratulations from our National Chairman Barry Nunn AO, together with an invitation to join the Association Victoria Branch

**The OAA VIC Branch has planned the following events for 2024:**

*Inspiring Australians Oration then Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting*

**Date: Tuesday 19 March**

**Time: 10.30am sign in for 10.45 am Oration**

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

*Mid-Year lunch*

**Date: Tuesday 18 June**

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

**Venue: Melbourne CBD easily accessible by public transport**

*Virtual Event via ZOOM*

**Date: Wednesday 24 July**

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

**Venue: Via ZOOM**

*Pharaoh Exhibition Winter Masterpieces*

**Date: Sunday 4 August**

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

**Venue: National Gallery of Victoria**

*Thank You Reception*

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

**Date: Wednesday 9 October**

**Time: 1.15pm**

**Venue: Alex Theatre, St Kilda**

*End-of-Year Dinner*

**Date: Thursday 21 November**

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

**Venue: Melbourne CBD easily accessible by public transport**

## VIC EVENTS

### VIC Branch AGM

The VIC Branch AGM will be held on Tuesday 19 March beginning at 1.00pm with sign-in from 12.45pm at the Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston Street entrance.

If you have book-keeping or accounting experience and use Xero, please consider nominating for the position of Treasurer.

Refer to the OAA VIC website Administration Annual General Meeting for Notice of Meeting, Nomination and Proxy Forms, 2023 AGM minutes, Chair's Report, Financials, 2024 Meeting and Events schedule and Position Descriptions. <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/vic-annual-general-meeting/>

For additional information regarding the AGM, please contact OAA Victoria Branch Chair Helene Bender AM at [chairvic@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:chairvic@theorderofaustralia.asn.au) or 0407 261 951.

### **South Central Suburbs**

The South Central Suburbs Regional Group held its End-of-Year dinner at the Commonwealth Golf Club. This was well attended by members, including new 2023 Honours Award recipients and existing members.

We were privileged to meet and chat with four of the 2023 recipients:

Garry Fabian OAM *for service through a range of organisations including Board Member Victorian Association of Jewish Ex Servicemen and Women Australia (VAJEX). Secretary Rotary Club of Glen Eira. Volunteer Shrine of Remembrance. Ex- Servicemen's organisations.*

Richard (Dick) Kirby OAM *for services to golf.* President of the VGA 2002-2007, VGA Council member for 25 years, being honoured with Life Membership. Life Member of Golf Society.

Tom Ludwick OAM *for services to the community through a range of organisations.* Member of Surf Life Saving Chelsea Longbeach SLSC VIC.

Jen McVeity OAM *for services to literacy education as an author and publisher.* Jen is author of more than 20 books, an international speaker and Churchill Fellow, and runs her business "Seven Steps to Writing Success"

They enjoyed the dinner, mixing with members and expressed a keenness to attend more events. This was an excellent opportunity to get to know these inspirational achievers.

### **Australia Day 2024 in Wangaratta**

The North East and Goulburn Valley Regional Group celebrated Australia Day with a presentation by John Brown AO, Ambassador for the Rural City of Wangaratta, who spoke of Australia as a "nation free of racial and religious intolerance, military conflict and famine".

John shared with the attendees some of the qualities that make Wangaratta special, and aspirations for the city's future:

"Wangaratta is more than just a location on the map; it is a community that thrives on its diversity and celebrates its heritage.

Our region, known for its rolling vineyards and the exquisite flavors of the King Valley wine region, is a testament to the agricultural richness that sustains us. Our commitment to sustainable practices not only preserves our natural beauty but ensures a legacy for generations to come.

One cannot talk about Wangaratta without acknowledging the harmonious blend of cultures that defines our city. Whether it's the notes of jazz and blues that resonate during our annual festivals, or the diverse backgrounds of our residents, we take pride in being a community that embraces differences, finding strength in our shared values.

As we look to the future, our vision is clear. We aspire to be a beacon of innovation in regional development, fostering opportunities that sustain our economy while preserving the essence of rural life.

Wangaratta is not just a place to live; it is a place to thrive. Through strategic partnerships, investment in education, and a commitment to technological advancements, we aim to create an environment where our residents can fulfill their aspirations without leaving the embrace of our beautiful city.

Our commitment to preserving our natural wonders is unwavering. Wangaratta is not only a city; it is a sanctuary. We will continue to champion environmental stewardship, ensuring that our open spaces, national parks, and the majestic Ovens and King Rivers remain pristine for the enjoyment of generations to come.

We must preserve and enhance our racial and religious tolerance and do what it takes to make Wangaratta region an even better place to live, work and play.

As we stand on the cusp of a new chapter for Wangaratta, let us remember that our strength lies not only in our past but in our shared dreams for the future. Today, as we celebrate Australia Day, let us recommit ourselves to the values that bind us together: resilience, unity, and the unwavering spirit that defines us as Australians. Thank you, and may this Australia Day be a joyous celebration of our shared journey as a nation.

And ladies and gentlemen, I have an admission to make! This presentation was AI generated on a mobile phone. An early example of the use of a technology that will bring major change in the way we do things in the future!"



## Featured member

### **Dr Peter Rogers AM: A Substantial Impact**

From encouraging women into engineering, using engineering approaches to facilitate medical breakthroughs, to working in Indigenous communities, Dr Peter Rogers AM has had a substantial impact on our community. That impact was recognised through his appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in the King's Birthday Honours List 2023 *for significant*



*service to engineering, to education, and to the community.* Peter is a member of the OAA VIC Branch -- Melbourne Central Regional Group.

“One of the greatest impacts has been to encourage more women into engineering, a historically male-dominated field. I was involved in developing our university’s world-leading engineering leadership program which provided graduates with skills in communications and teamwork. This attracted female students to the faculty, increasing enrolments and graduates from the course,” Dr Rogers has said.

Dr Rogers has also been involved in facilitating developments in 3D bioprinting, producing 3D models of brain structures used to screen drugs, and to model brain trauma, and to print scaffolds for different medical applications such as growing cardiac cells and inducing bone regeneration. The establishment of an engineering innovation centre – with industry funding – with its focus on 3D additive manufacturing, led to the 3D bioprinting capability.

Initially trained as a chemical engineer, Dr Rogers has spent much of his career focused on commissioning and achieving reliability in engineering operations, building and testing systems to ensure they deliver when they are needed. It is complex work.

“But now I can use my skills and experience to solve broader problems, such as bringing engineering solutions to reduce the incidence of trachoma, a debilitating eye disease in Indigenous communities. One project takes mobile face-washing trailers with games and local community music into remote communities. This initiative is helping to stamp out the disease’s transmission,” Dr Rogers explained. “I have always been driven to help others – friends, family, colleagues, and our invaluable universities. I am full of gratitude to those who took the considerable time to nominate and support me for this honour.”

In particular, Dr Rogers thanks his wife Cathy Rogers OAM (2020 *for service to chamber music*) and daughters, as well as a wide range of mentors and colleagues. These include several University Chancellors, Vice Chancellors and Faculty Deans, particularly Dr Alan Finkel AC, Sir Ed Byrne AC, Professor Peter Darvall AO, and Professor Tam Sridhar AO to whom he is also indebted.

“Opportunities in this life are only limited by our imaginations, persistence, and by taking calculated risks.”

## TASMANIA BRANCH

### CHAIRMAN ALASTAIR DOUGLAS O.A.M.'S REPORT

With Christmas and the New Year holidays behind us, it is time to focus on the year ahead. The three Tasmanian Regional Groups have plans at hand for events throughout the year and the Branch is readying for its events. We always look forward to our Investiture Day lunches when this year we will be able to congratulate the 23 Tasmanians who were recognised in the recent Australia Day Honours lists.

At Christmas many of us are involved with or watch major sporting events such as sailing, cricket and tennis, where the focus is usually on the main players. Behind the scenes a vast number of volunteers ensure these events run smoothly and that attention is paid to the detail that makes them a success. For example, I regularly learn, during a conversation with volunteers in one organisation I work with, just how many associations a volunteer actually supports, and usually over a long period of time. It should be possible to determine who has gone beyond the usual and is considered appropriate for a nomination. It might take a little time to gather the necessary detail for a nomination, but completing the nomination online is a simple task.

New members in Branch and Regional committees will bring fresh ideas and perspectives towards achieving our goals. We look forward to welcoming new members but thank all those who retire for freely giving their support, dedication and enthusiasm in supporting the Association and its members.

The Tasmania Branch AGM will be held on Zoom on Sunday 3 March, beginning at 2pm. You should have recently received the log-in details and we will be pleased to see you on screen. We shall also be honoured to have the National President, the Hon. Vicki O'Halloran AO CVO, address the meeting.

## TASMANIA EVENTS

### North West Luncheon

On 26 November 2023, the North West Regional Group of the Tasmania Branch held a reception to introduce new award recipients from the region to fellow members and their partners.

Fifty-six people attended the reception, which was held at the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens in Burnie. The 2023 recipients were introduced to the attendees by the Mayors of each council area where the recipients live. The Mayors of Waratah Wynyard, Burnie, Central Coast, Devonport, Latrobe and Kentish all attended and spoke about the achievements of each recipient. The recipients then responded and addressed the group.

### Southern Region Morning Tea

On 23 November 2023 members and guests of the Southern Regional Group gathered for a morning tea at The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Hobart. The guest speaker was Susie Daly who, with her husband Gerard, grows and markets A-grade potatoes near Dunalley in south-east Tasmania. Not content to accept the wastage the market demands by not accepting potatoes of a particular size and shape, Susie decided that there had to be a better solution than cattle feed. One answer was to build a vodka distillery, and another to produce gourmet potato salads. Susie and Gerard were recognised in 2019 as Australian Farmers of the Year.

## FEATURED MEMBER

### **Dr Ivan James AO: Support for refugees**

Dr Ivan James AO BA (Hons) PhD FCA FCPA was born in Deloraine, spent his childhood on Flinders Island, lived in Launceston, and worked in Melbourne. He trained as an accountant and spent most of his professional life as a chief executive in the Australian automotive industry. In June 2007, Ivan was appointed as an Officer in the General Division in the Order of Australia *for distinguished service to the manufacturing industry, particularly the automotive components sector and through the Australian Industry Group, and to the community through church and overseas aid organisations.*

After he retired, Ivan enrolled at UTAS, majoring in Sociology and Philosophy with a minor in Aboriginal Studies. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with First Class Honours in Sociology and a University Medal in 2017.

In June 2018, he enrolled as a PhD candidate in Sociology at UTAS, investigating refugee settlement in Launceston. His thesis entitled *Refugee Settlement and the Process of Belonging in Regional Australia: A Grounded Theory Study in Launceston, Tasmania* was accepted in November 2022, and he graduated in December that year.

While studying at UTAS, Ivan was also involved as a volunteer supporting refugees and settlement services in Launceston. His Honours and PhD research investigated the Australian Government's refugee settlement programs and the experiences and perceptions of refugees and frontline service providers in Launceston as they settled five successive waves of refugees: Chin Burmese, Nepali Bhutanese, Hazara Afghans, and refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Ivan's groundbreaking research examined the history of oppression and discrimination that caused each ethnic group to become refugees and their experiences as they sought asylum and made their often perilous journeys to Australia. He interviewed 56 former refugees in Launceston in depth, enabling them to tell their pre-arrival and post-arrival stories and raise issues that were important to them. He also interviewed eight senior officials from local service-providers, who provided valuable insights into settlement issues in Launceston.

Ivan's research was the first to examine the operations and outcomes of regional settlement under programs introduced nationally in 2018. His findings identified severe flaws in these new programs and significant national, state and local implementation shortcomings. His thesis contains a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the policy and practice of refugee settlement at all three levels of government in Australia.

Ivan's thesis contributes to sociological knowledge by highlighting the importance of the concepts of 'belonging' and 'homemaking' to understand the perspective and needs of former refugees as they strive to make a new home where they are safe, respected, and belong alongside all other citizens.

## UK/EUROPE BRANCH UPDATE

2023 saw the end of pandemic restrictions across Europe, so no events had been planned for early in the year.

There was a change of Chair in August, when Dr Caroline Hoffman OAM replaced Andrew Koo AM. A new member joined the Committee in July: Richard York OAM, who is based in Luxembourg.

The Chair sent out a survey to the OAA UK/Europe membership in October to ask them what they wanted from the Branch, and there was a 30% response rate from across Europe. The results showed that members would value opportunities to connect with other OAA members who live overseas; opportunities to learn more about the activities of OAA members living overseas and their contacts; to hear more about Australian society and Australian arts/music/culture. Predominantly, they were happy to meet in London or Paris.

The Committee has taken this on board for events in 2024 and has been planning events accordingly.

The Branch joined with the Britain Australia Society for their beautiful service of Carols and Readings at St Mary le Bow church in London on 7 December 2023, followed by a reception.

The Chair and Committee member John Bond OAM had a meeting with the Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Elisabeth Bowes, at the Australian High Commission on 13 December 2023 to see how the OAA and the High Commission could work more closely together.



## THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION REPORT

In December 2023, the Order of Australia Foundation announced the names of the six new Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship winners for 2024. This diverse group of young scholars bring new meaning to what it means to be Australian.

Their field of endeavour is diverse: They range from biomedical science/medicine (Lotte George) to nutrition (Chelsea Allen); from law/commerce (Hukam Kohli) to marine science

(Luke Barron); and from the performing arts (Roisin Wallace-Nash) to physiotherapy (Bree Harris).

The six winners come from five different universities: two from the University of Western Australia and one each from Edith Cowan University, Swinburne University, Deakin University and Charles Darwin University.

Chelsea, Luke and Bree are from rural communities, where they have made a significant contribution. Chelsea, Lotte and Hukam have demonstrated great resilience in overcoming a significant medical challenge, which has shaped their personal journey and their career choices. Chelsea, Bree and Roisin are studying at universities that are remote from their families, posing unique challenges. Hukam is a proud Sikh and the son of Punjabi migrants who have made a life in Western Australia. Roisin is proud of her Irish heritage and wants to take Irish and Australian stories to the world.

Above all, each awardee is a proud Australian who has achieved academic excellence and demonstrated a strong track record of giving back to the community. They will all benefit from the \$40,000 scholarship, which will help realise their potential for the future benefit of Australia. They also all see that mentorship from a member of the Order of Australia will enhance their ability to make that contribution.

The Governor-General paid tribute to the six students and their achievements in his Australia Day address, using footage taken from the Round Table Conference immediately before the announcement of the awards. The photo here was taken at Admiralty House on that day. Unfortunately, Luke was unable to be present because he was overseas pursuing his studies.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

### The loneliest VCs

Of the 101 Australian military personnel who have been awarded the Victoria Cross (VC), our highest honour for bravery, most lie in recognised graves. But five of our fallen – including our newest and only naval VC – have no known final resting place.



To explain further: when the recipients of the Crosses were given their honour, many were awarded posthumously. Recipients had died in the action in which they performed their feats of bravery, but their bodies were recovered and later buried or cremated.

Many of the other Cross recipients survived warfare. Later they died, and the usual process followed: they were given a funeral but often they were overseas when that happened, often reflecting the fact that many of these military personnel were born overseas and had sometimes gone to the country of their birth after their Australian military service. As a result, 37 of our 101 VCs are interred in other countries. Perhaps the most remote of these is the grave of Sergeant Samuel Pearse, who earned his VC in 1919. He is buried in a military cemetery near the Obozerskaya railway station, between Emtsa and Archangel, in North Russia.

Of the VC recipients interred in Australia, most lie in the states or territories where they spent the rest of their lives. They are distributed as follows: Australian Capital Territory 2; New South Wales 13; Queensland 5; South Australia 5; Tasmania 3; Victoria 18; Western Australia 9. The Northern Territory's only VC was Albert Borella from WWI. He was buried in Albury-Wodonga, where he spent his final years.

Four VCs are still living with us, and five of our 101 have no known grave.

Sixty-four Victoria Crosses went to the Australian Army in World War I. The Gallipoli campaign saw nine of these in only around six months, testimony to the fierce and close quarter fighting. When Gallipoli was closed down, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) moved to the Western Front, where they were joined by thousands more Australians for almost three more years of fighting.

Four of the five "no known grave" VCs come from WWI although, curiously, one received his VC for a WWI action but died in WWII.

Two had fairly conventional ends. Lance-Corporal Alexander Burton died in 1915. Born in Kyneton, Victoria, in 1893, Burton, an ironmonger, joined the AIF and was posted to the 7th Battalion. Although he missed the landing on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, he saw it from the deck of a hospital ship, where he was being treated for an infection. A week later he was in the trenches, fighting in different areas with his Battalion.

On 9 August at Lone Pine, the Turks launched a counterattack on a newly captured trench commanded by Lieutenant Frederick Tubb. The Turks advanced and knocked over a sandbag barricade, but Tubb and Burton rebuilt it, together with a Corporal William Dunstan. The enemy twice more destroyed the barricade, but each time was driven off and the barricade rebuilt. Burton was killed by a bomb while he was building up the parapet.

Burton's body was not recovered. Although this is difficult to understand, it reflects the fact that often soft-skinned humans in combat can be literally blown apart. To make matters worse, their bodies can lie in a contested area – often known as "No Man's Land" -- where they might lie for some time. Others may lie in the same area. When one side or the other takes that part of the battlefield, hasty burials often result, usually into mass graves. It is an unpleasant aspect of battlefields, but reflects the fact that it is urgent necessity, not nicety, that is needed at the time. Burton has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.

Private Thomas Cooke died in 1916. He was 35 years old, comparatively old for a private, and married with a family. Born in New Zealand, he had migrated to Australia shortly before the war. In the initial attack on Pozières, France, Cooke's battalion captured ground and held on

under heavy enemy artillery fire and counterattacks. Cooke was in a Lewis machinegun team working in a dangerous position. After the others with him were killed or wounded, he remained fighting at his post. Cooke was later found dead at his gun. His body was lost in later fighting. He has no known grave site. Cooke's name is recorded on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial and on the war memorial in Kaikōura NZ, his town of birth.

Captain Alfred Shout, despite being an Army soldier in WWI, was curiously buried at sea.

Shout had served in the Boer War and following that conflict worked as a carpenter in Sydney, while serving part-time as an officer in the local militia. He joined the AIF when war was declared and took part in the landing on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He was awarded the Military Cross and Mentioned in Despatches for actions over the next month.

In August, in fighting at Lone Pine, Shout was involved in an action that saw him attacking an enemy trench, killing eight Turks with grenades. Later that day he was with one of the locally made grenades when it exploded prematurely, causing horrendous injuries. Shout died on a hospital ship of his injuries two days later. He was buried at sea, with his Victoria Cross awarded two months later. He is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey (*Australian War Memorial*. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P11036537>).

Corporal Walter Brown served in both WWI and II. A Tasmanian, he enlisted in 1915 in the Light Horse before transferring to the infantry. He gained the Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1917 for bravery before he was involved in an attack on a German trench at Villers-Bretonneux in France. He then attacked an enemy sniper with two Mills bombs and caused the surrender of several other enemy soldiers. He was awarded the Victoria Cross.

When WWII broke out, Brown volunteered for the Army, despite being married and of older years. He went missing after the fall of Singapore in February 1942, when he was last sighted declaring, "no surrender for me". He likely died fighting in the confusion surrounding the island's last stand.

Teddy Sheean is the last of the five with no known grave. HMAS Armidale was attacked relentlessly from the skies by Japanese aircraft on 1 December 1941, and hit by at least one torpedo. Despite "Abandon Ship" being ordered, he returned to his 20mm Oerlikon gun to defend his shipmates from the strafing and circling enemy. HMAS Armidale has not been found. She lies in waters closer to Timor than Australia, and a search for her has begun.

It is a sad aspect for the bravest of our brave that they lie in unmarked graves. But at least we can remember them by recalling their stories.

Tom Lewis

*Dr Tom Lewis OAM, a retired naval officer, is a military historian. Recent books include *Teddy Sheean VC; the only biography of Australia's only naval Victoria Cross winner; Attack on Sydney Harbour – about the midget submarine raid of 1942; and Bombers North, a study of the Allied air missions out of northern Australia in WWII. His latest work *The Sinking of HMAS Sydney – how sailors, lived, fought and died in Australia's greatest naval disaster, was released by Big Sky in November 2023.***