

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND BRANCH



QUEENSLAND BRANCH CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2012



To be presented by
Professor Tony Webber AM,
Chairman, Queensland Branch

For presentation at the
33rd Annual General Meeting

6:15pm – Monday 26 November 2012

The Captains' Room, The Pavilion, 1
Bogan Street, Breakfast Creek

Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch Annual Report - 2012

1. Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to present the thirty-second Annual Report of the Queensland Branch of the Order of Australia Association in my second year as Chairman.

It has been a very busy year with a great array of events and functions organized by an enthusiastic branch committee. Attendance numbers have been up on last year's branch events and our regional groups have continued to provide a great service to the lifeblood of our members throughout the year.

There have been several challenges throughout the year, not the least of which was the financial decision reached at the national board meeting prior to the Darwin national conference in April that none of the branches would be receiving their annual business administration (BAG) grant. In Queensland's case this amounted to around \$8 000 not being available to help offset the costs of producing the three Bulletins for members and the cost of providing complimentary attendance at our celebratory lunches for new Order of Australia award recipients. This BAG grant decision was reached with great reluctance on the part of board directors in the light of a less than favourable national financial position for the Association. However, by providing good innovative events representing good value for money and obtaining greater excess monies from these events and supplementing this with a campaign to find limited sponsorship for the Bulletins, your committee has been able to ride the storm to a degree whereby its financial position remains reasonable despite this \$8 000 shortfall. I must compliment the dedicated and loyal effort of our treasurer Royce Voss OAM for maintaining a sterling job in looking after our finances under such testing conditions. Well done Royce.

I was pleased with the number of 2012 recipients of awards in the Order of Australia taking up membership of the Association. There were 111 award recipients in 2012 and 59 of these are now members, representing 53% of recipients. While the Committee would like to see this percentage higher, this new membership achievement is very encouraging.

As a positive response to our financial position, the committee convened a strategic planning meeting in June under the guidance of Paul McNally OAM and Bruce Howden OAM. This meeting developed the Queensland Branch Operational Plan 2012 in line with the national strategic plan focusing on the following key areas –

- attracting awardees in the Order of Australia to join the Association;
- developing attractive programs to develop and retain membership;
- developing an organization that is respected by the community and engenders active engagement by its members;
- developing continuous improvement processes;
- supporting the Order of Australia and our Foundation; and

- supporting selected communities and community programs for recognition by the Queensland branch of the Association

The Queensland Branch Operational Plan becomes an important document upon which the committee can work to develop the very best programs for the Queensland branch membership. It is envisaged that future committees will regularly review and amend where necessary the Queensland Branch Operational Plan.

The following is a summary of the main highlights of 2012.

2. The Queensland Branch Committee for 2012

The 32nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 21 November 2011 elected the following Office Bearers and members of the Branch Committee.

- **Chairman:** *Professor Tony Webber AM*
- **Secretary:** *Mr Geoff Cowles OAM*
- **Treasurer:** *Mr Royce Voss OAM*

Members of the Committee

- *Mr Phillip Blakey OAM;*
- *Associate Professor John Harden AM (Subsequently appointed Vice Chairman at the first Committee meeting on 15 December 2011)*
- *Mr Bruce Howden OAM;*
- *Professor Paul McNally OAM*
- *Adjunct Professor Mary Mahoney AO;*
- *Mr Simon Newcomb OAM*
- *Mr Raymond Young OAM (Co-opted onto the Committee as a member for regional matters at the first meeting of the Committee on 15 December 2011)*

The following roles were assigned to committee members as follows –

- Editor of the Bulletin - Paul McNally OAM
- Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Liaison Officer – Bruce Howden OAM
- Sponsorship/Media Coordinator – Simon Newcomb OAM
- Program Coordinator – Geoff Cowles OAM
- Merchandise Officer – Phillip Blakey OAM
- Regional Group Coordinator – Tony Webber AM

There were nine committee meetings throughout the year. Initially these were held at the board room of my offices at Clinical Network Services (CNS) Pty Ltd at Toowong. However the last three meetings have been held in the community meeting room of the Toowong Library in the Toowong Shopping Centre, Sherwood Road, Toowong. This new venue, which is free of charge, has excellent facilities and has proved popular with committee members with its free car parking and excellent public transport options. In addition to the nine committee meetings there was also our strategic planning meeting held at the Kenmore Library community meeting room in June 2012.

Meetings were well attended throughout the year.

The meetings in 2013 will continue to be held at the Toowong Library meeting room.

3. The 2011 Annual Dinner

In an endeavour to provide a less expensive Annual Dinner the committee chose The Pavilion at the Alan Border Field at Albion, Brisbane, the home of Queensland Cricket, as the venue for the 2011 Annual Dinner held on Monday 26 November 2011.

As a further departure from past practice the event was held on a Monday rather than a Friday night because The Pavilion was able to drop the price by \$10 per person.

The event was an outstanding success with 76 members and guests attending in the presence of Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, the Governor of Queensland and Mr Stuart McCosker. Her Excellency delivered a stirring speech thanking the Association and its members for all that they have contributed during the past year to the many and diverse activities of the Association in Queensland

Dr John Arvier OAM was our guest speaker for the evening. John, who is a leading oral and maxillofacial surgeon practicing in Brisbane, spoke on the volunteer outreach programs conducted by the Australian and New Zealand Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (ANZAOMS) in several developing countries in the Asia-Pacific rim. Smaller projects exist in Tonga, Vietnam and Vanuatu and more major ones are carried out in Bangladesh, New Guinea and Cambodia. The excellent PowerPoint presentation that accompanied John's talk provided insight into the outstanding work of John and other fellow workers in providing a better quality of life for people with facial deformities in these countries. John's talk was simply inspirational.

4. The Luncheons to celebrate with recipients of awards in the Order of Australia

The branch committee maintained its practice of last year by again organizing two excellent luncheons to celebrate with recipients of awards in the Order of Australia for both Australia Day recipients in May 2012 and for Queen's Birthday recipients in September 2012. These were very successful and key events in the Queensland branch calendar.

4.1 The Luncheon to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2012 Australia Day Honours

Twenty of 49 recipients of Order of Australia Awards in this year's Australia Day honours were special guests at our Luncheon on Wednesday 16 May 2012 at Broncos Leagues Club in Red Hill, Brisbane. Ninety-one people attended the gala event including the recipients, their families and friends

and 20 members and their guests. The Broncos put on a splendid lunch for the Association in keeping with our previous lunch held there in September last year for the 2011 Queen's Birthday award recipients. The number of award recipients attending was 6 more than at the equivalent event last year which was very pleasing.

4.2 The Luncheon to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2012 Queens Birthday Honours

This Luncheon was held on Wednesday 26 September at Hillstone St Lucia, overlooking the St Lucia Golf Links in the western suburbs of Brisbane. A change of venue was necessary because of a last minute change of Investiture plans at Government House, Brisbane. This meant we had to cancel our long standing booking with the Broncos Leagues Club. Needless to say the new venue was quite outstanding with excellent food, wine, wait service and surroundings.

This was the most successful Luncheon the committee has organized and easily surpassed the previous three. We had 166 guests attending including 25 of 62 Queensland recipients of Order of Australia awards in this year's Queen's Birthday honours. The comparable event last year attracted 90 guests and 14 award recipients.

The committee recommends that the next Luncheon in May 2013 for Australia Day award recipients should be held at Hillstone St Lucia.

5. 2012 Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards (SSCA)

This year we had 120 people attend the 14th annual Presentation of awards comprising secondary school students, family members, education representatives and OAA members from across Queensland.

The event was held on Friday 21 September at Parliament House in Brisbane. Guest of Honour, The Honourable Justice Margaret McMurdo AC, President of the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Queensland, presented 12 students with their commemorative plaques and Certificates of Merit, and Mr John Honeycombe representing our generous sponsor Honeycombes Property Group, presented Certificates of Community Service to ten selected local students.

Nominations were received for 72 students from 43 secondary schools throughout Queensland. This year's judging panel comprised Mr Bruce Howden OAM, Dr Bruce Cook OAM and Mrs Dina Browne AO. I wish to express my very sincere thanks to Professor Klaus Bremhorst AM who again has performed a sterling job in coordinating the event with help provided where necessary by the Branch Committee.

This year's presentation was enhanced by Mr Howard Ainsworth AM accepting our invitation to be the compere and the presence of the string ensemble from the Anglican Church Grammar School providing the musical program.

6. Brisbane morning teas

This year we organized two very special and well attended Brisbane morning teas.

6.1 Roma Street Parkland – 26 April 2012

On Thursday 26 April 49 members and guests were treated to an excellent tour of the Roma Street Parkland in Brisbane coordinated by Lawrie Smith AM, the well respected landscape architect who designed not only the Parklands but who was also heavily involved with the landscaping for the Expo 88 Site. The Parkland Train was made available for members for this most comprehensive and interesting tour.

After the tour of the Parkland, Lawrie Smith entertained the group over morning tea with his excellent talk about the history, design process and flora features of the Parklands and insights into the landscaping of the Expo 88 site. Geoff Cowles OAM and his wife Charyl catered the excellent morning tea which was held at one of the Parkland Apartment meeting rooms arranged through Dina Browne AO.

6.2 Queensland Museum – 29 August 2012

Our second morning tea was a special event at the Queensland Museum on Wednesday 29 August where Dr Alan Bartholomai AM, the former Director of the Museum from 1969 to 1999 gave a most interesting talk on the subject of *"Bringing the Museum into the 21st Century"* in the Museum's lecture theatre in the presence of the Museum's acting CEO, Mr Andrew Moritz.

Morning tea was a shared arrangement with the Queensland Museum and the Association and two curators were on hand to guide our members around the Gwen Gillam *"Dressed by the Best"* exhibition on show at the time. An amazing attendance of 75 members and guests made this a very memorable event indeed.

7. The Branch Newsletter – The Bulletin

I am pleased to report that we retained our classy full colour, six fold publication with its vastly improved format in 2012. The Association again engaged the services of Derek Jones of Jones-Hall Consulting to provide the formatting for the Bulletin as well as a professional proof reading service.

There were three editions in 2012 in March, August and October. In view of the tight financial position already reported, the October 2012 edition was reduced to a four page colour edition to save on costs.

I am again indebted to Michael Rayner AM of Cox Rayner Architects for his ongoing sponsorship of the front page of all three Bulletins. The money this generates goes towards offsetting the extra production costs associated with the publication. I am also grateful for the quarter page advertisement that Jack Hutchinson AM of Hutchinson Builders provided in the August edition.

The Bulletin remains the most important avenue to promote and encourage bookings for our many and varied Branch and regional events and thanks again to Paul McNally OAM for his continued interest as its editor in maintaining a more than useful publication for the benefit of our membership.

It would be remiss of me if I did not offer my sincere thanks to Teresa Gambaro MP, the Federal Member for Brisbane and Dale Shuttleworth MP, the State Member for Ferny Grove for the considerable help they provided the Association throughout the year arranging for their staff to photocopy mass copies of our promotional flyers inserted in the Bulletins as well as this year's annual general meeting material.

8. Regional Group activities

While the Association provided some excellent events at the Queensland branch level there were also some great regional events organized by our regional groups. Our regional groups play a significant role in keeping members interested in the Association at the local grass roots level.

A summary of a range of the events organized follows:

8.1 Darling Downs Regional Group –

[Convener: Paul McNally OAM]

- **1 June 2012 – Morning Tea** – Town and Country Club, Toowoomba. 32 members and guests. Guest speaker – Del Fitton OAM speaking about her fund raising activities for cancer research and Care Flight.
- **5 October 2012 – Luncheon** - Town and Country Club, Toowoomba. I was honoured to be their guest speaker at this lunch providing insights into my scientific career under the broad heading of "*From testing asbestos to clinical trials of new medicines*"

8.2 Gold Coast Regional Group –

[Convener: Air Vice Marshall Bill Collins AO (Retd)]

- **11 May 2012 – Lunch – The Southport Golf Club** - 40 members and guests. Instead of a guest speaker, the entertainment came from the Hope Island Harmonists from the Blenders, a Gold Coast all male choir. My wife Valerie and I were pleased to be in attendance, accompanied by Bruce Howden OAM and Ray Young OAM, representing the branch committee at this most innovative and interesting event.
- **13 October 2012 – Annual Garden Party** – "Jabiru", Mudgeeraba, the home of John Kearney AM QC and Mrs Alison Kearney – 25 members and guests.

8.3 Bundaberg Regional Group –

[Convener: Donna Duncan OAM]

- **3 December 2011 – social event – Isis Club, Childers** - 32 members and guests. Guest speakers were Donna Duncan OAM and Bill Trevor OAM providing their thoughts on the tragic Childers Backpacker Hostel Fire in June 200 claiming the lives of 15 young backpackers.
- **10 March 2012 - Lunch – Western Suburbs Leagues Club, Bundaberg.** This was a farewell to Kevin Gould OAM who has retired as Convener of the Group after 12 years of long and loyal service. A commemorative appreciation plaque was presented to Kevin for his services to the Association. An announcement was made at the lunch that Donna Duncan OAM from Childers is the new convener.
- **14 July 2012 – Lunch at the Gin Gin RSL Club –** 28 members and guests. Guest speaker – Councilor Wayne Honor talking about the history of the Gin Gin area. Geoff Cowles OAM, the branch secretary, represented the branch committee at this event.

8.4 Central Queensland Regional Group –

[Convener: Ray Young OAM]

- **19 March 2012 – Morning Tea – Rockhampton Leagues Club –** Guest speaker Caroline Holmes on the subject “ *If you became a teacher, by your pupils you’ll be taught*”
- **3 September 2012 - Capricornia ‘Improving our Community’ Awards Presentation and Lunch –** Rockhampton Leagues Club - 49 members and guests. Geoff Cowles OAM, our Secretary, attended on behalf of the branch committee and was the guest speaker speaking on the topic “ *Give thanks with a giving, serving heart*” - a tribute to volunteering.

7.5 Townsville Regional Group -

[Convener: - Coral Rizzalli OAM]

- **8 September 2012 – Annual Dinner.** 46 members and guests. It was pleasing that John Muller OAM stepped into the role of acting convener when Neil Weekes AM MC retired as the group’s convener after leaving Townsville to reside on Bribie Island. It was John’s enthusiasm that ensured that this Dinner took place. I was honoured to be there with my wife Valerie representing the branch committee and to be their key speaker at the event. As John was always only going to take on the role for no more than 12 months because of other pressing commitments it is pleasing to report that Coral Rizzalli OAM from Ingham will be taking on the convener role with much enthusiasm and a degree of permanency.

7.6 Cairns Regional Group –

[Convener: Diedre Ford OAM]

The Cairns regional group was unable to arrange any events this year. However, I am pleased to report that at time of printing there is renewed interest in a new convener possibly taking over from Diedre Ford for 2013.

7.7 Sunshine Coast Regional Group –

[Convener: – Keith Swan OAM]

Sadly I have to report that due to her sudden declining health, Lorraine Marsh OAM from Caloundra was not able to take up the reins as the new convener of the Sunshine Coast Group after enthusiastically accepting the position last year. Accordingly, the branch committee organized another event at Tranquil Park, Maleny in July to again find another convener to take on this regional group. I am pleased to announce that Keith Swan OAM from Cooran near Gympie has accepted the position as the new convener. The details of the Tranquil Park event that the branch committee organized are as follows -

26 July 2012 – A Lively Lunch – Tranquil Park, Maleny. 52 members and guests. Our guest speaker was Bruce Howden OAM, a member of the branch committee who thoroughly entertained the group with his excellent talk " *Young Ned Kelly – more sinned against than sinning*".

8 Representations at Government House Brisbane

8.1 The Order of Australia Award Investitures

The Association ensured that it was represented at all 8 Investitures carried out by Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland for 2012 Australia Day Awards during May 2012 and Queen's Birthday Awards during September 2012 at Government House, Brisbane. Representation at these Investitures was shared equally amongst the various Committee members. Coral Rizzalli OAM and Diedre Ford AM represented the Association at the North Queensland Investiture held in Cairns for North Queensland Queen's Birthday recipients of awards during early October 2012.

8.2 Government House Open Days

Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland again scheduled two Open Days at Government House for Australia Day and for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in June. Unfortunately heavy rain in January forced the cancellation of the Australia Day event. The Association was represented at the Open Day to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on a day which was also marred by inclement weather; however Government House decided to go ahead given that it had cancelled the Australia day event earlier in the year.

Our display at the June event was again in the Investiture Room and included some public Power Point presentations on the Order of Australia and the Honours system presented by Mick Davis AM. We were kept busy answering questions on a range of topics including the nomination process, the role of the Association and the distinction between the various awards.

9. Branch activity at national level

I was pleased to attend the first ever national conference held at Darwin in the Northern Territory on 12 and 13 April this year. What was very pleasing was the overall representation of 14 from Queensland. The conference was very well organized and received rave accolades from all present.

I also represented the branch at national board directors' meetings either face to face meetings or teleconferences where issues relating to the governance of the Association were addressed. It was also good to meet other branch chairmen and gain an understanding of their specific branch issues as well as the national board at these meetings.

The revised Constitution and By Laws were finalized in 2012. I would like to offer my very sincere thanks to Geoff Cowles OAM, our Secretary, for judiciously checking the finer points of the revised documents and providing good guidance to the national board by offering sound suggestions for improvement to both documents.

10. Queens Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

2012 was a special year in the royal calendar as it was 60 years ago that Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of England and Australia commenced her reign. Throughout the world there were celebrations aplenty to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee and the Association joined in the celebrations in style.

Several members of the Association accepted an invitation to attend the dedicated Queen's Diamond Jubilee Church Service held in St. Johns Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane on 20 May 2012, in the presence of Her Excellency, Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland. The Church Service was a most memorable occasion and I was honoured to be with other members representing the Association.

Also, members of the Committee and their wives and partners attended a wonderful Black Tie Diamond Jubilee Dinner coordinated by The Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship at the Parliamentary Annexe of Parliament House, Brisbane on Monday 4 June 2012. There were 170 people in attendance represented by the Association and other kindred organizations including the Victoria League, The Royal Commonwealth Society, The English Speaking Union and many others. Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, The Governor of Queensland, was present with Mr McCosker and Her Excellency presented a fine tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, reflecting on a truly amazing life of a truly amazing woman. I was also honoured at this event to move the vote of thanks to the Anglican Dean of Brisbane, The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt, for the use of St John's Cathedral and coordinating all aspects in the conduct of the Diamond Jubilee Church Service held on 20 May.

It was not possible to extend an invitation to the entire membership of the Association in view of the strict limitations on numbers that could attend.

9 Closing remarks

In concluding this report I wish to express my gratitude to the branch committee members and regional group conveners for their support and encouragement. In particular to Secretary, Geoff Cowles OAM, and Treasurer, Royce Voss OAM, who both work tirelessly to ensure that all activities undertaken bring credit to the Association.

Under our Constitution the year 2013 must be my last as your chairman. Further treasurer, Royce Voss OAM and Philip Blakey OAM, must stand down from the committee. Please consider putting your name forward to take on a position in 2014.

I will end on a positive note by formally announcing a new exciting initiative that the Queensland Branch will be undertaking in 2013 as a consequence of our strategic planning meeting in June this year - **The Senior Volunteers Award**.

Under the proposal Queensland branch members may nominate worthy Queensland volunteers 65 years or older for consideration against selection criteria demonstrating superior extended and continuing valuable voluntary community service; and recognised valuable impact of the contributions made to the group/s or organisation/s served. Up to three awards would be presented each year. The awards would be presented at branch official functions to the successful volunteers. Watch out for more details in the next edition of the Bulletin and the Association website in early 2013.

I commend this report to you all.

AJ (Tony) Webber AM PhD
Chairman



Lawrie Smith AM presents his talk at the Roma Street Parklands morning tea 26 April 2012



Dr Alan Bartholomai AM presents his talk at the Queensland Museum morning tea event – 29 August 2012



At the Bundaberg regional group Gin Gin Lunch – 14 July 2012 - from L to R – Kevin Gould OAM (former convener), Cnr Wayne Honor (guest speaker); Judy Honor; Geoff Cowles OAM, Qld branch secretary and Donna Duncan OAM (current convener)

A selection of pictorial highlights – 2012



Members and guests enjoy the Sunshine Coast regional group event at Tranquil Park, Maleny – 26 July 2012.



The winning students on parade at the Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Presentation at Parliament House, Brisbane – 21 September 2012



Geoff Cowles OAM explains the Australian Honours system to interested listeners at the Diamond Jubilee Open Day at Government House in June 2012



A tale of two lunches – a tale of two groups of new recipients of awards in the Order of Australia. Above - the 25 Queen's Birthday recipients at the Hillstone St Lucia lunch – 26 September 2012 and to the right - 17 of the 20 recipients at the Broncos Leagues Club lunch – 16 May 2012

