

**THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
ASSOCIATION
QUEENSLAND BRANCH**



**QUEENSLAND BRANCH
CHAIRMAN'S
ANNUAL REPORT - 2013**



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

**For presentation at the
34th Annual General Meeting**

6:15pm – Monday 25 November 2013

**The Captains' Room, The Pavilion, Allan Border
Field, 1 Greg Chappell Street, Albion, Brisbane.**

Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch Annual Report - 2013

1. Introduction

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

It has been a very busy year with a great variety of events and functions organized by a hard working branch committee. Our regional groups have continued to provide a great service to the lifeblood of our members throughout the year.

As reported last year the branch was faced with several challenges as a consequence of the financial decision made at last year's national conference that none of the branches would be receiving their annual business administration (BAG) grant for 2012. I am very pleased to report that this decision was not repeated at this year's national conference board meeting and as a result the Branch received its entitlement of \$8 930 towards its finances for 2013. This pleasing outcome ensured that the branch could organize its functions and events and provide its services with greater financial certainty compared to last year. However, it needs to be stressed that even though the Branch was blessed with these extra funds, the branch committee continued to administer the finances prudently. To this end I must compliment the dedicated and loyal effort of our treasurer Royce Voss OAM for the sterling job he performs year in, year out, looking after our finances. Thank you so much Royce.

On the membership front there were 150 Queensland recipients receiving awards in the Order of Australia in 2013 and 63 of these are now members. While this represents four extra new recipients taking up membership over last year, the percentage of recipients actually taking up membership is down to 42% this year. These membership trends do fluctuate from year to year and it is difficult to pinpoint precisely why this is so. What is very pleasing is the increase in the new award recipients who attended our two celebratory lunches deciding to take up membership. In 2013 we welcomed 48 Queensland recipients at our two lunches in May and September and of these 39 (81%) joined the Association. In 2012 the percentage of lunch recipients joining was 71%. The branch committee works hard in striving to get new recipients to take up membership of the Association and will continue to do so in 2014. Our Secretary, Geoff Cowles OAM, has compiled some interesting membership trend statistics which are appended to this report on page 13 as **Appendix A**.

A major highlight for the year was the introduction of the Senior Volunteer Award for the first time. A report on this new initiative appears later under its own heading.

The following is a summary of the main highlights of 2013.

2. The Queensland Branch Committee for 2013

The 32nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 26 November 2012 elected the following office bearers and members of the Queensland branch committee.

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

Other members of the Committee

- *Mr Phillip Blakey OAM;*
- *Dr Christine Bundesen AM*
- *Mr Mick Davis AM ASM*
- *Associate Professor John Harden AM* (Subsequently appointed Vice Chairman at the first Committee meeting on 16 January 2013)
- *Mr Bruce Howden OAM;*
- *Professor Paul McNally OAM;*
- *Adjunct Professor Mary Mahoney AO;*
- *Dr Brian Miller AM;*
- *Mr Simon Newcomb OAM;*
- *Mr Raymond Young OAM;*

There were eight committee meetings throughout the year and all were held in the community meeting room, Toowong Library, Toowong Village, Toowong, Brisbane at no cost to the Association.

Meetings were well attended throughout the year.

The meetings in 2014 will continue to be held at the Toowong Library meeting room.

3. The 2012 Annual Dinner

The event was held again at The Pavilion, Allan Border Field, Albion, in Brisbane on Monday, 26 November 2012. There is a considerable advantage in choosing a Monday rather than a Friday night because The Pavilion is able to drop the price by \$10 per person.

The event was an outstanding success with 101 members and guests attending, compared to 76 the previous year.

The star attraction was an enjoyable talk from Professor Ian Frazer AC, the Australian of the Year in 2006 and eminent immunologist who developed the cervical cancer vaccine known as Gardasil. Ian did not speak to any set theme but chose to share with the audience some of his life experiences and some personal observations with the added touch of his own unique brand of humour. His talk was very entertaining. Memorable was his advice on four ways for Australians to lower the growing national health bill – stop smoking; drink in moderation; maintain good exercise and as far as is practicable 'keep out of the sun'

The Association felt privileged that both Ian and his wife Caroline attended as its special guests.

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

The branch committee organized two excellent luncheons to celebrate with new recipients of awards in the Order of Australia for both Australia Day recipients in May 2013 and for Queen's Birthday recipients in September 2013. Both events were held at Hillstone St Lucia, overlooking the St Lucia Golf Links in St Lucia in Brisbane. These were very successful and key events in the Queensland branch calendar.

4.1 The Luncheon to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2013 Australia Day Honours

Twenty-one of 71 Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards in this year's Australia Day honours were special guests at our Luncheon on Tuesday 7 May 2013 at Hillstone St Lucia. One hundred and twenty-two people attended the gala event including the recipients, their families and friends and 25 Association members and their guests. At the equivalent event last year there were 91 attendees and 20 new recipients. The increase this time round is pleasing to report.

A highlight at this year's event was the presence of St Peter's Lutheran College String Quartet who entertained the guests on arrival on the Mango Tree Terrace. They also played and the guests sang the first two verses of the National Anthem to commence the Lunch proceedings. A special book presentation was made to the College, in appreciation of the String Quartet's contribution and each member of the Quartet received a commemorative certificate.

4.2 The Luncheon to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2013 Queen's Birthday Honours

Twenty-seven of 79 Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards in this year's Australia Day honours were special guests at our Luncheon on Tuesday 17 September 2013 at Hillstone St Lucia. One hundred and thirty people attended the gala event including the recipients, their families and friends and 18 Association members and their guests. At the equivalent event last year there were 166 attendees and 25 new recipients. However the event last year had several very large recipient groups attending that accounted for that astonishing number of attendees. The final attendance this year was still very gratifying.

We were entertained on this occasion on arrival at the Mango Terrace by 23 musicians from the Brigidine College String Ensemble. They also played and the guests sang the first two verses of the National Anthem at the commencement of the lunch proceedings. I presented the College music captains with a book for the College Library in appreciation of the String Ensemble's contribution to the event. Each of the 23 musicians also received commemorative certificates from the Association.

5. 2013 Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards (SSCA)

This year we had 130 people attend the 15th annual Presentation of awards, comprising secondary school students, family members, education representatives and OAA members from across Queensland.

The event was held on Friday 20 September at Parliament House, Brisbane. Guest of Honour, The Honourable Justice Margaret McMurdo AC, President of the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of Queensland, presented 14 students with commemorative plaques and Certificates of Merit, and Mr Peter Honeycombe, Managing Director of our sponsor Honeycombes Property Group, Townsville presented Certificates of Community Service to 11 selected local students. Mr Terry Heath, Principal, Yeronga State High School presented the response speech on behalf of the Schools at the Presentation.

Nominations were received for 81 students from 48 secondary schools throughout Queensland, compared with 72 nominations representing 43 schools last year. This year's judging panel comprised Mrs Dina Browne AO and Mr Bruce Howden OAM from the Association and a new judge Mr Chris Lassig, the Principal of the Aspley Special School. Chris stepped in at the last minute following the retirement of long standing judge Dr Bruce Cook OAM. The Association thanks Chris for stepping in so willingly and also offers its sincere thanks to Bruce Cook for taking on the judging duties for a number of years. It would be remiss of me if I did not offer a huge vote of thanks to Professor Klaus Bremhorst AM who retired on health grounds, after many years as the SSCA Coordinator. Klaus has played an important role in coordinating the event including liaising with the schools and the nominated students; and receiving and assembling nominations. To Geoff Cowles OAM, thank you for agreeing to add to your considerable workload as Secretary by tackling with such enthusiasm the coordination role of this year's awards program, in the absence of Klaus.

This year's presentation was again compered by well known announcer Mr Howard Ainsworth AM and was made special by the presence of the Ormiston College Chamber Orchestra providing musical interludes and the playing of the National Anthem. A presentation of a book for the College's library was accepted by Mr Shane Tooley, the College's musical director and all members of the Orchestra received commemorative certificates from the Association.

Georgia Folker, from Maroochydore State High School who received a Secondary Schools Citizenship Award was unable to attend the Presentation at Parliament House due to her being in Cambodia with a group of other students from the School performing humanitarian work. Geoff Cowles OAM, the Secretary, presented Georgia with her award in front of all the year 12 students at a special school assembly he attended at Maroochydore State High School on Monday 14 October. Geoff also attended the final year 10 to 12 Assembly at Brisbane Boys' College at Toowong to present certificates of community service to their two nominated students on Wednesday 31 October.

6. 2013 Senior Volunteer Awards (SVA)

The idea of the Queensland branch having an annual senior volunteer award (SVA) scheme was one of the positive outcomes from the strategic planning meeting the branch committee convened in June 2012.

In 2013, the first year of operation of the SVAs, we had 10 nominations received from members of the Association which I think is quite an encouraging start. All of the nominations were of a high standard and the judging panel had a difficult task determining the best to receive the inaugural awards. The judging panel of myself, Mick Davis AM ASM and Susan Norrie OAM selected three worthy volunteers to receive this Award. My thanks to Mick and Susan for agreeing to be on the judging panel this year. The three awardees will be announced and presented with their awards during the Annual Dinner to follow the AGM tonight.

The purpose of the Senior Volunteer Award is to recognise and reward outstanding voluntary contributions made by senior Queenslanders to their communities, independently or through organisations with which they are associated. Any current member of The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch, residing in Queensland may submit a nomination of a volunteer 65 years or older who they believe meets the selection criteria required.

I wish to record my thanks to Paul McNally OAM and Bruce Howden OAM for their initial steering work in getting the awards up and running. I also thank Geoff Cowles OAM, the Secretary, for his contribution with administering the scheme in 2013.

I encourage members of the Association to nominate worthy senior volunteers in 2014. Let's try to make it bigger and better next year.

7. Brisbane morning teas

This year the Queensland branch committee organized two well attended Brisbane morning teas.

7.1 Ormiston House, Ormiston, Redland Bay - 1 May 2013

On Wednesday 1 May, 50 members and guests enjoyed a memorable morning tea and tour of historic Ormiston House and the beautifully maintained grounds located at Ormiston in the heart of Redland Bay, south of Brisbane. Special thanks must go Bruce Howden OAM and Geoff Cowles OAM for their organization of this outstanding event.

The Association also extends its appreciation to Meg O'Driscoll and other voluntary staff of Ormiston House who assisted in making this event a great success.

7.2 Queensland University of Technology (QUT) visit – 28 August 2013

Earlier in the year I accepted an invitation from Dr Peter Coaldrake AO, the Vice Chancellor for QUT, for QUT to host a morning tea and tours of Old Government House and the new QUT Science and Engineering Centre in August at the Garden Point, Brisbane campus.

The event took place on Wednesday 28 August and I am pleased to report that 57 members and guests attended. We were broken up into two groups to tour both Old Government House and the Science and Engineering Centre. Professor Carol Dickensen, Acting Vice Chancellor, attended the morning tea in Old Government House, in the absence of Dr Coaldrake who was overseas. I was very happy to present Professor Dickensen with a commemorative plaque to thank QUT for the visit and for hosting the morning tea and the two tours.

8. 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 2013. 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 2013 in April, August and October.

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.

The Bulletin remains the most important avenue to promote and encourage bookings for our many and varied Branch and regional events. 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.

Through the enthusiasm of Simon Newcomb OAM we have embarked on a modest Bulletin sponsorship program this year by way of including small \$60 advertisements which allow interested members to promote their business activities. The take up of this initiative has been slow to date; however the aim would be to try to have an advertisement on each of pages 2 to 6 of every Bulletin, a total of five advertisements per edition. The success of this initiative is in the hands of the 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 provide the Association throughout the year arranging for their staff to photocopy mass copies of our promotional flyers inserted in the Bulletins (Teresa Gambaro) and this year's annual general meeting material (Dale Shuttleworth).

9. 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:

9.1 **Darling Downs Regional Group**

[Convener: Paul McNally OAM]

- **17 May 2013 – Morning Tea** – Town and Country Club, Toowoomba. 46 members and guests. Guest speaker – Helen Bawden OAM talking about her involvement in several organizations including the Museum of Australian Army Flying at Oakey and the Toowoomba Regional Cultural Network. Bruce Howden OAM represented the Queensland branch committee at this event.
- **18 October 2013 – Luncheon** - Town and Country Club, Toowoomba. 45 members and guests. Guest speaker Emeritus Professor Maurice French AM, local historian.

9.2 **Gold Coast Regional Group**

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

- **16 May 2013 – Lunch – The Southport Golf Club** - 26 members and guests. Guest speaker: Dr Teresa Withers, Gold Coast Hospital neurosurgeon. Bruce Howden OAM represented the Queensland branch committee at this event.
- **26 October 2013 – Annual Garden Party** – “Jabiru”, Mudgeeraba, the home of Alison Kearney, the wife of the Late John Kearney AM QC – 34 members and guests. It was very pleasing that Alison chose to continue to allow members into her home and grounds for this annual garden party, despite the recent passing away of her husband John.

9.3 **Bundaberg Regional Group**

[Convener: Donna Duncan OAM]

- **11 May 2013 - Lunch – Isis Cultural Centre, Childers** – 31 members and guests. Guest speaker: Dorothy Bunn of Childers speaking on the history of the Isis region.
- **26 October 2013 – Lunch – Catholic Church Hall, Biggenden**

9.4 **Central Queensland Regional Group**

[Convener: Ray Young OAM]

- **18 March 2013 – Morning Tea – Rockhampton Leagues Club**
40 members and guests – Guest speaker Win Forday on the topic "*My Patchwork Life*"
- **2 September 2013 - Capricornia 'Improving our Community' Awards Presentation and Lunch** – Rockhampton Leagues Club - 63 members and guests. Guest speaker Ray Channells OAM speaking on the topic of Nature Salon Photography.

9.5 **Townsville Regional Group**

[Convener: - Michael Johnson OAM]

- **18 April 2013 - Lunch – Townsville RSL Club** – 38 members and guests. There was no formal guest speaker. Instead members were invited to spend 5 minutes telling everyone about their vision for Australia.
- **7 September 2013 – Annual Dinner – Townsville RSL Club** - 38 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. At the Dinner Coral Rizzalli OAM advised that she has been forced to stand down as the regional convener for health reasons and Mick Johnson OAM agreed to take over as the new convener.

I would like to pay tribute to Coral for her hard work and dedication in running the Townsville group over the past year and I and the branch committee look forward to working with Mick, the new convener, over the coming months.

9.6 **Cairns Regional Group**

[Convener: Diedre Ford AM]

Regrettably, no events were made available for members in Cairns Regional Group in 2013. The Cairns regional group has not organized any events for at least the past three years.

Your branch committee is concerned that members have not had the opportunity to meet in their Regional Group. It plans to assist the Regional Group by organizing an event early in 2014.

9.7 **Sunshine Coast Regional Group**

[Convener: – Keith Swan OAM]

- **25 July 2013 – Lunch - Tranquil Park, Maleny.** 46 members and guests. Guest speaker –Neil McGarvie OAM speaking on the history of the Buderim-Palmwoods tramway. This was Keith Swan's first event as new convener and it was a great success.

10. Representations at Government House Brisbane

10.1 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 2013 Australia Day Awards during May 2013 and Queen's Birthday Awards during September 2013 at Government House, Brisbane. Representation at these Investitures was shared amongst various Committee members. Mick Johnson OAM represented the Association at the North Queensland Investiture held in Townsville for North Queensland Queen's Birthday recipients of awards during October 2013.

10.2 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 Queensland Day in June. The event on 26 January for Australia day was marred by very wet weather but still went ahead.

Our displays were in the Investiture Room on both occasions 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.

11. Membership survey

During the latter part of the year the branch committee decided to organize a short membership survey to gauge Association members opinion on the events and service that the Queensland branch organizes through its branch committee and regional groups.

I would like to express my appreciation to Christine Bundesen AM for utilizing her considerable skills in developing suitable questions for this survey.

Members have until 6 December 2013 to complete the survey and post to the Secretary. The results should be available early in 2014.

12. The Association website

The Queensland segment of the website was again maintained by Phil Morrall AM, the national webmaster relying heavily on material provided by Geoff Cowles OAM, our Secretary. The website contains lots of advice about upcoming events as well as information and nomination forms for both the Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards and the Senior Volunteer Awards. Archival material has been kept up to date as far as was practicable and a copy of each edition of the Bulletin was uploaded to the site after publication.

I urge members to make it a habit to visit our website from time to time to keep up to date with what is happening in the Association, particularly national matters.

13. Branch activity at national level

I was very pleased to be a part of the 24 strong contingent from the Queensland branch that attended the national conference in Canberra from 14 to 16 February. Last year we had 14 attendees and I am looking forward to a good number attending the 2014 conference to be held in Melbourne in February. The 2013 conference was well organized by the ACT branch and was an outstanding success. On 13 February, the day before the conference, I attended the national board meeting that was held at the conference venue.

I also represented the branch at national board directors' 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.

14. Relationships with outside organizations

In my report last year I reported on 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 in which members of our Association and several other kindred organizations took part. Following on from this Dinner and with the strong encouragement of Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland, the various kindred organizations decided to organize another event around the Queen's Birthday this year which all would attend.

A loose alliance called the Combined Patriotic Societies (CPS) was formed and the CPS combined with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to organize a scholarship around the current CHOGM theme announced by Queen Elizabeth II. This year's CHOGM theme was women as agents of change and a scholarship was awarded to Leilani Pearce, a deserving indigenous woman at a Gala black tie Dinner in the new refurbished Brisbane City Hall on 11 June. 202 guests attended the Dinner and 22 members and guests came from our Association.

The CPS is planning to organize these Gala Dinners annual around the Queen's Birthday and next year's event will involve another QUT-CPS scholarship on the current Queen's CHOGM theme of "Unlocking Potential with Innovation and Excellence".

On 3 September Geoff Cowles OAM and I represented the Association at the annual Australian National Flag Raising Ceremony organised by the Australian National Flag Association, Queensland.

15 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. While not members of the committee, and indeed not even members of the Association, much of the success of our events throughout the year has come from the support of the executive's partners, particularly Charyl Cowles, Marjory Voss and Val Webber.

It is with sadness that I report the passing on 9 November of our long time committee man Phil Blakey OAM. Phil had made the decision at the October meeting that he would not be standing again on the Committee in 2014. On behalf of the Queensland Branch I extend my condolences to the Blakey family over the loss of a fine volunteering man. Phil gave 10 years service on the branch committee. In more recent times Phil took on the role of merchandising officer for the branch and he ensured that Association merchandise such as ties, scarves, cuff links and the like were always available for sale at most of our events. "Rest in Peace" Phil.

I commend this report to you all.

AJ (Tony) Webber AM PhD
Chairman

APPENDIX A TO THE 2013 Chairman's Annual Report of the Queensland Branch of The Order of Australia Association.

Membership Trends @ 1 November 2013 (Complied by Geoff Cowles OAM, Secretary)

A Combined 2011 Recipients – Australia Day and Queens Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunches
107	41	38.3%	28	16	57.1%	26.2%

B. Australia Day 2012 only

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
49	22	44.9%	20	11	55%	40.8%

C. Queen's Birthday Day 2012 only

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
62	43	69.4%	25	21	84.0%	40.3%

D. Combined 2012 Recipients – Australia Day and Queens Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
111	65	58.6%	45	32	71.1%	24.7%

E. Australia Day 2013 only

No of recipients	No who have joined @ 16 June 2013	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
71	33	46.5%	21	17	80.9%	29.6%

F. Queen's Birthday Day 2013 only

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
79	30	40.0%	27	22	81.5%	34.2%

G. Combined 2013 Recipients – Australia Day and Queens Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
150	63	42%	48	39	81.2%	32%

APPENDIX B to the 2013 Chairman's Annual Report of the Queensland Branch of The Order of Australia Association.



Our two Queensland Branch Morning Teas



Above – Ormiston House – 1 May
To the right – QUT – Old Government House – 28 August →



Thirteen of the 14 Secondary Schools Citizenship Award finalists with The Honourable Justice Margaret McMurdo AC at Parliament House, Brisbane – Friday 20 September 2013



Geoff Cowles OAM at Maroochydore State High School presenting Georgia Folker, the 14th finalist, with her Secondary Schools Citizenship Award – 14 October 2013

A selection of 2013 pictorial highlights



Queen's Birthday 2013 award recipients at the Hillstone St Lucia Lunch on 17 September 2013

Sunshine Coast Regional Lunch - Tranquil Park, Maleny -25 July



Australia Day 2013 award recipients with Tony Webber AM, Qld Branch Chairman at the Hillstone St Lucia Lunch on 7 May 2013