

The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch

Biographies – 2024 Queensland Branch Members



Chairman - Ronda L. Nix OAM

Ronda has been the Treasurer of the Queensland Branch of the Order of Australia Association for the past five years. Prior to her retirement in 2016, she was the Business & Information Technology Manager for an Engineering Consulting firm. Ronda has considerable experience in voluntary administrative roles as a President/Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and has chaired numerous committees, including Constitutional Committees and Finance Committees responsible for preparing large budgets and acquitting multi-million grants.

As well as serving in administrative roles, Ronda is an internationally qualified hockey Tournament Director who until recently conducted training courses and officiating workshops for match officials, then mentored and assessed them for State and Australian accreditation. She has been the Tournament Director in charge of numerous large State, Australian and International hockey tournaments. Ronda has also received several Life Memberships and many awards for her service to sport. She was voted the "Administrator of the Year" by the Australian Society of Sports Administrators Qld in 1995 and was made a Fellow of the Australian Society of Sports Administrators (FASSA). In 2011 she received a Queensland Government QSport Service to Sport Award for her service to hockey.

Ronda was a Guide Leader when younger (and fitter!). She is currently a Committee Member and Bursary Coordinator with the National Council of Women of Queensland, and Treasurer of her local Forum Communicators Club..



Source: Quest Newspapers

Deputy Chairman - Dr Michael John (Mick) Davis AM, ASM - FPA, LMFAFP, FCHSM, LFAIES, MBA

Mick retired from QAS in 2013 after 50 years-service in operational and management roles and was appointed Volunteer Manager Qld Ambulance Heritage & History. In 1964, he began as an Honorary in Rockhampton QATB and was appointed to the permanent staff in 1969. He now has 60 years with Qld Ambulance.

Mick is President QAS Retired Officers' Assoc, Deputy Chairman/Treasurer of the KJ McPherson Education & Research Foundation, past director, Board of the Order of Australia Association, past Qld Branch Deputy Chairman/Treasurer and Past Chairman and currently Queensland Branch Deputy Chairman. He is a past Institute of Ambulance Officers (Aust) President and has served in most executive roles of the Institute, which became ACAP, Paramedics Australia and is now Australasian College of Paramedicine, and was Treasurer/Director until 2016, playing a key role in that organisation's evolutionary transitions. He served 15yrs as Director and Treasurer of the Health and Community Services Workforce Council and is currently a member of the Central Qld University Brisbane Campus Community Engagement Committee. Mick has served as Branch President and Director of Australasian College of Health Service Managers (ACHSM). He was appointed "Member" (AM) of the Order of Australia in June 2000 and awarded the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) in 2012. In 2013, he was awarded the Surgeon-General John White Medal for Services to Health. In Dec 2016 he awarded the status of 'Doctor of the University' by the Chancellor of the Central Queensland University. In 2020 He was awarded the Centenary Medal by RQHS for services to Qld History. Mick started his work life as an apprentice Fitter in 1960 and soon became a member of the Qld Railway Ambulance Corps.



Secretary - Robyn Porter OAM, BAppSci (Chem); GradDip (TechMgt);
Cert IV Government (Procurement and Contracting).

Robyn has been a management consultant providing advice on strategic research management, large scale research funding and cooperative research arrangements, a research scientist in protein biochemistry/biotechnology, a patent examiner in biotechnology, managed a competitive Commonwealth science granting program and administered some ACT Government programs which assist ACT residents in improving their homes to better suit the changing climate.

She was also actively involved in Professionals Australia, an association that works to achieve greater respect, recognition and reward for professionals in STEM, being both National Secretary and President of the Scientists Division. She also served on the Science and Technology Australia Board, which is Australia’s peak body in science and technology. For many years she was engaged, as President, Treasurer or Newsletter Editor, in several community organisations in which her children participated, most of them as a single parent after her first husband died.

As a result of her committed involvement in many organisations she was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in June 2021 for service to science, and the community. She has also been awarded a Commissioner for Public Administration Award in 2010 for service delivery to ACT citizens and an Australia Day Achievement Medallion in 2002 for some of her teamwork in the Commonwealth Government. Additionally, Robyn is a Life Member of both the Canberra and Region Multiple Birth Association (CARMBA – 2002) and Professionals Australia (2015).



Treasurer - Dr Dennis Young AM, DHSM, MBA, Grad Dip F.E.T., B. Bus, FIML, MAICD

Dennis has served on Not-for-Profit Boards since 1975 and includes: The Crèche and Kindergarten, The Police Citizen and Youth Welfare association. 4 Walls; Community Council of Australia, Inaugural President of the Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agency, the Chair of the Nyunda Park Cooperative, Mental health

Association Queensland, The Australian College of Community Service, the Drug Awareness and Relief Foundation (Australia) and Drug ARM. Dennis is also a member of Metro South Health Clinical Ethics Committee. Secretary/Treasurer of the Queensland Former Parliamentary Members Association and an Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Community Service,

Dennis’s current position is Chief Policy Advocate and Company Secretary for the Drug Awareness and Relief Foundation (Australia) and Drug ARM. Previously served for 30 years as the Executive Director of the Drug Awareness and Relief Foundation (Australia) and Drug ARM 1988 – 2018. Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of Queensland 2011-2018 and the Australia College of Community Services 2011-2017. He served as a member of the Parliament of Queensland. Dennis served for over 17 years in the Queensland Police Service. Work included Juvenile Aid Bureau, officer in Charge of the Missing Persons Bureau, the Criminal Investigation Branch and the Fraud Squad. Dennis also served as Manager, Regional Manager and Assistant State Secretary of the Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association. Dennis served in the Citizens Military Force for a number of years in 2/14 QMI and 9 RQR.

Dennis has been fortunate to receive a number of public recognitions for his community work especially in Queensland. These awards included 2022 Life Time Achievement Award presented by the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner; 2022 Life Time Achievement Award presented by the Queensland Former Parliamentary Members Association for service to community; Appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2018; 1989 National Medal; 2018 National Police Medal; 2018 Queensland Police Service Medal with clasp; 2018 National Service Defence Medal; 2018 Defence Medal; 2002 Centenary Award; and 1977 Queens Silver Jubilee Medal.
ice Defence Medal; 2018 Defence Medal; 2002 Centenary Award; and 1977 Queens Silver Jubilee Medal.



Governance and Policy Review Officer - Peter James McMurtrie AO, KStJ, JP(Qual.) FPA(Hon.), FAIES(Life), FAIM, AFCHSM(Life), MBA(HRM), Gr.Dip.HSM, CHM.

Peter McMurtrie was born in Melbourne and educated at Northcote High. He first worked in Town Planning and later in electrical wholesale lighting. In 1967, following 6 years as a volunteer first aider for St. John Ambulance he commenced with the Ambulance Service in Melbourne. in 1988 he was appointed District Superintendent Goulburn Valley Ambulance at Shepparton.

He has a vast experience in Major Incident Operations including the West Gate Bridge collapse, Hoddle Street and Queen Street shootings, multi fatality fires at Pentridge Jail, Ahmad factory and William Booth Home and the Violet Town Southern Aurora rail crash. He was for 10 years the City of Preston Civil Defence Controller (SES).

He has been active in many allied organisations including 59 years with St. John Ambulance rising to Commissioner, He was elevated to *Knight of Grace of the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem* within the Order of St. John, and is an Honorary Fellow of Paramedics Australasia. He was admitted to the Australian Institute of Management as a Fellow, an Associate Fellow, Councillor, Queensland President and Life Member of the College of Health Service Executives, a Life Fellow of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services and was National Secretary of the Australian Resuscitation Council. He completed a Master of Business Administration (HRM) at the University of Southern Queensland and a Graduate Diploma in Health Services Management at Melbourne University (R.M.I.T.).

Peter came to Queensland from the Goulburn Valley in 1991 as Deputy Commissioner, with Queensland Ambulance Service. In 2004 he received an Australia Day Council Achievement Medal and the United Nation’s – International Year of the Volunteer Medal through service to AIES. In 2013 he was awarded as an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) and in 2013 was elected to the Queensland Committee of the Order of Australia Association. In 2018 he was appointed as Queensland’s nominated Director on the National Board of the Order of Australia Association.

Merchandise Officer - Kelvin Brown OAM



An ex RAAF clerk with 24 years with the Permanent Air Force and 4 years Active Reserve. Awarded the Order of Australia in the Military Division for duties performed in the RAAF.

While in the RAAF, held many committee positions from Chairman of a Sergeant’s Mess, Deputy, Secretary and President of the local Cricket Club. Presently, the position of Secretary and Membership Officer of the Goodna RSL Sub Branch (with 260 members).

This branch is heavily involved in supporting the local community and direct support to veterans with advocacy rights. Also sponsoring local military cadet units (Army, Navy and Airforce).

Since leaving the RAAF, has been employed in the Human Resources industry with employment in both public and private sectors. Has over 15 years’ experience with public and private correctional services within HR and Ethical Standards Branch. Education level includes a Master’s Degree in Industrial Relations, and a Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management (Griffith University).



Multicultural and Diversity Officer – Irene Cayas OAM

Irene was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2018 for her volunteering services to Multiculturalism and the Ageing.

In the past, Irene was a Commonwealth Bank employee in Sydney and Wollongong (NSW), and after her marriage, Irene worked as a Garnishee clerk at ACO (a finance company). Irene was volunteering for the Red Cross in her high school years, where she was a School Prefect. In later years she participated in School P&Cs, Mothers’ Groups and Tuckshops. She has lived in NSW, Victoria and, since 1980, in Queensland where she has worked diligently to assist in many facets of migrant families’ lives.

Irene has been involved in the Greek Community as President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Greek Orthodox Church at Mount Gravatt; on the Board of the Ethnic Communities Council of Qld (ECCQ); as Convenor of the Womens’ Ethnic Network (WEN); a volunteer at the St. Nicholas Nursing Home; President of Older People Speak Out (OPSO - a not-for-profit advocacy group); on the Board of the National Council of Women in Qld (NCWQ); on an Advisory Committee of the Elder Abuse Unit (until her Covid 19 illness); and as an inaugural committee member of the Estia Disability Group.

Irene’s hands-on experience has been used to assist and advocate for those most vulnerable in the community, and who are in need of a Voice!

Her life-skills and experience with the ethnic, disadvantaged and disabled members in the community, give Irene the insight to contribute to the Branch Committee of The Order of Australia Association, Qld Branch



Awards and Metro Events Coordinator - Mr Geoff Cowles OAM

JP (Qual)

Geoff’s life philosophy is *“be loyal to the cause and do one’s best”*. Geoff was born in Ipswich, England in 1949, and migrated to Australia on the *SS Otranto* in 1956. He has lived in Brisbane since that time. He was educated at Seville

Road State School, Holland Park (1956 to 1963) and Cavendish Road High School, Holland Park (1964 and 1965). Geoff gained a Certificate in Chemistry from Queensland Institute of Technology (now QUT) in 1970.

Geoff is married to Charyl and has two boys, Peter and David. He enjoyed a 47 year regulatory career in agriculture initially with the Department of Primary Industries and later with Biosecurity Queensland. His principal roles included registration before sale of agricultural inputs such as pesticides, veterinary medicines, fertilisers and stock foods; promoting responsible agricultural and veterinary chemical use, contributing to Queensland’s response to the BSE (Mad Cow Disease) and regulating the fledgling Queensland industrial hemp industry.

Geoff is very community focused. Among a number of organizations he has served, he has been a member of the Ferny Districts Cricket Club Inc, Ferny Grove, Brisbane since 1991 and a life member since 2004. He was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on Australia Day 2007 *“for services to the community through a range of youth, sporting and church groups.”* He received an Australian Sports Medal in 2000 *“In recognition of more than 10 years involvement with junior cricket. Significant involvement in the Ferny Districts Cricket Club.”* Geoff is also a recipient of a Dickson Community Award in 2007 from Hon Peter Dutton MP, Member for Dickson.

He also holds life memberships with Brisbane North Junior Cricket Association; Youth Hostels Association and The Order of Australia Association. Prior to his current role in The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch which commenced in 2020, he served the nine previous years as the Queensland Branch Secretary.



Branch Editor 'The Order' - Graham Hyde OAM PHF.FIPA. FFA. (UK), FCHSM(Hon), FIML. FRSH(UK). AFAAQHC.

Graham's award in 2019 was for services to: Medical Administration (28 years), the Anglican Church (Organist, Parish Councillor, Synod Representative for many years), Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM) Queensland Branch as Registrar and then as President (8 years), ACHSM National Board Director and Treasurer (5 years), Councillor of the Royal School of Church Music Queensland and

National (5 years), a Lead Assessor for the Australasian Council on Health Care Standards (ACHS) (26 years) , and to Rotary (11 years).

Graham is also a current Order of Australia Association Board Director and National Secretary. Graham was awarded a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Mullumbimby in 1992 to acknowledge 11 years of service to the Club and serving in all Board positions culminating in being President and Immediate Past President. In 2004 Graham was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Medallion by ACHSM.

Graham has fellowships from the Institute of Public Accountants, the Institute of Financial Accountants (UK), the Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM), the Institute of Managers and Leaders, the Royal Society of Health (UK) and an Associate Fellowship from the Australian Association for Quality in Health Care.

Currently Graham has a small consultancy business specialising in quality management systems, organisational development, strategic planning and a works as a Lead Assessor with ACHS reviewing Australian public and private hospitals against the National Quality and Safety Standards. His current community roles include: Community Member Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee; Chair ACHSM Audit and Risk Committee and Assistant Organist St Thomas' Anglican Church Toowong.



Branch Nominated Director - Paula Penfold AM, BSc (UK), RE, RCM, CCHV(UK), Ethicist, AFCHSM, JP(Qual)

Paula has always worked in the Health Industry. First as a Registered Nurse/Registered Midwife both in Australia and the United Kingdom and later as a member of a research team doing bench top research into Neuromuscular Disease. The result of this research was two papers published back to back in the British Journal of Endocrinology

in approximately February/March 1992. Paula was instrumental in developing the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Queensland and also the National Body of Muscular Dystrophy.

In 1992 Paula saw a gap in Health Services for new Mothers and developed a business providing advice to new Mothers based in Pharmacies. The Clinics were held weekly for Healthy Infants and their siblings. All infants with a health challenge, needing medical or specialised care, were referred on to the appropriate area of health. These clinics were administered from Brisbane but grew to encompass the Eastern Seaboard of Australia through to South Australia. The clinics were staffed by suitably qualified Maternal and Child Health Midwives. Inservice was provided for Staff by Paula and other suitably trained Medical and Nursing Staff.

Paula was appointed as a member of the Ethics Committee for Children's Health and Research at the Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane in 1981 and remains on that committee to this day as the deputy Chair.

Paula retired from full time work in 2004. In 2006 she was invited to join the Quality Auditing Program for Health which was in it's infancy of development. She joined IHCA in 2006 and after completing a training program and registering with the National Body (RABQSA- now Exemplar Global) went on to Audit over 350 Services under Home and Community Care Standards, Community Common Care Standards, Queensland Disability Standards, Queensland Advocacy Standards, Human Service Quality Standards – Community, Human Services Quality Standards - Disability in Queensland, Third Party Verification Standards NSW, National Safety, Mental Health and Quality Health Service Standards and provided many levels of Consultation to a variety of Services. Paula retired from this field of work due to health challenges in 2018. She currently holds positions on several 'Not for Profit' organisation's Boards.

In the Australia Day Awards of 2016 Paula was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).



Regional Groups Coordinator - Darryl R Secombe OAM

Darryl was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen’s Birthday Australian Honours on 13 June 2011. Darryl is a current Board Member of The Lady Bowen Trust Board of Advice, a charitable trust established by the Queensland Government in November 2006 to assist the homeless. He has been Chairman for the 14 years since its establishment Nov 2006 - Aug 2020. Darryl was Managing Director and Principal of DSA Financial Pty. Ltd. a successful Financial Planning Practice prior to his retirement in January 2017. He was a Certified Financial Planner and a Certified Insurance Professional. Darryl is a former Director of the AFA Investment Fund Pty. Ltd. an Investment Trust for the Association of Financial Advisers of which he was the Queensland Trustee, and is also a former Director and Vice President of the Valley Chamber of Commerce Incorporated and former President of the Valley Business Club. He is a Past President of the Association of Financial Advisers Queensland. Darryl was awarded Life Membership of the Financial Advisers Association in May 2022 in appreciation of the valuable contribution to the Advice Profession, work as a Trustee of the AFA Investment Fund, significant involvement with the AFA Foundation and valuable support for the AFA over several decades.

Darryl was the Founder and Managing Director of Charitable Bequest Services (Australia) Pty. Ltd, a National Organisation which specialised in deferred bequests through the donations of life insurance. With extensive experience in charitable fundraising, Darryl has been a past Secretary of The Australasian Institute of Fundraising (Qld Chapter). He has also written various articles on Charitable Life Insurance for the “Fundraising Australasia Journal”.

Darryl assisted in introducing the Make- A- Wish Foundation to Australia. Make- A- Wish Foundation Australia Limited was officially established in November 1985 in Victoria. In 1986 Darryl introduced the National Charity to Queensland and was an integral part of its development over the years, with its early years run from Darryl’s financial planning practice. Make- A- Wish Foundation of Australia celebrates its 38 year anniversary in 2023 and the first country to establish Make- A Wish outside the USA.



Protocol Officer - Marjorie M Voss OAM

Marjorie was born in Bundaberg and spent the war years helping on her parents’ dairy farm and in their local store. This is when she learnt that caring for and sharing with people was “a way of life”. Since then she has spent 50 years with the Girl Guides as a Sea Ranger; Brownie Leader (Active & Lones); State Council (involved in many areas); Trefoil Guild and is still involved in State matters.

In 1960 Marjorie became a member of the Worldwide Mothers’ Union (now AMUA) serving on the Diocesan and National Committees and holding the position of Diocesan and National Promotion & Development Coordinator/Caritas Leader for 7 years. During this time, she was involved with members from around Australia and Overseas. From 2004 to 2017 Marjorie sat on the Management Committee of National Council of Women of Qld. and held the positions of Vice President and State Child and Family Adviser. Before her retirement in 2002 Marjorie spent 23 years on the teaching staff at St. Lucia Kindergarten where she was actively involved in Early Childhood and C&K matters as well as being an employees’ representative in the Independent Teachers Union. She was also Secretary of the Queensland Child Watch Committee for eight years until 2014. Marjorie has also assisted with the organizing of two OAA National Conferences.

Of acknowledgments received over the years the most cherished are the Emu Award for Guiding and the OAM