



Queensland Branch
ANNUAL REPORT
2024



**To be presented by
Mrs Ronda L. Nix OAM,
Chairman, Queensland Branch**

at

the 45th Annual General Meeting

Monday 17 March 2025

**The VC Suite, Level 1, Kedron Wavell Services Club,
21 Kitty Hawk Drive, Chermside, Brisbane**

To celebrate and promote outstanding Australian citizenship'

The Order of Australia Association Limited ACN 008 812 664 – A Company Limited by Guarantee



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1. Summary

It is with pleasure that I present the forty-fourth Annual Report of the Queensland Branch of The Order of Australia Association, in my second year as Chairman.

It has been another busy year in 2024 with a great variety of events organized by a hard working Queensland Branch Committee, as well as some worthy functions organized by our regional groups throughout the State.

The Queensland Branch functions held in the Metro (Greater Brisbane) area during the year were as follows -

- The Annual Dinner following the AGM on Monday 18 March at Kedron Wavell Services Club, with *Barry Bull OAM* as our inspirational guest speaker;
- The Welcome Celebratory Dinner for award recipients in the 2024 Australia Day Honours held at Kedron Wavell Services Club on Tuesday 14 May on the eve of the National Conference in Perth;
- A memorable Black Tie King's Birthday Dinner organized by the Queensland Branch to which members of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Queensland also attended at the Tattersall's Club in Brisbane on Tuesday 11 June;
- The Annual Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Presentation at Parliament House, Brisbane on Friday 13 September; and
- The Welcome Celebratory Dinner for award recipients in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours held at Kedron Wavell Services Club on Thursday 19 September, made memorable with 255 guests present.

Fuller details of all of these Queensland Branch functions are provided under their individual headings later in this report, commencing on page 6.

Additionally, our eight regions across Queensland arranged twelve entertaining and interesting functions throughout the year, comprising five lunches, four morning teas, a mayoral reception, an informal get together and a dinner. Members enjoyed some fabulous guest speakers at these functions. All twelve functions will be described in greater detail later in this report commencing on page 13.

The total number of bookings received for the combined Queensland Branch functions in the metro area and the twelve regional group functions was 1 205. The five metro functions (including the OAAQ members attending the King's Birthday Dinner (with the Victoria League) totalled 683 bookings and the twelve regional group functions 522. It's been a collective job well done by the Queensland Branch Committee and the Regional Conveners and I thank all who contributed to this success.

Following its success in 2023, the preferred means for members to register and pay for all 2024 functions, both metro and regional, was again Humanitix online. Humanitix is a not-for-profit organisation, notable for operating an event ticketing platform to raise funds for education projects. Humanitix directs 100% of profits from booking fees to a range of education programmes and operates in the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This platform for function registrations has proved very popular with the members with almost 100 percent patronage of this booking method at events.

The following pages provide highlights of the year in greater detail.



2. Queensland Branch Committee 2024

The following members of the Association were elected or re-elected under their three year terms to the Branch Committee at the 44th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on **Monday 18 March 2024**.

- **Chairman:** *Mrs Ronda Nix AM*
- **Deputy Chairman:** *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* (also appointed by the Committee as Membership Officer)
- **Secretary:** *Mrs Robyn Porter OAM*
- **Treasurer:** *Dr Dennis Young AM*

Other members of the Committee (Committee appointed roles in brackets)

- *Mr Kelvin Brown OAM* (Merchandise Officer)
- *Mrs Irene Cayas OAM* (Multicultural and Diversity Officer)
- *Mr Geoff Cowles OAM* (Awards and Metro Events Coordinator and Queensland Branch Webmaster)
- *Mr Graham Hyde OAM* (Newsletter Editor)
- *Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ* (Governance and Policy Review Officer)
- *Ms Paula Penfold AM* (Also elected at the AGM as Queensland Branch Nominated Director on the National Board)
- *Mr Darryl Seccombe OAM* (Regional Groups Coordinator)
- *Mrs Marjorie Voss OAM* (Protocol Officer)



The 2024 Queensland Branch Committee

From L-R
Marjorie Voss OAM
Darryl Seccombe OAM
Paula Penfold AM
Kelvin Brown OAM
Robyn Porter OAM (Secretary)
Dr Mick Davis AM ASM (Deputy Chairman)
Ronda Nix OAM (Chairman)
Dr Dennis Young AM (Treasurer)
Irene Cayas OAM
Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ
Graham Hyde OAM
Geoff Cowles OAM

The Committee met on eleven occasions (nine “face to face” meetings and two meetings using Zoom Technology). Meetings were well organised and a considerable amount of business was transacted to maintain the activities of the Queensland Branch. Everyone contributed positively to the various items debated. I am very pleased with the professionalism and efficiency of Secretary *Robyn Porter OAM* who has continued to faithfully record the minutes of all meetings, as well as assembling all the agendas and associated paperwork for each meeting in a timely manner. Also, my thanks to *Dr Dennis Young AM*, the Branch Treasurer who has maintained the financial affairs of the Branch with quiet efficiency.

Honours and citations for each Committee member are listed in **Appendix B** on page 34.

In keeping with a tradition introduced by my predecessor *Dr Gary Bacon AM*, I again arranged for the Committee members and their partners/spouses to join with me and my husband Keith for an end of year Christmas function in the intimate Wine Room at the Albion Hotel, Brisbane on 27 November. This was an ideal opportunity to thank the members of the Committee for their loyal and dedicated support to me during a very busy year of activity and to wish everyone the compliments of the Christmas season.

On Thursday 4 April 2024, the then Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency the Honourable General David Hurley AC CVO DSC (Ret'd), in his role as Chancellor of the Order of Australia, and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley hosted an impromptu private lunch at the Sofitel Hotel, Brisbane, for the four ‘executive’ members of the Queensland Branch Committee plus our Multicultural & Diversity Officer and our Awards and Metro Events Coordinator. It was a most pleasant occasion held in a very relaxed atmosphere and was enjoyed by all present. Discussion was free and frank and allowed those present to gain valuable insights into the workings of the Office of the Governor-General and in particular the Honours Secretariat.



Ronda Nix OAM, Branch Chairman (standing) thanks Committee members and their spouses for their support and contributions during 2024 at the Chairman’s Christmas Party in the Wine Room at the Albion Hotel. Flanked on her left are *Kelvin Brown OAM* and *Christine Brown* and on her right *Elaine Davis*, *Royce Voss OAM* and *Marjorie Voss OAM*



Present at the Governor-General’s impromptu lunch at the Sofitel on 4 April are from L-R – *Dr Dennis Young AM* (Treasurer); *Robyn Porter OAM* (Secretary); Her Excellency *Mrs Linda Hurley*; His Excellency the Honourable General *David Hurley AC CVO DSC (Ret’d)*, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia; *Ronda Nix OAM* (Chairman); *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* (Deputy Chairman); *Irene Cayas OAM* (Multicultural and Diversity Officer) and *Geoff Cowles OAM* (Awards and Metro Events Coordinator)

3. Queensland Branch Annual Dinner 2024

One hundred and three guests attended a most memorable and enjoyable Annual Dinner on **Monday 18 March 2024** in the Blue Pacific Ballroom at Kedron Wavell Services Club in Brisbane. Everyone present enjoyed good fellowship together, in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The previous 2023 Annual Dinner attracted 130 guests. The lower than expected numbers for the 2024 Annual Dinner was a little disappointing.

A well attended Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Queensland Branch in the VC Suite preceded the Dinner. As part of proceedings, I presented *Grant Cassidy OAM*, the new Regional Group Convener for the Central Queensland Regional Group with his Regional Group Convener's name badge.

Our Annual Dinners attract wonderful guest speakers and this year's Dinner was no exception. We were all 'blown away' by our irresistible guest speaker *Barry Bull OAM*, who delivered a most memorable and nostalgic after dinner presentation with his thought-provoking theme of "No finish line". For over 30 years *Barry Bull OAM* owned and managed the successful and iconic music store *Toombul Music*, at the former Toombul Shopping Town in Brisbane. He has had the rare privilege of sharing magic moments with some of the best stars of the modern rock 'n' roll music industry including *Sir Cliff Richard*, *Neil Diamond*, *Michael Crawford*, *John Denver*, *Jimmy Barnes*, *John Farnham*, *Olivia Newton-John* and the list goes on and on. Barry emphasised his strong philosophy of "No is Negotiable" throughout his talk. There was no better example expressed as when he refused to accept 'no' for an answer in convincing these music stars to come to his store and promote their personality and music to scores of adoring fans. Barry enjoyed phenomenal success with his Toombul Music store which resulted in the business winning over thirty Westfield retail awards and becoming one of the most loved music retail portals of its time.

At the Dinner three outstanding Queensland senior volunteers (*Ian Cameron* from Ferny Grove, Brisbane; *William Henderson* from Bridgeman Downs, Brisbane, and *Jeffrey McColl* from Bundaberg) received their Queensland Branch Senior Volunteer Awards from *Michael Rayner AM* representing Blight Rayner Architecture, the award sponsor).

Also at the Dinner I presented Certificates of Appreciation to our two retiring members on the Queensland Branch Committee – *Dr Carol Cox AM* and *Kathy Wooldridge OAM*. Carol joined the Committee in 2020 and was Branch Secretary in 2021 and 2022 and Assistant Secretary in 2023. Kathy joined as a Committee member in 2020 and was our Merchandise Officer. Both ladies have made a fine contribution to the betterment of the Queensland Branch and I thank them both for their service and wish them well for their futures.



Ronda Nix OAM, Chairman flanked by *Kathy Wooldridge OAM* (left) and *Dr Carol Cox AM* (right)

2024 AGM AND ANNUAL DINNER PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS



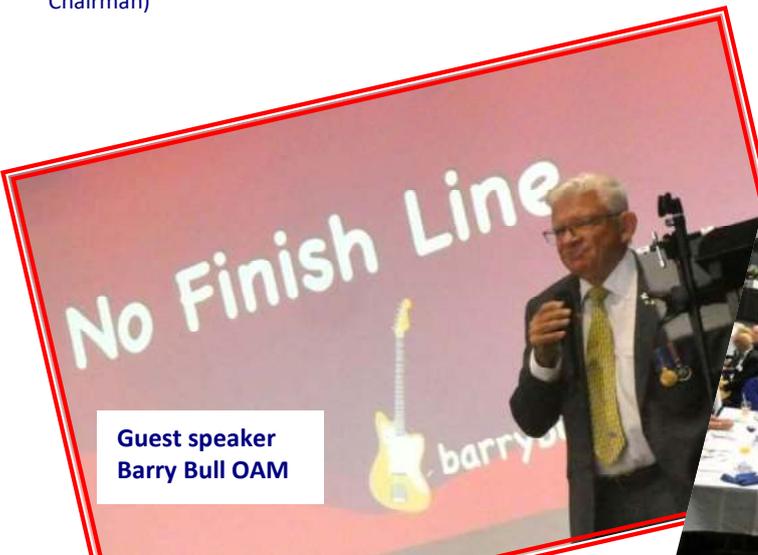
At the AGM Grant Cassidy OAM (right) is presented with his regional group convener's badge from Ronda Nix OAM, (Chairman)



Regional Group presence at the Annual Dinner – from L-R - John Hardy OAM (Far North Queensland Convener); David Jackson OAM, (Townsville Convener); Darryl Seccombe OAM (Qld Branch Regional Groups' Coordinator); Marjorie Voss OAM, (Immediate Past Convener, Sunshine Coast) and Grant Cassidy OAM, (Convener, Central Queensland).



Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ (left) presents Annual Dinner guest speaker Barry Bull OAM (right) with a gift and a Certificate of Appreciation.



Guest speaker Barry Bull OAM

A great atmosphere at the Annual Dinner



Our three senior volunteer awardees presented with their awards at the Annual Dinner – from L-R – William Henderson (Bridgman Downs, Brisbane); Ian Cameron (Ferny Grove, Brisbane); and Jeffrey McColl (Bundaberg)



Table 9 at the Annual Dinner - Enjoying the moment from L-R – Dr Glenda Powell AM; Elaine Unkles OAM; Judeen Airey; Ian Airey OAM; Dr John Cox OAM; Dr Carol Cox AM; Gwynneth Petrie AM and Dr Andrew Petrie.

4. Queensland Branch Celebratory functions to welcome 2024 Award Recipients

As a departure from the usual welcome celebratory lunches, the Branch committee organized two excellent dinner receptions to celebrate with new recipients of awards in the Order of Australia; one for Australia Day recipients in May 2024 and the other for the King's Birthday recipients in September 2024.

To maximize attendances at both events, notably from new award recipients, the functions were held during the week of the investitures for these awardees at Government House Brisbane. The May Welcome Dinner was organized the night before Committee members left for Perth for the National Conference and the September Dinner just six days after the important Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Presentation at Parliament House. Despite the closeness of these functions to important events the Branch Committee rose to the occasion in splendid fashion.

4.1 The Welcome Dinner to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2024 Australia Day Honours – 14 May 2024

Twenty-one of 94 Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards from the Australia Day Honours were special guests at the Dinner on **Tuesday 14 May** in the Blue Pacific Room, Kedron Wavell Services Club, Chermside, Brisbane. There were 131 guests present, including recipients, their families & friends and 27 Association members and their guests.

The 2024 Dinner was roughly on a par with the previous 'stand alone' Australia Day Award Recipients' Welcome function held as a lunch in May 2022, also at Kedron Wavell Services Club. On that previous occasion 25 of 99 award recipients attended. There were 128 guests in total and 29 Association members.

Nevertheless, it was a privilege to be at the 2024 function to welcome the Order of Australia award recipients in attendance, and to celebrate their fine achievements leading to their awards. Their achievements, from a perusal of their citations, are diverse and varied. Collectively these wonderful Queenslanders have made an outstanding contribution to their communities and to our Nation. Congratulations to all of you.



Our fine parade of 2024 Australia Day award recipients who attended the 14 May 2024 Dinner Reception with the Queensland Branch Chairman

Standing – from L-R - Douglas Porter AM; Colin Meng OAM; Jeffrey Maurice OAM; Professor Cliff Mallett OAM; Distinguished Professor Louise Ryan AO; Ken Rogers OAM; Associate Professor Jennifer Cullen AM; Gary Golding OAM; David Kerrigan AM; Nicole Cleary OAM; Dr Brian Hoepper OAM; Dr Helen MacGillvray AM; Ken Martin OAM; and Sue Smith OAM. Seated –from L-R – Professor Donna Pendergast AM; Robin Cooke AM OBE; Professor Zarnie Lwin OAM; Ronda Nix OAM, (OAA Queensland Branch Chairman); John Moran OAM; Kathy Neehouse OAM; Tess Rowley OAM; and Barbara Page- Hanify OAM.

4.2 The Welcome Dinner to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours – 19 September 2024

Eighteen of 71 Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards from the King's Birthday Honours and one from the 2023 Australia Day Honours were special guests at the Dinner Reception on **Thursday 19 September** in the Blue Pacific Room, Kedron Wavell Services Club, Chermside, Brisbane. The function was made especially memorable with the bumper turnout of 255 guests present, including recipients, their families and friends and 31 Association members and their guests.

There were five significant supporter groups on the night helping to bring the guest total to 255. New award recipients *John Honeycombe OAM* from Townsville and *Martin Corkery OAM* from Ipswich brought with them 44 and 42 supporters respectively. Most of *Leonard Goode OAM's* 34 family and friends travelled from Sarina in the Mackay region and *Barbara Knowles OAM* from the Sunshine Coast included 17 family and friends in her party. Finally, *Evelyn (Joan) White OAM* from Texas on the Queensland –New South Wales border was accompanied by 18 of her fellow "Texas Rangers" to support her. As Joan explained "Someone getting an award in The Order is big news here in little old Texas!"- population 790 (2021).

The number of award recipients attending was always likely to have been lower than expected due to only 71 recipients being honoured on this occasion. However, with such a great crowd of people present, there was an "electric buzz" atmosphere throughout the night. It was indeed a "crackerjack" welcome party and one for the memories.



Our fine group of 18 Award recipients with Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chairman

Back Row standing – from L-R - Leonard Goode OAM , John Fradgery OAM, Linda Kochanski AM, Jeanette Lockey OAM, Kay Bryan OAM, Martin Corkery OAM, Cheryl Harris OAM, Dr Noel Robinson OAM, Barbara Knowles OAM, and Lance Haslewood OAM.

Front Row seated – from L-R - John Honeycombe OAM, Evelyn (Joan) White OAM, Kathy Cavanagh AM, Patricia Sibraa AM, Ronda Nix OAM (Chairman, Queensland Branch), Dr Beres Woodhead AM, Shauna Hicks OAM, Margaret Phillips OAM (Australia Day 2023), and Barbara Daley OAM.

Minister flanked by two OAMs



Hon Di Farmer, Queensland Minister for Education and Youth Justice and Member for Bulimba (centre) enjoys a moment with Margaret Phillips OAM (right) and her daughter Nicole Phillips OAM (left) at the Welcome Celebratory Dinner.

5. King's Birthday Dinner (combining with the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Queensland)



The Queensland Branch organized a highly successful King's Birthday Dinner in the Grand Ballroom at the Tattersall's Club in the Brisbane CBD on **Tuesday 11 June**, to which members of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Queensland (VLQ) also attended. One hundred and twenty-six guests were in attendance including 72 of our Association members and guests and 44 from the VLQ.

The event was held in the presence of *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, the Governor of Queensland and *Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD*.

The formal part of the programme included an opening address from Her Excellency, my welcome address and the Loyal Toast proposed by *Bill Willcocks*, the Chairman of VLQ. The programme took on a British theme and the gathering were thoroughly entertained with two brackets of British songs performed admirably by the Chapel Hill Singers, a group of close family friends in Chapel Hill, in the western suburbs of Brisbane with strong musical experience and love of music. To add to the British flavour on the night *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* recited William Woodworth's "*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*" to the accompaniment of suitable images projected on the overhead screens.

Our guest speaker for the evening was *Alexander Voltz*, a young Australian composer who is also known for his passionate support for the monarchy. For his presentation at this King's Birthday Dinner, Alexander spoke passionately about the relationship between monarchy and music. He delivered a most memorable speech.



Left – The Official Party – from L-R *William Willcocks*, Chairman, Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Qld; *Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD*; *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland and *Ronda Nix OAM*, Chairman, OAAQ.



Top right- Our dynamic guest speaker *Alexander Voltz*



Bottom right – The Chapel Hill Singers receiving their accolades with *Dina Browne AO* (the emcee) far left.



Left – a real buzz of excitement amongst the crowd at the King’s Birthday Dinner.

Right - “After the Ball is Over”
The King’s Birthday Dinner Sub Committee of L-R -*Geoff Cowles OAM, Marjorie Voss OAM and Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* “letting their hair down” a little with a bit of fun and British flag waving!

KING’S BIRTHDAY DINNER



6. Queensland Regional Groups – 2024 Conveners

I offer my personal thanks to the following members who have continued or commenced their role as Regional Group Convener of our regional groups throughout 2024.



Sandra Doumany OAM



Megan McNicholl OAM



Grant Cassidy OAM

Regional Group

Convener

Gold Coast	<i>Sanda Doumany OAM</i>
Sunshine Coast	<i>Rhonda Clayton AM *</i>
Darling Downs	<i>Megan McNicholl OAM **</i>
Wide Bay Burnett	<i>Judy Peters OAM</i>
Central Queensland	<i>Grant Cassidy OAM</i>
Mackay Whitsunday	<i>Carmel Daveson AM</i>
Townsville	<i>David Jackson OAM</i>
Far North Queensland	<i>John Hardy OAM</i>

* *Rhonda Clayton AM replaced Marjorie Voss OAM as the Convener of the Sunshine Coast Regional Group in February 2024.*

** *Megan McNicholl OAM retired as Convener of the Darling Downs Regional Group in November 2024 and her replacement for 2025 onwards is Rhonda Weston AM.*



Rhonda Clayton AM



Judy Peters OAM



Carmel Daveson AM



David Jackson OAM



John Hardy OAM

Honours and citations for each Convener are listed in **Appendix B** on page 34.

Our regional groups play a very significant role in servicing Association members outside the Greater Brisbane Metro area and keeping them interested and involved in the Association. Queensland is a very decentralized State with 49.4% of the total Queensland Branch membership (588 out of 1191 members) residing outside the Metro area in these regions. The importance of having strong regional groups cannot be overstated and I reiterate my thanks to the Regional Conveners for keeping each dispersed Regional Group strong and viable.

I extend my thanks to *Darryl Seccombe OAM* who continued in the role of coordinating the activities of the regional groups in 2024 with enthusiasm, acting as a trusted conduit between the Regional Conveners and the Queensland Branch Committee throughout the year.

In November 2024 the Darling Downs Regional Group Convener *Megan McNicholl OAM* decided it was the right time to “pull up stumps” and pass the baton on to someone else. Megan has been an excellent Convener of this Regional Group since taking over from *Professor Paul McNally OAM* in December 2021 who held the mantle for an amazing 32 years from 1989 to 2021. It was always going to be a case of filling big shoes and Megan handled her three years of service with drive and enthusiasm ensuring the members of the Darling Downs Region were able to continue to enjoy quality functions with great guest speakers and good fellowship. What is impressive about Megan is that she would drive to Toowoomba for all the Group’s functions from her home at Dulacca, a small town between Miles and Roma, 252 kilometres away. That’s dedication indeed! We thank Megan for her service and wish her well for her future. I am pleased to report that the Branch Committee at its November 2024 has appointed *Rhonda Weston AM* from Toowoomba as Megan’s replacement and we look forward to working with Rhonda in the future.



A CHANGING OF THE GUARD
New Sunshine Coast Regional Group Convener *Rhonda Clayton AM* (left) is welcomed by immediate Past Convener *Marjorie Voss OAM* At the Alexander Headlands function on 19 February 2024.

During February 2024 there was another changing of the baton with Regional Group Conveners. *Rhonda Clayton AM* was appointed by the Queensland Branch Committee as the new Convener of the Gold Coast Regional Group, taking over from *Marjorie Voss OAM*, who decided it was time to step aside from the role after having steered the Sunshine Coast Regional Group over the period from September 2017. In that time Marjorie has with drive and enthusiasm organized many outstanding and interesting Regional Group functions and has upheld the ideals of the Order of Australia in the Sunshine Coast Region. She has been ably supported by her husband Royce, a former Queensland Branch Treasurer, throughout her convenership. Marjorie has remained, however, an active member on the 2024 Branch Committee. There was a special handover ceremony from Marjorie to Rhonda at the luncheon at Alex Surf Club, Alexandra Headlands on 29 February 2024. I have been impressed with the three events that Rhonda has organized this year and she will be good for the Region.

The following is a table showing the breakup of Queensland Branch members across the metro area and the 8 Queensland regions as at 1 March 2025.

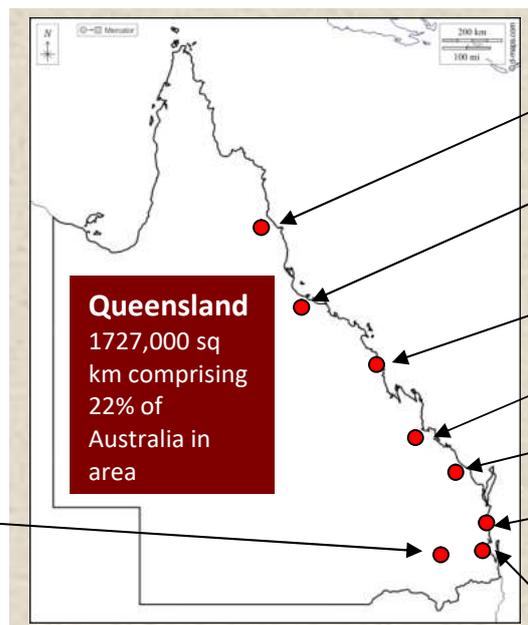
Name of Region	As at 1 MARCH 2025		As at 1 March 2024	
	Members	Percentage	Members	Percentage
Greater Brisbane Metro Area	600	50.37	610	50.84
Gold Coast	135	11.34	136	11.44
Sunshine Coast	170	14.27	154	13.05
Darling Downs	74	6.21	73	6.19
Wide Bay Burnett	43	3.61	45	3.98
Central Queensland	42	3.53	47	3.89
Whitsunday Isaac Mackay	21	1.76	18	1.35
Townsville	48	4.04	53	4.66
Far North Queensland	55	4.61	52	4.32
Interstate Members aligned with Qld Branch	3	0.26	3	0.25
TOTAL	1191	100%	1191	100%

7. Queensland Regional Groups Functions

WHERE OUR FUNCTIONS WERE HELD

[Road distances from Brisbane for each town/city in

Toowoomba
[127km]



Cairns [1702 km]

Townsville [1381km]

Mackay [1015km]

Rockhampton [630km]

Bundaberg [358km]

Sunshine Coast

Alexandra Headlands [99km]

Golden Beach, Caloundra [91km]

Bribie Island [95km]

Greater Brisbane Metro Area

Queensland Regional Groups Functions in more detail

7.1 Wide Bay Burnett Regional Group Lunch – February 2024



From L-R – Dave Facer, Ronda Nix OAM and Judy Peters OAM

Thirty guests enjoyed lunch at the **Young Australian Hotel** in Bundaberg on **Saturday 17 February 2024**.

The guest speaker was *Mr Dave Facer*, a suicide prevention qualified speaker and the face and facilitator of Brave Brothers Bundaberg, a charity focused on Men's Health, Suicide Prevention and Domestic Abuse campaigns. Regional Group Convener *Judy Peters OAM* also took the opportunity to have five selected members speak briefly about receiving their award and about their fields of endeavour.

A highlight was the Welcome to country performed at the commencement of proceedings by *Professor Dr. Brad Murphy OAM*, who is a well-respected elder and a champion for indigenous health care. I also attended and addressed the gathering on Queensland Branch matters as well as encouraging nominations of deserving persons for an award.

7.2. Sunshine Coast Regional Group Lunch – February 2024

A very large turnout of ninety members provided a great atmosphere at the lunch at the **Alex Surf Club** at Alexandra Headland on **Thursday 29 February 2024**.

The outstanding guest speaker was prominent Australian linguist, *Professor Roly Sussex OAM Chevalier des Palmes Académiques* who spoke on the interesting topic “*Australian English – What it is and where it is going*”.

The function featured the official farewell as Regional Group Convener of *Marjorie Voss OAM* and the public handover of the baton to new Convener *Rhonda Clayton AM*.

I was pleased that several members of the Queensland Branch Committee joined with me in attending this event and wishing both Marjorie and Rhonda well for their respective futures.



Left – Welcoming five recent Sunshine Coast award recipients

L-R – **Douglas Marsen OAM** (Awardee KB 2023); **Lyn Davies OAM** (Awardee KB 2023); **Ronda Nix OAM** (Chairman, OAAQ); **William Lord AM** (Awardee KB 2023); **Rhonda Clayton AM** (Convener, Sunshine Coast Regional Group); **Professor Emeritus Debra Henly AM** (Awardee AD 2023); **Bernadette O'Neill OAM** (Awardee KB 2023); **Marjorie Voss OAM** (past Sunshine Coast Regional Group Convener); and **Councillor Joe Natoli** (Sunshine Coast Regional Council).

KB = King's Birthday
AD = Australia Day



Above – Guest speaker - *Professor Roly Sussex OAM Chevalier des Palmes Académiques*

7.3 Darling Downs Regional Group Morning Tea – March 2024



At the Toowoomba morning tea in March 2024 are L-R – Dr Carol Cox AM; The Hon Mike Horan AM (guest speaker); Ronda Nix OAM (OAAQ Chairman) and Kent Bligh OAM.

Forty-three guests attended a morning tea held in the historic **Downs Club in Toowoomba** on **Friday 15 March 2024**. I attended the event as Branch Chairman.

The guest speaker was *The Honourable Mike Horan AM*, a former Leader of the Opposition (National Party) and Health Minister and the outgoing Chair of the Darling Downs Health and Hospital Board. Mike highlighted the exciting times ahead for health in Toowoomba, outlining plans for the redevelopment of the old Toowoomba CBD hospital site, and the new \$1.3B Toowoomba Hospital project, where construction has started.

7.4 Townsville Regional Group Lunch – April 2024



Santa Claus is coming to town!
George White OAM (Townsville's Santa in demand) sharing a moment at Tom's Tavern with his wife Jan White OAM (right) and Gwyneth Cutler OAM (left)

Tom's Tavern in Townsville was the venue for a lunch held on **Saturday 20 April 2024** with 30 guests in attendance.

The guest speaker was *George White OAM* who retold a number of his interesting life stories in the period 1996 to 2021 sharing the moments with his wife Jan (who is also an OAM recipient).

George sports an impressive white beard and one of his life highlights revealed in his talk was his accepting a regular role of Santa for Christmas parties for a group of Special Needs Children up to the age of 12 years. His talk was very entertaining.

7.5 Gold Coast Regional Group Morning Tea – August 2024



Emeritus Professor Graham Jones AM addressing the gathering

The **Southport Golf Club** was the venue for a pleasant morning tea on **Monday 12 August 2024**. A total of 50 guests were present at the function.

Guest speaker was *Emeritus Professor Graham Jones AM* who gave an interesting presentation reflecting on how the Griffith University on the Gold Coast was established and providing insights into his mathematics education career.

7.6 Sunshine Coast Regional Group Morning Tea – July 2024



Rhonda Clayton AM, Regional Group Convener digs deep to get the best out of William Lord AM during their Chair Chat interview at the morning tea in July 2024.

Forty-five guests were in attendance at the morning tea held at the **Pacific Harbour Golf Club** on Bribie Island on **Thursday July 2024**. **Dr Mick Davis AM ASM** joined with me in representing the Queensland Branch Committee at the function.

The guest speaker was **Dr William Lord AM**, who was made a member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2023 King's Birthday honours for significant service to paramedicine, particularly research and education. As a novel departure from a usual formal presentation, the audience learnt all about William via an excellent 'Chair Chat' interview with Regional Group Convener Rhonda Clayton AM acting as an excellent moderator.

7.7 Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Regional Group Informal Get Together – July 2024

On **Friday 12 July 2024**, I attend the informal get together held in the **home of Carmel Daveson AM**, the Convener of the Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Regional Group, where I was warmly welcomed by all 25 guests present. Several members travelled from towns quite some distance away. It transpired that I was the first Branch Chairman to pay an official visit to the Region, so members were quite keen to talk to me and hear what I had to say.

The function took on a theme of *"Pride in our Nation"* and members were invited to speak briefly and informally about their personal background leading up to receiving their awards. **Paul Maguire OAM** was the MC and facilitator.



Awardees at Mackay informal Get Together – standing from L-R – Ray Braithwaite OAM; Colin Meng OAM; Ken Martin OAM; The Rev. Professor James Haire AC; Neil Kelso Greenwood OAM; Ron Bassan OAM; Len Goode OAM; Kenneth Higgins OAM; Paul Kelly OAM and Ian Hamilton OAM Seated from L-R – Paul Maguire OAM; Elspit Mulherin OAM; Ronda Nix OAM (Chairman OAAQ); Val Hamilton OAM and Carmel Daveson AM (Regional Group Convener).

7.8 Townsville Regional Group Annual Dinner – August 2024



Guest Speaker Professor Ajay Rane PSM OAM addresses the gathering.

Forty guests were in attendance at the Annual Dinner of the Townsville Regional Group held at the **Townsville RSL Club** on **Friday 23 August 2024**.

The guest speaker was *Professor Ajay Rane PSM OAM*, Director of Urogynaecology at Townsville University Hospital, on the subject, “*What can the Haves do for the Have Nots?*”. Those present at the dinner were impressed with the way he presented his address on the touchy subject of women’s health.

7.9 Far North Queensland Regional Group Lunch following the Investitures - September 2024



Proud award recipients at the Investiture share a moment with the Governor
Back L-R *Margaret Maunsell OAM* and *Philip Harrison AM*. Front L-R *Jo-Ann Lees OAM* and *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland.

I was delighted to attend the investiture ceremony for the 2024 Far North Queensland King’s Birthday award recipients followed by morning tea held in the Public Curators Gallery, **Cairns Art Gallery**, Cairns on **Friday 13 September 2024** with *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM* presenting the awards to the three worthy recipients present.

Musical accompaniment during the event was provided by members of the Townsville 1RAR Band.

After the Investiture ceremony an Award Recipients’ Welcome Lunch was held at **Dundee’s on the Waterfront** at Cairns with 20 guests attending. I found this a nice informal way to round off the formal proceedings at the Investitures previously.

7.10 Central Queensland Regional Group Lunch – October 2024

Unfortunately, the lunch scheduled for **Thursday, 31 October 2024** at the **Frenchville Sports Club, Rockhampton** had to be cancelled at short notice due to power cuts in the venue. I had booked flights to attend and fortunately I was able to cancel these at no cost. The event has been rescheduled for February 2025.

7.11 Far North Queensland Mayoral Reception – October 2024

Mayor Amy Eden hosted the annual mayoral civic reception, attended by 40 guests, recognising Order of Australia recipients at **Cairns City Council** on **Thursday 10 October 2024**. Recognised were 10 people, including seven from the Cairns area, announced as 2024 Order of Australia award recipients on either Australia Day or the King's Birthday.

John Hardy OAM, the Regional Group Convener did a presentation explaining the Order of Australia and how to nominate worthy citizens and Mayor Eden addressed the group highlighting how it was important to recognize people who contribute to their community. A highlight was the excellent background music provided by local harpist Joy Zahner.



A proud mayoral moment for eight FNQ award recipients – from L-R – *John Hardy OAM* (FNQ Regional Group Convener); *Colin Sparkes OAM* (Brinsmead); *Raymond Byrnes OAM* (Yungaburra); *Margaret Maunsell OAM* (Freshwater); *Mayor Amy Eden*; *David Chalk OAM* (Gordonvale); *Philip Harrison AM* (Freshwater); *Jo-Ann Lees OAM* (Cairns); *John Moran OAM* (Karumba) and *Effie Bacalakis OAM* (Clifton Beach).

7.12 Sunshine Coast Regional Group Lunch – October 2024

61 guests attended the lunch held at the **Caloundra Power Boat Club, Golden Beach** on **Thursday, 31 October 2024**.

The guest speaker, *Susan Street AO*, spoke on the topic “Balancing Act”, providing her thoughts on Art and Science, reflecting on her career and finding a life balance in retirement. *Mr Ken Kelley* from the Caloundra Music Academy entertained the gathering with a few popular Australia song favourites and was well received.



Entertainer *Ken Kelley*



Guest speaker *Susan Street AO*



Rhonda Clayton AM (centre) introduces new award recipients *Wendy Waller OAM* [King's Birthday 2024] (left) and *Allen Reed OAM* [Australia Day 2024]

7.13 Darling Downs Regional Group Morning Tea – November 2024

The final Queensland Branch regional group function for 2024 was a most interesting morning tea organized by the Darling Downs Group at the **Downs Club in Toowoomba** on **Friday 15 November 2024** with 47 guests in attendance.

Three guest speakers assembled for a panel discussion, *Carol Patterson OAM*, *Rhonda Weston AM*, the new Darling Downs Regional Group Convener and *Dr Carol Cox AM*. The topic was "China - Working with Children and with Seniors". *Carol Patterson OAM*, spoke of her work with Pony Club highlighting the difference between how Pony Club is organised in Australia to how it is organised in China. *Rhonda Weston AM* spoke of Lifelong Learning and how that is offered in China compared to how we offer Lifelong Learning in Australia and *Dr Carol Cox AM* facilitated the Q&A session.



Our three "Stars" shining at the Darling Downs Morning Tea – from L-R – *Dr Carol Cox AM*; *Rhonda Weston AM* and *Carol Patterson OAM*



8. The 25th Queensland Branch Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards



The Honourable Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC, the former (26th) Governor of Queensland again presented the Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards at the annual Awards Presentation Ceremony in the Premiers' Hall of Queensland's Parliament House on Friday 13 September 2024. Paul performed his role splendidly and his address to the gathering, reflecting on life for students 25 years ago compared to now was most incisive.

This was the 25th (Silver) Anniversary of these Awards being conducted by the Queensland Branch and it was another inspirational and memorable occasion.

We were very pleased with the response from 60 secondary schools this year comprising both state high schools and private colleges from across Queensland and we received a creditable 109 student nominations – 15 more than last year.

Awards were presented to eleven of the 'year 12' winning school students, recognised for their selfless community service in helping others and promoting true Australian citizenship. The stirring acceptance speeches from the students as always were a highlight and the students brought great credit to the schools they represented. Three schools, (Stuartholme School, Balmoral State High School, and Hillbrook Anglican School, all from Brisbane) enjoyed success for the first time with their award winning students.

During the Presentation Ceremony we enjoyed excellent music from the Balmoral State High School Chamber Flute Ensemble. Hearing the flutes was a nice change to our usual string ensembles that have performed at past Presentations. The event was capably compered by *John McCoy OAM*.

One hundred and twenty-five guests including students and their families, school principals and representatives, State Members of Parliament and 11 members of the Association attended.

At the Presentation *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*, the Branch Deputy Chairman presented a special commemorative plaque on behalf of the Association to *Tim Fairfax AC* in sincere appreciation of his generous sponsorship of the annual Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards since 2015. Well done and sincere thanks Tim. Unfortunately, I was unable to be there on this occasion as the date clashed with my attendance at the investitures in Cairns by the Queensland Governor of recipients of awards in the King's Birthday Honours who lived in Far North Queensland. I thank Mick for agreeing to deputize for me on this occasion.

One of the students, *Jacob Hiles* from St George State High School was unable to be present at the Parliament House Presentation. So instead, *Geoff Cowles OAM*, the Awards Coordinator, attended the School's Awards Presentation in St George on 11 November as the Branch's representative to have the award presented to Jacob there. Significantly it was *Laura North* (nee Worboys), the very last student in 2006 to receive this award from St George State High School, who was given the honour of presently Jacob's award with Geoff reading Jacob's citation and speaking to the assembled about the importance of citizenship. I thank Geoff for taking the time to visit St George to perform this fine gesture.

The table is enclosed in a decorative blue border. At the top center is a circular logo with the text 'SSCA 25 Years'. Below the logo is the title 'Schools providing most winning students'. The table lists four schools and their respective number of winning students.

SSCA 25 Years	
Schools providing most winning students	
Kirwan State High School	15
Mareeba State High School	11
Brisbane Girls Grammar School	7
Maroochydore State High School	7

Over the past 25 years since the awards programme commenced in 1999 the Queensland Branch has presented secondary schools citizenship awards to 305 students representing 132 secondary schools. We salute all these students and the many others who were nominated but were not successful over these 25 years. The Queensland Branch can feel justly proud of this initiative – still going strong after 25 years and still lots more to give.

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS – NEXT PAGE ⇨

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS – SECONDARY SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP AWARDS



Simply the Best!! – Our Awardees for 2024 with our Guest of Honour
Back row from L-R – Ellen Brieffies (*Hillbrook Anglican School*); Benjamin Campbell (*Toolooa State High School*); Lucy Collins (*Stuartholme School*); Bernadette Furner (*Balmoral State High School*); Hon Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC (*former (26th) Governor of Queensland*); Deepti Kutty (*Moreton Bay College*); Eliza Portas (*Maleny State High School*); and Heath Walker (*Somerset College*).
Front Row from L-R – Emma Boyd (*Pacific Pines State High School*); Bridie Marshall (*Pimlico State High School*); David Schofield (*Ingham State High School*); Augustus Tan (*Cairns State High School*).
Absent Jacob Hiles (*St George State High School*) – see Inset



The Honourable Paul de Jersey AC CVO KC, the former (26th) Governor of Queensland addresses the gathering



Citations for Award students were read out by Dina Browne AO, member of the judging panel

SSCA
25
Years

**Thank You –
Tim Fairfax AC**



Dr Mick Davis AM ASM, OAAQ Deputy Chairman (right) presents Mr Tim Fairfax AC with a commemorative appreciation plaque recognising his generous sponsorship of the Awards – 2015 – 2024.



Jacob Hiles from St George State High School (left) with his award and Geoff Cowles OAM, OAAQ Awards and Metro Events Coordinator at the St George State High School's Presentation Night on 11 November 2024.

9. Queensland Branch 2024 Senior Volunteer Awards

The Association continued its Senior Volunteer Awards programme in 2024.

After a slow start receiving nominations in 2024 we eventually received 17 nominations received, the best response since the awards commenced in 2013.

The judging panel for the 2024 awards, comprising *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* (Chairman of the Panel), *Professor Paul McNally OAM*, and *Mrs Kathy Wooldridge OAM* has selected three worthy volunteers to receive this Award. My thanks to Mick, Paul and Kathy for agreeing to be on the judging panel again this year. **The Awardees will be announced and presented with their awards during the Annual Dinner tonight.**

The purpose of the Senior Volunteer Awards is to recognise outstanding voluntary contributions made by Queensland Seniors to their communities, independently or through organizations with which they are associated. Any current member of The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch, residing in Queensland may nominate a volunteer who is 60 years or older.

I encourage members of the Association to nominate worthy senior volunteers in 2024.

I acknowledge the continuing generous sponsorship of the awards received from Blight Rayner Architects and particularly *Michael Rayner AM*, a director of the company and strong supporter of these awards.



In attendance at the Presentation of the 2023 awards are L-R - *Michael Rayner AM*, Blight Rayner Architects (award sponsor) – *William Henderson* (Awardee - Bridgman Downs, Brisbane); *Ian Cameron* (Awardee - Ferny Grove, Brisbane); *Ronda Nix OAM* (OAAQ Chairman) and *Jeffrey McColl* (Bundaberg)

10. Queensland Branch Communications

10.1 The Order Magazine

Newsworthy articles for the dedicated three pages assigned to the Queensland Branch in each of the four editions of the national magazine *The Order* continued to be produced to a high standard. Our pages have been well received by the Queensland membership and interested members from other Branches.

Graham Hyde OAM continued as Editor of the Queensland Branch pages of *The Order* and I thank Graham for his dedication in this role.



10.2 Communicating to members via Communiqués from the Queensland Branch Chairman

To supplement the quarterly communication that members receive via *The Order* National magazine, I sent out short Communiqués via broadcast emails, to Queensland members at various times throughout 2024. This continues to provide a means to bring items of interest to the attention of members.

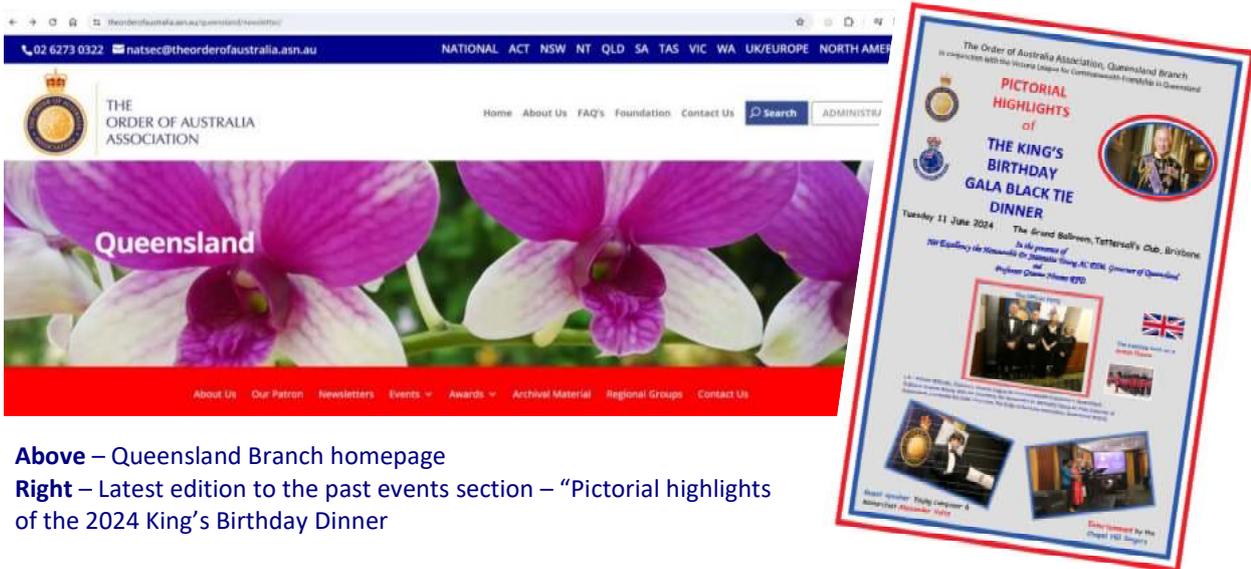
Communiqués were sent out in March, July, October and December 2023 making eight reports from me during the year when you add my regular column in each quarterly edition of *The Order*.



10.3 Communicating to members via the Association website

The Queensland segment of the OAA National website was maintained with material provided to the national webmaster by *Geoff Cowles OAM* (OAAQ Awards and Metro Events Coordinator). The website contains advice about upcoming events and our awards. Pictorial records of past events have been added and archival material has been kept up to date as far as is practicable.

I urge members to make it a habit to visit our website from time to time at <http://theorderofaustralia.asn.au> to keep up to date with what is happening in the Association, particularly national matters.



Above – Queensland Branch homepage

Right – Latest edition to the past events section – “Pictorial highlights of the 2024 King’s Birthday Dinner

11. Queensland Branch Activity at the National Level

At the Queensland Branch Annual General Meeting held on 18 March 2024 the members elected *Paula Penfold AM* as the Queensland Branch Nominated Director on the National Board. Paula replaces *Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ*, who was Queensland Branch Nominated director for a number of years previously. I would like to thank Peter for his years of service in representing the Queensland Branch at the National level in this essential role. I also thank Paula for providing her timely updates on national policy matters and decisions at meetings of the Queensland Branch Committee throughout 2024.

Graham Hyde OAM, a member of our Queensland Branch Committee continued in his role as National Secretary and discharged his administrative duties with due diligence. In addition, *Kathy Wooldridge OAM*, a former member of the Queensland Branch Committee, continued her excellent role as the National Membership Director on the National Board, developing new and innovative ways to try to increase Association membership.

Throughout the year the Queensland Branch Committee was kept up to date with National Board matters by receiving copies of the minutes of the Board meetings when convened. The Queensland Branch Committee provided input into revisions of national policy and procedure documents from time to time and provided comment to the relevant Director on the National Board.

At time of publication the planning for the National Conference in Sydney, New South Wales from 1 to 4 May 2025 is well advanced. I am hoping that Queensland Branch members will take the opportunity to attend the Conference and enjoy the excellent programme of events on offer.

On the matter of National Conferences, I advised in my January communiqué to members that Our Branch was scheduled to host the 2027 National Conference; however the Northern Territory Branch, which was to host the 2026 Conference in Darwin, now finds it is unable to do so. The result is that our turn to host the Conference has been brought forward a year to 2026. We have appointed a Conference Committee which has been charged with the task of developing a programme, securing venues and finding sponsors for the 2026 Conference in time to present to the Sydney Conference in May this year.

12. Membership Trends

12.1 Membership uptake by new award recipients

There were 166 Queensland recipients who received awards in the Order of Australia in 2023 and 62 of these are now members of The Order of Australia Association, as at 1 March 2025. This represents 37.3% of the total number of 2024 Queensland recipients joining the Association compared with 35.4% last year (79 of 223 recipients joining). This represents a small increase of 1.9% over last year showing that membership uptake has not gone backwards. There was a pleasing uptake of new award recipients accepting our invitation to be our special guests at the two 2024 Celebratory Welcome Dinners with 23.5 % of the total award recipients attending compared to 15.7% at the one combined Australia Day and King's Birthday Award Recipient Celebratory Welcome Lunch in 2023. While we would love to have more award recipients attending, the increase is probably testament to the belief that more award recipients will attend if the two functions coincide with their respective investitures at Government House, Brisbane. .

12.2 Current Queensland Branch Member statistics as at 1 March 2024

As at 1 March 2025 there were 1191 current paid members of the Queensland Branch. The following table provides a breakdown of the various types of current memberships, with corresponding statistics as reported in the previous Annual Report in March 2024, in brackets.

Type of membership	1 March 2025		1 March 2024	
	Number	% of total current paid members	Number	% of total current members
Paid lifetime members	603	50.7%	(620)	(52%)
Lifetime members by installment	3	0.25%	(9)	(0.8%)
Annual Members	299	25.1%	(312)	(26.1%)
Three Year Members	263	22.1%	(239)	(20.%)
Ten Year Members	12	1.0%	(10)	(0.8%)
Ten Year Members by 2 installments	4	0.3%	(n/a)	(n/a)
25 year membership	3	0.25%	(1)	(0.1%)
25 year membership by instalment	2	0.17%	(n/a)	(n/a)
Honorary Members	2	0.17%	2	(0.2%)
Total Qld Branch Members	1191	100%	(1193)	(100%)

The number of current Queensland Branch Members reflects a small decrease of 2 over last year (1193 as at 1 March 2024 to 1191 as at 1 March 2025). Thus the 62 new awardees who took out membership of the Association last year are offset by 64 membership departures in the year, due to members passing away or not renewing their membership. Membership compared with last year has remained roughly at par.

It is interesting to note the steady increase in three year memberships from 20 % of the total membership last year to 22.1 % this year. It is good to see the interest in new members opting for the ten year membership option introduced by the National Board in 2022 with now 16 members this year. Also 5 members have opted for the new 25 year membership offered by the Association in late 2023.

As at 1 March 2025 there were 1128 members out of the total of 1191 members (94.7%) supplying email addresses for the membership database. Broadcast emails are the preferred means of communicating upcoming events and Association news to the wider membership. This compares with a similar 1124 out of 1193 members (94.2%) in March 2024.

Dr Mick Davis AM ASM added the role of Membership Officer to his position as Deputy Chairman, working with the National office tracking additions and removals from the membership data lists as well as providing a valuable service in notifying when members pass away.

I thank *Geoff Cowles OAM*, the Awards and Metro Events Coordinator, for updating membership statistical tables compiled over the past 4 years, which are appended to this report on page 31 as **Appendix A**. These statistics also include the ratio of male and female award recipients and the number of awardees by Queensland regions.

13. Queensland Branch Chairman's Closing Remarks

As you can see from this report, the past year has been another very busy one for the Queensland Branch Committee of The Order of Australia Association. The makeup of our committee remained stable in 2024, with no new members elected at last year's AGM and no changes in portfolios. We are a hardworking group. Though we don't always agree on every issue, we all have the good of the Association at heart and I believe we deliver beneficial outcomes to our members. My sincere thanks to all my colleagues on the 2024 Branch Committee. I am grateful for both your input and for your support.

This year we are losing long-serving and highly valued Branch Committee Member, *Marjorie Voss OAM*. Marjorie has served the allowed maximum term of nine years on the Queensland Branch Committee and consequently must stand down. Marjorie has contributed enormously to the work of the Committee during her term of office, and her input will definitely be missed at Branch Committee meetings. As well as the important contributions Marjorie has made to the work of the Branch, she also served as the Convener of the Sunshine Coast Regional Group for seven years. Her service to the Queensland Branch in both these roles has been outstanding and we thank her sincerely for the work she has done. We are not losing her entirely though, as she has offered her services (and been appointed) to the Queensland Branch National Conference Committee charged with organizing the conference to be held in Brisbane from 30 April – 3 May 2026.

While all members on the Branch Committee contribute to the organization of the various Branch activities and events and are responsible for many of the associated tasks, one of the hardest working members on our Branch Committee is our Awards and Metro Events Coordinator, *Geoff Cowles OAM*. All the metropolitan functions plus the Queensland Branch Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards and the Senior Volunteer Awards are organized by Geoff. We are indeed indebted to him for his service on behalf of the Queensland Branch of the Association and I thank him most sincerely for all the time and effort he puts into making them such a wonderful success.

Quite apart from the work the Branch Committee does, we could not serve our members throughout our vast state without our wonderful Regional Group Conveners. In 2024, I attended Regional Group functions in Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Caloundra, Bribie Island Southport and Toowoomba in my capacity as Branch Chairman. The standard of these functions was excellent and the speakers outstanding. Unfortunately, I was not able to travel to Townsville this year, but I will make every effort to do so in 2025. There were no Regional Group functions held in Central Queensland in 2024. Work pressures and associated travel took up the time of our new Central Queensland Regional Group Convener for much of the year, and then when he did find time to organize a function in October, Ergon Energy cut the electricity supply to the venue (the Frenchville Sports Club) and the function had to be postponed until early 2025. On behalf of the Branch a big thank you to all the Regional Group Conveners who organized functions for their members during the past year.

This year I had the pleasure and privilege of representing the Queensland Branch at the following functions and events:

- a. The Commonwealth Day Multicultural Church Service held at St John's Cathedral in the presence of *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland on 12 March 2024 and the Champagne Reception at the Inchcolm Hotel that followed. Both were organised by The Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Queensland;



Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland (8th from left) flanked by a colourful array of Commonwealth Nations at the Commonwealth Day Multicultural Church Service

- b. A private farewell Lunch with the outgoing Governor-General, *the Honourable General David Hurley AC CVO DSC (Ret'd)*, *Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley* and invited Queensland Branch Committee members at the Sofitel Hotel, Brisbane on 4 April 2024;
- c. The Investiture of Australia Day Recipients of awards in the 2024 Australia Day Honours list at Government House Qld on 13 May 2024;
- d. The meeting of the National Board of The Order of Australia Association with Branch Chairmen and the Vice-Regal Welcome to Perth on 16 May 2024;
- e. The National Conference of The Order of Australia Association in Perth from 17- 19 May 2024;



The Traditional Queensland Dinner hosted by the Queensland Branch Chairman at every National Conference
The 2024 Perth group at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Perth on 17 May 2024 – Clockwise from lower left – *Alastair Douglas OAM* and *Jenny Douglas* (Tasmania – Honorary Queenslanders); *Keith Nix*; *Ronda Nix OAM*; *Robyn Porter OAM*; *Chris Fitzgerald*; *Elaine Davis*; *Geoff Cowles OAM*; *Charyl Cowles* and *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*.

- f. The King's Birthday Dinner at the Tattersall's Club, Brisbane on Tuesday 11 June, in the presence of *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland where I delivered the Welcome Speech;



- g. The Investiture of North Queensland Recipients in the 2024 King's Birthday Awards in the Public Curators Gallery, Cairns on 13 September 2024; and
- h. The Investiture of Recipients of awards in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours list at Government House Qld on 18 September 2024

Once again a sincere thank you to *John Hardy OAM* and *David Jackson OAM* who deputized for me at investiture ceremonies in Cairns and Townsville respectively and also to the members of the Branch Committee who deputized for me on the days during the Australia Day and Queen's Birthday investiture weeks in May and September when I was unable to attend at Government House in Brisbane in person.

It would not be possible for me to carry out my role of Branch Chairman without the support and understanding of my husband Keith. The same is true for our hardworking Committee Members and Regional Conveners, who rely on the support of their partners, many of whom undertake tasks to assist us. I thank them all on behalf of our Branch. I encourage all members to take an interest in the Association's activities and participate in the events offered. If you are visiting another part of the state, you are always welcome to attend functions in that region. Most importantly, if you haven't done so already, make it your business to learn how to nominate others for an award in The Order of Australia, and do so. Both I and all the members of the Branch Committee are always willing to assist you.

In closing, allow me to encourage you to attend the National Conference being held in Sydney this year from 1st to 4th May. The link to book can be found on The Order of Australia website.

I commend my Report to you and move its adoption.

Mrs Ronda L. Nix OAM, Branch Chairman.

Email: chairqld@theorderofaustralia.asn.au

Aknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards and Metro Events Coordinator, in researching and producing much of the information and for many of the photos in this report

NINE TIPS ON NOMINATING SOMEONE FOR AN ORDER OF AUSTRALIA AWARD

compiled by the Honourable Shane Stone AC PGDK KC, Chairman, Council of the Order of Australia – February 2018 – October 2022 (extracted from the OAA website).

1. I believe that everyone who has received an honour has an obligation to nominate;
2. Don't leave it too late: an award can only follow a nomination and posthumous Awards only occur when the nominated person has sadly passed on after a nomination has been received and the process has not yet completed;
3. Provide the Honours Secretariat with as much information as possible about the person nominated; if you don't know something, for example a date of naturalisation, say so and the case officer will do the rest;
4. Do not – under any circumstances – discuss the nomination with the person nominated;
5. Stress the confidentiality to all who are assisting you with the nomination – family, friends and colleagues;
6. Self-nominations or those made by immediate family are not precluded but to be frank a third party nomination has greater veracity;
7. There are no State or Territory quotas – it's a myth. The Companion (AC); Officer (AO) and Member (AM) have numerical quotas. The Medal is quota free and typically represents the largest number. These are our community heroes, the glue that holds us together.
8. When preparing the Nomination keep referring back to the published bench marks so that you are eliciting the critically important information in support;
9. If anything changes refer to the case officer who first acknowledged your Nomination or ring the Honours Secretariat direct.

You can read his full very interesting article "Tips – The Honourable Shane L Stone AC PGDK KC. – Chairman of the Council for The Order of Australia February 2018 – October 2022 by hitting on the link at <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/about-the-award/>

APPENDIX A TO THE 2024 Queensland Branch Annual Report

Item 12, p 25 - Membership Trends – Award recipients 2021 through to 2024

Compiled by Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards and Metro Events Coordinator

A. 2024

A.1. Australia Day 2024 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
94	36	38.3%	21	15	71.4%	22.3%

A.2 . King's Birthday 2024 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
72	26	26.1%	18	13	72.2%	25%

A.3. Combined 2024 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
166	62	37.3%	39	28	71.8%	23.5%

B. 2023

B.1. Australia Day 2023 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
100	33	33%	14	11	78.6%	14%*

B.2 . King 's Birthday 2023 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
123	46	37.4%	21	14	66.7%	17.1%*

B.3. Combined 2023 Recipients – Australia Day and King's 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
223	79	35.4%	35	25	71.4%	15.7%*

* Note: in 2023 there was only the one combined Australia Day/King's Birthday awardees lunch

C. 2022

C.1. Australia Day 2022 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
99	35	35.3%	26	18	69.2%	26.3%

C.2 . Queen's Birthday 2022 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
74	34	45.9%	14	8	57.1%	18.9%

C.3. Combined 2022 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
173	69	39.9%	40	26	65%	23.1%

D. 2021

D.1. Australia Day 2021 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
83	33	39.8%	22	18	81.8	26.5%

D.2 . Queen's Birthday 2021 only

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
122	58	47.5%	43	35	81.4%	35.2%

D.3. Combined 2021 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
205	91	44.4%	65	53	81.5%	31.7%

* Note: in 2021 there was only the one combined Australia Day/King's Birthday awardees lunch

E. Queensland award recipients by region – Australia Day 2020 – King’s Birthday

2024 [AD = Australia Day: QB = Queen’s Birthday: KB = King’s Birthday]

Honours	Total No.	Metro	Gold Coast	Sunshine Coast	Darling Downs	Wide Bay Burnett	Central Qld	Mackay W'Sunday	T'ville	Far North Qld
AD 2020	115	68	11	11	7	6	4	1	1	6
QB 2020	122	60	17	11	11	5	3	1	8	6
AD 2021	83	45	13	9	5	2	2	2	2	3
QB 2021	122	58	23	12	7	4	4	1	8	5
AD 2022	99	54	14	11	4	6	1	4	4	1
QB 2022	74	38	12	10	4	1	4	3	1	1
AD 2023	100	39	7	22	6	4	3	2	3	14
KB 2023	123	52	15	23	10	5	5	3	6	4
AD 2024	94	44	13	16	2	2	3	3	5	6
KB 2024	72	38	9	12	2	1	3	1	2	4
Totals	1004	496	134	137	58	36	32	21	40	50

F. Ratio of male (M) to female (F) Queensland recipients – Australia Day 2020 through to Australia Day 2025

Honours	Total No.	M No.	M %	F No.	F %
Australia Day 2020	115	68	59.1 %	47	40.9 %
Queen’s Birthday 2020	122	84	68.9 %	38	31.1 %
Australia Day 2021	83	54	65.0 %	29	35.0 %
Queen’s Birthday 2021	122	78	64.0 %	44	36.0 %
Australia Day 2022	99	52	52.5 %	47	47.5 %
Queen’s Birthday 2022	74	46	62.2%	28	37.8%
Australia Day 2023	100	59	59%	41	41%
King’s Birthday 2023	123	70	56.9%	53	43.1%
Australia Day 2024	94	50	53.2 %	44	46.8 %
King’s Birthday 2024	72	34	47.2 %	38	52.8 %
Australia Day 2025	64	28	43.8 %	36	56.2 %
Total – AD 2020 to AD 2025	1068	623	58.3%	445	41.7%

APPENDIX B to 2024 Queensland Branch Annual Report
Order of Australia Honours and Citations – Branch Committee Members and Regional Conveners

A. QUEENSLAND BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
<i>Ronda Nix OAM</i>	QB 2013	For service to hockey.
<i>Dr Mick Davis AM ASM</i>	QB 2000	AM -For service to community health through the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Institute of Ambulance Officers, particularly in the areas of education and training.
<i>Robyn Porter OAM</i>	QB 2021	For service to science, and the community.
<i>Dr Dennis Young AM</i>	AD 2018	For significant service to community health in Queensland through alcohol and drug treatment support programs, and to the community.
<i>Kelvin Brown OAM</i>	AD 1994	In recognition of service to the RAAF
<i>Irene Cayas OAM</i>	AD 2018	For service to the multicultural community, to women, and to the aged.
<i>Geoff Cowles OAM</i>	AD 2007	For service to the community through a range of youth, sporting and church groups.
<i>Graham Hyde OAM</i>	AD 2019	For service to medical administration.
<i>Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ</i>	AD 2013	AO - For distinguished service to the community through leadership in the areas of emergency patient care and health service management and contributions to professional organisations.
<i>Paula Penfold AM</i>	AD 2016	For significant service to the community through support for people with Muscular Dystrophy, to child health ethical standards, and to medical research.
<i>Darryl Seccombe OAM</i>	QB 2011	For service to the community through a range of charitable organisations.
<i>Marjorie Voss OAM</i>	QB 2014	For service to women, and to youth through the Guiding movement.
B. REGIONAL GROUP CONVENERS -		
<i>Grant Cassidy OAM</i> Central Queensland	AD 2019	For service to the tourism and hospitality industry.
<i>Rhonda Clayton AM</i> Sunshine Coast	KB 2023	For significant service to squash as a competitor and administrator.
<i>Carmel Daveson AM</i> Whitsunday Isaac Mackay	AD 2009	For service to the Mackay region through a range of social welfare, education and arts organisations.
<i>Sandra Doumany OAM</i> Gold Coast	QB 2021	For service to the community of the Gold Coast.
<i>John Hardy OAM</i> Far North Queensland	AD 2017	For service to veterans and their families.
<i>David Jackson OAM</i> Townsville	AD 2007	For service to the community of the Burdekin Shire, particularly through the Rotary Club of Home Hill and as a journalist.
<i>Judy Peters OAM</i> Wide Bay Burnett	AD 2022	For service to local government, and to the community of Bundaberg.
<i>Rhonda Weston AM</i> Darling Downs	QB 2021	For significant service to aged persons' education, and to the community of Toowoomba.

Legend AD = Australia Day' QB = Queen's Birthday; KB = King's Birthday

The Order of Australia Association QUEENSLAND BRANCH



THE BENEFITS OF BEING A MEMBER

- The opportunity to mix, make new friends, network (social interaction) with other fellow Australians who have also been honoured in your region and interstate.
 - A greater opportunity to wear your medals and influence others to volunteer in communities.
 - The opportunity to unexpectedly meet up with people you have known in other areas of your life.
 - Access to places of interest not generally open to the public.
 - Access to interesting and stimulating speakers.
 - Social support and fun.
 - The opportunity to see the best of our State and Territory Capitals at a National Conference.
 - Receive 'The Order' national magazine quarterly in e-version or hard copy.
 - Ability to participate and give further service to the community.
 - Ability to attend various functions such as Annual Dinners, special events, lunches and morning teas in various branches and regions.
 - Opportunity for Philanthropy by supporting scholarships helping promising young Australians to achieve their potential through The Order of Australia Association Foundation.
 - Opportunity to celebrate and foster aspirations in our young emerging leaders through our Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards program.
 - Opportunity to celebrate and honour our Senior Volunteers through our Senior Volunteer Awards program.
- [This list is not exhaustive.]



FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

Visit our website at
<https://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/membership/>



To celebrate and promote outstanding Australian citizenship.



*The Order of Australia
1975 to 2025
Congratulations on 50 years*



DATE CLAIMER !!

The Queensland Branch is celebrating this great milestone with a special Gala Black Tie Dinner at the Tattersalls' Club Brisbane on

MONDAY 9 JUNE 2025

Be part of this once in a lifetime celebration –

Further details to follow