



Welcome from VIC Branch Chair



Greetings and welcome to this edition of The Order of Australia Association Ltd Victoria Branch E-Newsletter as summer approaches and all too fast this year's festive celebrations will be upon us.

Thank you to all Vic Branch members and guests who attended our End of Year Dinner and making it a success with over one hundred in attendance.

I congratulate all Victorian nominations in the various categories of the Australian of the Year Awards and wish you all the best for the announcements on Australia Day. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my cousin Jenny Duggan OAM who is the nominated Northern Territory Senior Citizen of the Year for her continued commitment to the community of Katherine.

As we commence the last quarter of 2025, I ask members to start thinking about nominating for the 2026 OAA Vic Branch committee.

At this point I confirm we require members to fill the following positions:

Vic Branch **Membership Secretary**. This is a position I have held since 2021 and will not be nominating to continue in this position.

Committee Member/Events Coordinator. This position has been vacant for several years and one we must fill if our events program is to continue.

It is early days; however, it is time for members to begin to consider taking on one of the committee roles. We are a big and highly active Branch. For this to continue we need to ensure all Vic Branch Committee positions are filled.

As I said it is early days, but can you have a think about next year's committee and feel free to have a chat to me if you require any further information.

Our next Vic branch event is the Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians Oration. Further details of this event are provided in this newsletter. I look forward to meeting members and guests at this first event for 2026.



In this final E-Newsletter for the year I take this opportunity to thank members of the Vic Branch committee and Regional Group committees for their support during the year and wish all Vic Branch members, their families and loved ones a safe and happy Christmas.

Fred Harrington OAM VIC Branch Chair M: 0417 116 304 E: chairvic@theorderofaustralia.asn.au





Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians **Oration**

Date: Friday 20 March 2026

Time: 10.30am

Venue: Angliss Conference Centre 555 Latrobe Street, Melbourne

The Oration will be delivered by **Kathryn Fagg AC**

Kathryn Fagg was an Officer of the Order (AO) recipient Queen's Birthday 2019 for distinguished service to business and finance, to the central banking, logistics and manufacturing sectors, and to women.

King's Birthday this year Kathryn Fagg was elevated to Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) for eminent service to business governance, to the banking, finance and investment industry, to public administration, to the not-for-profit sector, and to women.

Kathryn Fagg AC is a current Non-Executive Director of the National Australia Bank; Djerriwarrh Investments and Medibank Private. Executive Mentor at Merryck & Co Australia and New Zealand, since 2016, Inaugural Chair Watertrust Australia, Board Member The Myer Foundation, Chair Breast Cancer Network Australia, Board Member Champions of Change Coalition and Grattan Institute, since 2018



Chelsea Allen an OAA Foundation 2023 scholarship recipient donated by Paul Wheelton AM will update members and guests on her studies and community work.

Cost: There is no cost for Order of Australia Association members and Order of Australia 2026 Australia Day recipients to attend the Oration, one guest per member or recipient is allowed. Bookings are essential for seating and catering.

Booking: TryBooking link for **Oration** <https://www.trybooking.com/DHHUD>

Following the Oration and refreshments will be The Order of Australia Association Ltd Victoria Branch **Annual General Meeting** commencing at 12.30pm on Friday 20 March 2026. There is no cost to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The AGM agenda pack will be emailed to members with an email address noted on the national database and mailed to members with no email noted February 2026.

Booking: TryBooking link for **Annual General Meeting** <https://www.trybooking.com/DHHTW>

SAVE THE DATE



2026 Victoria Branch Regional Group Annual General Meeting dates

Sunday 8 February – Barwon

Sunday 15 February Loddon Campaspe – 11am AGM, 12 noon lunch (individuals order from the a la carte menu and pay the hotel directly) The Gold Mines Hotel Marong Road, Bendigo

Sunday 22 February – Central Highlands & Wimmera, Ararat

Sunday 22 February – Western Suburbs

Thursday 26 February Eastern Suburbs at Blackburn Lake Visitor Centre

Wednesday 11 March – North Central Suburbs, with lunch at Sycamore Tree Café, Heidelberg

Thursday 19 March – Frankston Mornington Peninsula with lunch at Rosebud RSL

Sunday 15 March – Gippsland, Traralgon

Sunday 22 March - North East Vic Goulburn Valley with lunch at the Wangaratta Gateway. Garry Spencer AM National Facilitator/Founder of Operation Grain Harvest Assist will be the speaker.

OAA Victoria Branch and Regional Group Events for 2026, please refer to website:

<https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/>

Order of Australia Association **Merchandise**

It is not too late to order OAA Merchandise for delivery in time for the festive season or as a congratulations gift to an Association member or Order of Australia recipient.

www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart



OAA Victoria Branch End of Year Dinner

In excess of 100 members and guests were greeted by Beverley Pinder OAM and Milly Parker OAM when they arrived at the End of Year Dinner on Thursday 20 November at the Stamford Plaza Melbourne at 111 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.

Doug Caulfield OAM Chair of the VIC Branch Gippsland Regional Group proposed the Toast to the King and the Association.

Two past OAA VIC Branch Chairs Diane James AM and Paul Wheelton AM were acknowledged and welcomed.

Cr Connie Boglis OAM was the dinner MC; she introduced speaker **Georgina Gubbins OAM** (Photo below) who talked about modern farming, research, profitability, community wellbeing and mental health.

Some of Georgina's key points emphasised that farming is a highly technical and innovative profession.

Notably, 93% of Australian farms are family owned and operated, which presents challenges for coordinated training and the adoption of research and development initiatives.



However, benchmarking indicates that the family run farms tend to be more profitable and often demonstrate better animal welfare and environmental outcomes. Family farms face challenges in exerting political influence compared to multinational competitors, particularly in areas such as mining and land use. Victoria produces nearly 25% of Australia's food on just 3% of the country's total land mass. This remarkable productivity is made possible by prime farming land, diverse and fertile soils, and relatively reliable rainfall.

However, there has been a significant loss of agricultural land for agriculture, with 100,000ha made available for other uses, disturbing the soil profile. This decline raises important questions about the future of food production in the regions. It is crucial to consider whether the use of this prime land for growing food should remain a priority, given its unique suitability and contribution to the nation's food security.

Escalating costs remain a significant concern for the sector. Additionally, mental health pressures within farming and rural communities are substantial, with a tragic statistic of one farmer dying by suicide every ten days- a figure exacerbated by droughts by 15%. Animal activist activities contribute further distress and anxiety, and inappropriate government policies also worsen these issues.

Agriculture is not just about food. It's about community, resilience and innovation. It's about feeding and clothing a nation- and doing it with care, science and pride. My honour is not just for myself, but for every woman who's been underestimated, every farmer who's faced hardship, and every child growing up on the land wondering what's possible.

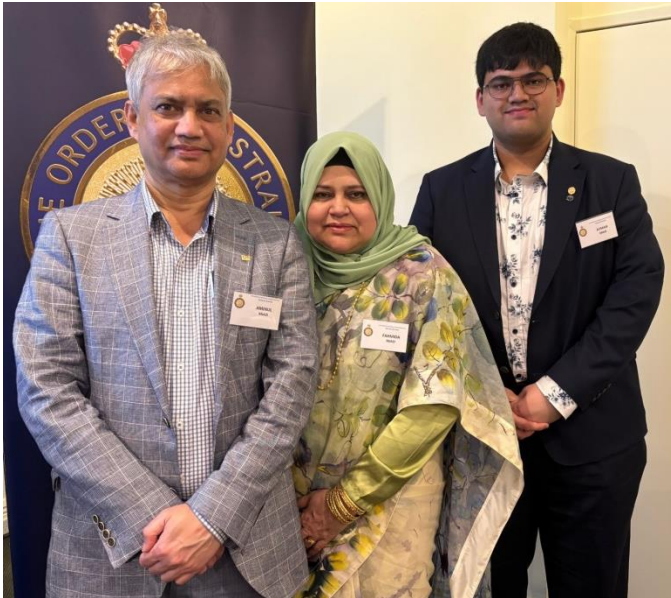


OAA Victoria Branch End of Year Dinner continued

The journey of Georgina Gubbins OAM will be the Member Profile in *The Order* national magazine February 2026 edition, from a young girl told to marry a farmer, to becoming one herself is reminded that leadership doesn't always come from ambition. Sometimes, it comes from necessity. From resilience. From showing up, day after day, when no one expects you to.

Connie thanked Georgina for her enlightening talk about life on the land and presented her with a gift from the Victoria Branch.

The second speaker **Ayman Miazi** an Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship recipient is an undergraduate aerospace student who is passionate about technology and rocketry, currently studying Aerospace Engineering at Monash University, with aspirations of postgraduate studies in the US. Ayman is writing articles about space and technology on Just In Space, on Medium.com he communicates to a broader audience about space in easy to read English. He has also participated in the National Youth Science Forum.



Ayman has a deep sense of community, which he describes as being based on the need to

help others. This includes the Bangladeshi community in Geelong. In 2005, Ayman's parents moved from Dhaka to provide a better life for him and his elder brother, as a result, he has been actively involved in fundraising for activities in Bangladesh, including flood relief.

Victoria Branch Director Grahame Leonard AM thanked Ayman for his informative update and commented on value of OAA Foundation Scholarships. Photo L-R: Aminul Miazi, Fahmida Miazi and Ayman Miazi (OAA Foundation Scholarship recipient)

Victoria Branch of The Order of Australia Association was the donor in 2024 of Ayman's scholarship and his mentor is Professor Alexander Smits AO.

One new member Helen Parker OAM and eight Order of Australia recipients who have not yet joined the Association were acknowledged and their citations read.

In closing the evening VIC Branch Chair Fred Harrington OAM thanked members and guests for attending and the staff at Stamford Plaza Melbourne for their service in the lead up to the dinner and their service during the evening.

The Order of Australia Association Scholarship

Donating to the OAA Foundation Scholarship, Association members promote Australian citizenship and thereby help the Association achieve its purpose.

Donations may be made to:

Name of Account: The Order of Australia Association Foundation Ltd Gift Account

BSB No: 013006 **Account No:** 314735771

Please advise details of EFT transfers by email to: sec@oaafoundation.com.au

Donations through the Foundation attract DGR tax deductibility.

News from the VIC Branch Regional Groups

Barwon Regional Group

The Barwon Regional Group has held the following events for members and guests since the September 2025 VIC Branch E-Newsletter.

Archibald Prize Exhibition - The visit to the Archibald Exhibition at the Geelong Gallery in October had seventeen members and guests taking part.

All were able to walk around at leisure and spend time looking at the finalist portraits.

Some you could concentrate on, others you could quickly bypass if not to your liking. At the end you were able to record your vote for the People's Choice award. It was nice to share some comments with fellow members.

For some members the realism was important for them, for others it was the story included in the painting, for some it was the colour, and for others it was the person featured. All of this is what makes the Archibald such an important award in Australia.



Photo L-R: Helen Trigg OAM, Jan Synot OAM and Richard Trigg



Photo L-R: Wayne Myers OAM, Luke, Olivia and Tracey Myers

Christmas Luncheon - Held on Friday 28 November at the Waurm Ponds Hotel.



There were two speakers at the lunch, first was Air Commodore Cr. Rowan Story AM, RFD, a retired oral and maxillofacial surgeon and Royal Australian Air Force officer. Rowan is a City of Greater Geelong Councillor; he teaches law and ethics to healthcare students and is also a member of the Bellarine Unit of the State Emergency Service.

Queen's Birthday June 2002 Rowan Story was a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) recipient for service to dentistry as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, educator and administrator.

Second speaker was Ayman Miazzi, a 2024 OAA Foundation scholarship recipient who lives within Geelong.

At this annual lunch members were invited to bring gifts to be distributed by a local charity, the Barwon Regional Group recognises whilst members and guests are enjoying a lovely meal others in our community are doing it tough.

Gippsland Regional Group

The legacy of Nobel Laureate Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet was celebrated on Wednesday 22 October at the 2025 Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet Annual Dinner and Address, held at the Traralgon Tennis Association Function Centre.

Hosted by the Order of Australia Association Gippsland Regional Group, the annual event continues to honour the life and achievements of Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet, the Traralgon-born scientist who won the 1960 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his groundbreaking work on immunology. Sir Frank was also the inaugural Australian of the Year in 1960 and went on to become one of the first Directors of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.

This year's dinner welcomed a distinguished gathering, including Sir Frank's granddaughter Jenny Dexter, along with Deputy Mayor of Latrobe City, Cr Sharon Gibson, Cr Joanne Campbell and Cr Adele Pugsley from Latrobe City Council.

Ten students from Federation University also attended, having been sponsored by Order of Australia Association members, underscoring the event's commitment to connecting Gippsland's next generation of scholars with leading scientific and civic voices.

The evening was MC'd by Doug Caulfield OAM RFD, Chair of the Order of Australia Association



Gippsland Regional Group, who officially welcomed guests at the beginning of the event and, following the main course of the dinner, he introduced the guest speaker. The keynote address was delivered by Dr Raffi Gugasyan BSc (Hons) PhD, Chair of Education and Head of the Diagnostic Markers and Chronic Immune Disorders Group (Gugasyan Laboratory) at the Burnet Institute. Dr Gugasyan's presentation — "How the Body is Prone to Inflammation as We Age and its Role in Disease" — explored how changes in the immune system contribute to chronic illnesses including autoimmunity and cancer.

Photo L-R: Dr Raffi Gugasyan presented with a replica of Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet's Nobel Prize by Gippsland Regional Group Chair Doug Caulfield, OAM RFD

Drawing on a research career that began with a PhD at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and continued at Washington University School of Medicine in the United States, Dr Gugasyan discussed his team's current work in developing new diagnostic markers for inflammatory and immune-related diseases.

The dinner program featured canapés on arrival, a two-course meal, and a petite dessert buffet, and guests were encouraged to engage in questions and discussion following the address.

While the scientific focus remained central, the evening also served as a community celebration — a meeting point for local leaders, students, and professionals reflecting on Gippsland's proud contribution to Australian science through Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet's legacy.

Gippsland Regional Group continued

As the night concluded with coffee, dessert, and conversation, the sentiment across the room was one of pride and inspiration — a reminder that the values of curiosity, dedication, and service that defined Sir Frank's life continue to inspire new generations in the region he once called home.

Photo: Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet's granddaughter, Jenny Dexter poses in front of a portrait of her grandfather at the dinner



Loddon Campaspe Regional Group

Bendigo Recognition Reception for 2024 and 2025 Order of Australia recipients

The City of Greater Bendigo hosted a Civic Reception on Wednesday 8 October to thank and recognise residents who are 2024 and 2025 recipients of the Order of Australia Honors Awards in the spectacular Bendigo Town Hall.

A significant number of previous recipients were also in attendance to meet with and support new awardees. Following introductory remarks from MC and CEO of the City of Greater Bendigo Andrew Cooney, citations of individual awardees were read by Mayor, Cr Andrea Metcalf. The mayor also recognized absentee recipients.

Dr Penny Davies AM Deputy Chair of the Order of Australia Association Ltd., Victoria Branch Loddon Campaspe Regional Group responded on behalf of the local group taking the opportunity to thank the city for hosting the event and congratulating new recipients. To the members of the Order of Australia Association Dr Davies acknowledged the value of each person's contribution to the community especially those who volunteered and others who had excelled in their professional roles and congratulated them on their awards. Thanks were also extended to people who had taken time and effort to put forward nominations for awards. In recognition of this, it was suggested the wearing of honours by members and the personal qualities that distinguished them sufficiently to be chosen by the selection panel recognises those who nominated them for the award.



In closing Dr Davies noted that membership of the Order of Australia Association provides valuable opportunities for members to network and to liaise with others who have received awards through social and formal events locally and throughout Australia.

Following the reception, light refreshments were provided allowing guests to meet informally and participate in photo opportunities with the mayor and local councillors. Entertainment for the evening was provided by the Bendigo Youth Choir.

Photo: 2024 and 2025 Order of Australia recipients in attendance at City of Greater Bendigo Civic Reception in October 2025

Melbourne Central Regional Group

Wednesday 19 November lunch with speaker Robert Kirby AO – the family man, entrepreneur and visionary

Against a backdrop of glorious sunshine and the tennis courts of the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club Trevor Clark OAM Chair of OAA VIC Branch Melbourne Central Regional Group introduced, Robert Kirby AO, Executive Chairman, Village Roadshow who informed and delighted members and guests with his personal reflections on film, cinema, FM Radio and film production and distribution – encompassing his 'lifetime activities' spanning five decades.

The confluence of family, business and community has played a big part in Robert's life. While the 'we' belonging to Robert and Mem, his dear partner of nearly 60 years, was the message upfront, Robert gave himself permission to speak about himself for most of his talk, painting a vivid picture of the development of the Village Roadshow family business, which also included good friend and business partner, Graham Burke, the former CEO of Village Roadshow.

"I have been forced to reflect on my life and the intertwining of lifetime activities," said Robert.

He acknowledged Mem's contribution from the early days working with the Kirby family, and then her flair in creating the Gold Class concept, plus the Jam Factory and later the Rivoli re-development.

Each has proved to be a lasting icon. In particular, the re-creation of The Rivoli as one of the best art deco cinemas anywhere has added further cache to the business.

The Village Roadshow Corporation grew from a standing start in the 1950s when it opened Australia's first drive-in movie theatres. From there, it grew into a leading radio and cinema distribution and production company.

Robert was seven years of age when he started working in the cinemas at the Saturday matinees, selling lolly bags and being mobbed by kids bouncing over to him to buy the lollies...when he found that he was 10 shillings and six pence short and he had to make this up to his dad, he knew it was time to give up the job and move onto something else, which turned out to be the jobs that no one else wanted to do.

Saturday nights would see the Kirby family travel in the car surveying all the drive-in theatres and taking in glimpses of movies as they were driven around by Roc Kirby so he could assess how they were going.

The '60s saw Village develop into an aggressive and buoyant company, leading to winning the rights to Warner Bros in Australia. That partnership is still secure.

Photo: L-R: Speaker Robert Kirby AO and Melbourne Central RG member Milly Parker OAM



Melbourne Central Regional Group continued

Wednesday 19 November lunch with speaker Robert Kirby AO – the family man, entrepreneur and visionary continued

The KOG warning – Keep Off the Grass – was the unwritten rule that was not to be transgressed; so the family started their own independent film company, so they could access their films of choice from overseas distributors.

It is the only independent circuit to survive as everyone was tired of doing business with the major production houses from the US.

Aussie films like Alvin Purple and Picnic at Hanging Rock gave the company the impetus it needed to evolve. Then the very first Mad Max film by George Kennedy and Byron Kennedy (Kennedy Miller) became a worldwide success, and Roadshow was on its way to stardom. And then came Red Dog – the 2011 box office hit starring Koko as the title character in a film based on the true story of Red Dog.

The 80s saw the Kirby family become the pioneers of home videos with Robert saying: "...it was pretty amazing just to know that you could walk away with a slice of Hollywood in the palm of your hand, all ready to view from the comforts of your own home." Such was the success of the VHS / DVD explosion.

In the late 80s, the multiplex cinema concept was taken around the world with Robert telling lunch guest Christina Despoteris OAM the success of the concept in Athens.

Soon after through a 'back door' listing, Village Roadshow became a public company, listed on the ASX; then followed the Warner Bros Movie World and Wet and Wild theme parks.

In the mid-1990s the Group bought Triple M and then Austereo which was a big part of the Village Roadshow world for nearly a decade.

Robert went on to talk about cinema and "the intimate experience of sharing a trip to the cinema..." telling the enthralled audience that 'cinema does survive and it will stand the test of time'.

All augurs well for a young man selling lollies, following in his father's footsteps and building a visionary cinema/entertainment company and turning it into a global business. All achieved

together with his two key partners: Mem Kirby and Graham Burke; and now with son, Clark Forbes at the helm as CEO.



Photo L-R: Suzette Gallagher OAM, Christina Despoteris OAM, Beverley Pinder OAM with speaker Robert Kirby AO all OAA VIC Branch Melbourne Central Regional Group members

North East & Goulburn Valley

The North East Victoria and Goulburn Valley Regional Group of the Order of Australia Association held its recent luncheon at Fowles Winery, Avenel on Sunday 12 October 2025 with 50 members and guests attending.

Members and guests were welcomed at the Wine Shed by Matt Harrop, Chief Winemaker and given an opportunity to try various white, red and sparkling wines at the Wine Tasting Station prior to the luncheon.

Matt Harrop who is an acclaimed Australian winemaker who joined Fowles Wine in 2024 as Chief Winemaker was the speaker at the lunch. He spoke about his extensive experience, knowledge and expertise in the wine industry. Matt currently chairs the National Wine Show and has previously chaired the Melbourne Wine Show.

Matt also has experience in climates and soils that are similar to those in the Strathbogie Ranges, where most of Fowles grapes are grown for their wines. He spoke passionately about the importance of family businesses and that his son is following in his footsteps currently studying in France.

Photo: Matt Harrop



South Central Suburban Group

A number of functions were held, including the *Welcome to all New Recipients of the Order of Australia Medals* hosted by Glen Eira Council in September.

This event included award recipients from both Kingston and Bayside.



Photo L-R: David Southwick MP, Member for Caulfield, Professor Allen Cheng AC (awardee), Glen Eira City Council Mayor Cr Simone Zmood and Jim Magee OAM (awardee and three-time former Glen Eira Mayor)

Photo courtesy of Glen Eira City Council

We also had an informative visit to the Marine Sanctuary at Ricketts Point, where we heard from Professor John Buckeridge PhD, and discovered the wonders underwater and learned about the amazing fossils that abound this area.

Photo supplied by Simon Mark





We finished the year with our End-of-Year Dinner, where we were entertained by Ross Smith OAM a physiotherapist at six Olympic Games. He regaled us with a collection of funny and memorable stories.

Dr Cheryl Threadgold OAM was presented with her 15 year membership certificate by South Central Suburbs Regional Group Chair

Photo L-R: Felicity Frederico OAM with Ross Smith OAM and Colin Neave AM

Planning is already underway for next year, with an exciting array of speakers lined up, including former school principal extraordinaire David Sheppard OAM and our very own Deputy Chair and banking guru Colin Neave AM.

Order of Australia News Alert

On 31 October 2025 the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat implemented changes to the way nominations for the Order of Australia are submitted. These changes have been designed to increase efficiency.

Nominating someone for recognition through the Order of Australia has always required the provision of referees. The revised nomination form requires the nominator to include the name and email address of three referees who can comment on the nomination they have prepared.

These changes mean referees will receive an email generated by the portal, seeking their comments. Nominators will not have access to the comments provided by referees. Only after all three referees have responded to this request will the nominator be able to submit their nomination.

The nominator will be alerted by email when each referee has responded and, once all referees have responded, the nominator will need to log back into the portal to submit their nomination.

These changes apply to all new nominations and those that have not yet been submitted.



Further information and guidance is available on the website.

Please visit <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/order-australia>

Vale Dame Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ

A Bright Shining Star Who Made a Difference

The late Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ was a titan of the corporate and philanthropy worlds.

With an extensive background as a senior business leader, Angela was a passionate supporter of health, having worked in an executive role within the corporate sector, specifically the Dental Industry for many years. She believed that education and learning is the lifelong process of acquiring vital skills and tools to build a sustainable, successful and prosperous life.



Having moved on from the board room in her corporate life – she moved to the boardroom at Wheelton Philanthropy.

Her sole desire - educate the broader community and families about the possibilities and opportunities in all areas of the philanthropic sector.

Alongside her husband and philanthropist, Paul Wheelton AM KSJ, Angela spread a viral message of positive and engaged philanthropy.

Passionate about backing women and girls which included the establishment and ongoing support of several orphanages and remote village projects that align and focus on education for over 2,000 children in Bali, Angela completed her MBA later in her career, a testament to her passion on the value of education.

Up until the time of her illness, she was the Deputy Chair of Life Education Victoria, a Director of Bali Children Foundation Ltd and a Director of the eviDent Foundation. To each of these roles she brought a wealth of expertise in business administration, a passion for health and wellbeing and believed that as women are the central part of a family, it is critical that they prioritise their own health to care for others.

Dame Wheelton's "unwavering support, dedication to community, and kindness to countless not-for-profit organisations", was recently acknowledged by Variety Victoria.

The Wheelton's are also supporters of Rotary, Women Moving Millions and are valued members of [the Swanson Society](#).

In June 2018, the late Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ was acknowledged for her service to the community, her membership to Boards and philanthropy and became Dame Angela Wheelton DSJ through being invested in The Order of St John of Jerusalem at the same time receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community through a range of organisations.

With their early start in humble beginnings, Paul and Angela have always been involved in community activities in some way. One of the reasons the Wheelton's started a charitable fund account with the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (now the Greater Melbourne Foundation) was to help them learn about the issues and opportunities impacting Melbourne. Their involvement with the Foundation enabled an understanding of the charities to support and the deserving initiatives as they affect Melbourne.

Vale Dame Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ continued

The concept of 'leverage' is something that Paul and Angela often discussed and agreed that with leverage, you also have more impact, especially when people join forces or partner together.



Members of giving circles including Melbourne Women's Fund and Impact 100 Melbourne, the Wheelton's believed that leveraging and collaborations is one way in which to make the funds go longer and stronger with deeper meaning.

Positive collaborations, partnerships and leveraging resources have all been at some stage part of the success of the Wheelton philanthropy.

Dame Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ leaves behind two children, eight grandchildren and three brothers and their families.

With a love of plus working with positive, supportive and innovative

people, the true legacy of Dame Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ is one of respect and a bright future for all creating lasting impact for all whom she touched and making the roughest of diamonds sparkle in their own self-belief and desire to learn and grow as responsible and caring citizens of a great Australia.

A Mother, a Wife, a Partner, a Friend, a Sister, a Business Leader, a Philanthropist and Change Maker, a Supporter of Women and an instigator of breaking down the barriers - Angela Wheelton encouraged young people to go on a continuous journey of learning.

She lived with courage, generosity and joy so may we all live to celebrate the life that was and the lasting legacy of a great woman who was a shining example of a great Australian.

Condolences are extended to the families of Angela and Paul Wheelton.

Dame Angela Wheelton OAM DSJ passed away peacefully on Thursday 21 August 2025, aged 66 years.



OAA Merchandise Shop Online

Gift Giving for Friends, Family and Yourself at the OAA Merchandise Shop

Items available include



New tote bag
\$12.00



Ties
\$30.00



Apron
\$30.00



Bucket Hat
\$16.00



Cooler Bag
\$20.00

Enquiries Barb 0413 008 571

All items in the OAA range can be purchased at
www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart



Storage of Vic Branch promotional items

OAA Victoria Branch has a range of items used at various Branch events including.

- a fold down banner (carry bag is approx 150mm diameter and 1meter long)
- three flags (two carry bags are approx 150mm diameter and 1meter long)
- a flag base (carry bag approx. 300mm by 300mm)
- medal board (900mm by 900mm)
- an easel (approx. 2m high)

Current storage arrangements are no longer available, and the Vic Branch is looking for alternative storage arrangements.

This is a call out to any member who has an appropriate storage area for the items listed above and willing to assist the VIC Branch or even suggest a space, which could be used for storage?

If so, please contact Vic Branch Chair (Fred) at chairvic@theorderofaustralia.asn.au

Social Media

The Order of Australia Association invites members to join us on Social Media.

LinkedIn and Facebook are the first two platforms being used for member and event news; please refer to the links below.

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/order-of-australia-association

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560448315014



OAA VIC Branch Member Profiles

My journey: From Plumtree to the Order of Australia - Shillar Sibanda OAM

Close your eyes and let me take you back to Plumtree, Zimbabwe, in the autumn of 1970. The sun casts a golden glow over the dry earth, the air is warm and gentle, and the trees stand bare, whispering stories of generations past. This is where my story begins—in the small rural community of Tjingababili, where communal living wasn't just a philosophy, it was our reality.

I was born into a world where every adult was a parent, every child a sibling. My mother was the local childcare teacher, and thanks to her, I was surrounded by love, guidance, and the values of unity and education from the very beginning. I walked 3 kilometres to school with my siblings and village friends, laughing, playing, and sharing stories along the way. Education was our beacon of hope, the key to a better future.

By grade three, I moved to the city to pursue better schooling. That shift marked the beginning of a lifelong journey shaped by resilience, purpose, and service. At 25, I migrated to Melbourne, Australia, with my husband and two young daughters. The transition was jarring—gone was the warmth of communal life, replaced by the solitude of a new land. But Melbourne's diversity offered a new kind of community, one where every voice could matter.

I leaned into the lessons of Plumtree and began building connections with fellow Zimbabweans and African immigrants.

Together, we formed Zimbabwean Community Inc. Zimcommunity, a space of belonging and support. As President, I helped new arrivals settle, often picking them up from the airport myself, offering guidance and comfort during their first steps in Australia.

But I wanted to do more than just help individuals, I wanted to shape systems. In 2011, we founded Africa Day Australia, bringing together representatives from all five regions of the African continent. For seven years, I led initiatives like Africa's Got Talent, Youth & Family Forums, sports events, and our signature Africa Day Gala Dinner. These programs weren't just celebrations—they were platforms for advocacy, empowerment, and unity.

In 2018, I was deeply humbled to receive the Premier's Volunteer Award, acknowledging over two decades of passionate advocacy and service within grassroots African Australian communities. That same year, I was honoured with the Chairman's Award from the Zimbabwe Achievers Awards Australia and Africa Day Australia's Multicultural Award for Excellence. In 2022, I was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for my contributions to the African Community in Victoria, a moment that stands as one of the most meaningful milestones of my life. It wasn't just a personal honour; it was a tribute to the collective strength, resilience, and spirit of the communities I've had the privilege to serve. It affirmed that our efforts matter and that are being heard.



Shillar Sibanda OAM continued

To me, the Honours system is vital. It reflects what we value as a society—service, compassion, and impact. It creates role models who show others, especially young people from underrepresented backgrounds, that they too can lead, contribute, and be celebrated.

Being part of the Association of recipients has been an unexpected gift. The award was a moment, but the Association is a movement—a network of brilliant, humble, and driven individuals who inspire me every day. It's a space where collaboration, learning, and shared values thrive. I'm honoured to serve as Treasurer of the OAA VIC Branch Western Suburbs Regional Group since the Annual General Meeting earlier this year.

Culturally, I carry the spirit of Plumtree in everything I do. I'm Zimbabwean Australian, and I honour both identities with pride. Professionally, I work as a Forensic Mental Health Clinician, managing a Psychiatric Outpatient program within a prison facility. I lead a team that supports incarcerated men facing mental health challenges.

Beyond my career, I run a not-for-profit that provides resources to schools in Plumtree, my birthplace, ensuring that the next generation has access to the tools they need to thrive. I'm also passionate about healthy living, regularly participating in marathons and encouraging others to prioritise wellness.

Looking back, I realise that success isn't measured by awards or titles—it's measured by the lives we touch and the communities we build. My journey has been shaped by the wisdom of Plumtree, the resilience of migration, and the power of service. And as I continue forward, I do so with gratitude, purpose, and an unwavering belief in the strength of community.

Profiling Rosanna Baini OAM nee Chaina Baini

Rosanna starts her interview with "Australia the Great, though you are located in the Southern Oceania, you are the centre of my universe."

Rosanna has a remarkable track record of contributing to community. Her work has focused on encouraging integration and active participation, empowering individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to fully engage in Australia's economic, social, and cultural life. Rosanna is staunchly patriotic and respectful to the country in which she was born "I have always believed that while we honour our heritage, our patriotism to Australia must come first. This country offers opportunity, fairness, and belonging, and it is our duty to give back in service to the nation that has given us so much.

Rosanna received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the 2020 Australia Day Honours for service as a Commissioner for Multicultural Affairs and for her contributions to the Lebanese community in Australia. In fact, Rosanna was the Founding Executive Director Australia and New Zealand Lebanon Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Also, the Founder and Vice President of the Australian Lebanese Business Council (ALBC). She served as a Bail Justice from 1994 to 2009. Receiving the Order of Australia was profoundly humbling. It represents not just personal recognition, but an acknowledgment of the many people and communities who share my passion for unity and inclusion. It reaffirmed my belief that the most valid form of leadership lies in service, in building understanding, empowering others, and contributing to a shared vision of a cohesive, compassionate Australia.



Profiling Rosanna nee Chaina Baini OAM continued

Rosanna is proud of her Lebanese heritage. Her father arrived in Australia in the mid-1940s and he set about building a life in a country far from his homeland. She describes her late husband, Clark, as her greatest supporter and inspiration. "Together, we raised five wonderful children. Our two eldest daughters are married, and I am now a proud grandmother of five grandchildren, ranging in age from one and a half to twelve years old."

Juggling family, work and study, Rosanna is a powerhouse. She is an academic at Victoria University in the First Year College and the College of Sport, Health and Engineering. Her work covers areas such as Law and Ethics, Evidence and Health and Dermal Science. She is also currently undertaking her PhD studies in Health and Law. Further, she serves as a Justice of the Peace.

She works in various roles including as a member of the Drug Advisory Council of Australia – Public Funding Management Committee. In her current role as Vice Chair of the Australian Lebanese Business Council she champions stronger bilateral and domestic business engagement, encouraging enterprises to expand their economic connections and contribute to the prosperity of Australia's business environment.



For Rosanna, the Australian Honours system represents "a powerful way of expressing national gratitude. It celebrates the quiet achievers. Those who dedicate their time, skills, and energy to uplifting others. It recognises that greatness in Australia is not defined by status, but by service, integrity, and compassion. By highlighting these values, the system encourages future generations to follow a path of contribution and civic pride".

The day of her investiture ceremony at Government House was particularly special for her. She soon took up the opportunity to become a member of the Order of Australia Association. She views membership as both a privilege and a responsibility. "It connects me with Australians from all walks of life who share a commitment to the greater good. For me, it is a community of service, one that encourages collaboration, mentorship, and the continuous pursuit of excellence. It reminds me that recognition is not an endpoint, but a call to continue serving with humility and gratitude."

"One of my most memorable Victoria Branch events as a North Central Suburbs Regional Group member was the first Oration I attended at the Melbourne Town Hall. It was an inspiring occasion that brought together people from all walks of life who share a deep respect for service and community."

A regular attendee at Victorian Branch events, she feels that each provides "wonderful opportunities to reconnect with fellow recipients, meet new honourees, and listen to remarkable guest speakers whose stories continue to inspire. Every event has left a lasting impression on me, reminding me that there are many pathways to contribution, and that the strength of our nation lies in the diversity, compassion, and unity of its people."

"Throughout my life, my guiding belief has remained constant. While our heritage gives us identity and pride and should never be forgotten, our patriotism to Australia must always come first. This nation has given me the freedom to learn, serve, and contribute, and it will forever remain the centre of my universe."

Members making a difference in the community

William Lye OAM KC

Congratulations to William Lye OAM KC on being elected to the 2025/2026 Victoria Bar Council (Category A). William's participation highlights the growing cultural diversity within the peak bodies of the legal profession.

In 2017 William Lye was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the law, to business, and to the promotion of cultural diversity.

William also serves as Chair of Foley's List Pty Ltd, one of the oldest and largest barristers' groups in Australia, and Deputy National Chairman of The Order of Australia Association.

William Lye OAM KC is an Eastern Suburbs Regional Group Victoria Branch member.



Helen Parker OAM

I recently had the profound honour of being admitted as an Honorary Freeman of the City of Maroondah. It is such a beautiful and humbly recognition that reflects the powerful community that I'm privileged to be part of.

Thank you to then Mayor of Maroondah City Council - Kylie Spears and Councillors for the privilege.



In my acceptance speech, I shared that while yes, I once had a dream and I saw a failing in the system for women, dreams alone are never enough. The Babes Project only became a reality because I asked for help and people said yes.

Over the years, I've seen how transformative a simple "yes" can be. A yes from someone willing to donate. A yes from someone choosing to volunteer. A yes from someone ready to advocate. A yes from someone who simply believed in the vision.

Those collective yeses built a movement that has now shaped the lives of thousands of women and families. They created something far bigger than one dream - they created a community. Receiving this honour from the City of Maroondah is, to me, a celebration of that shared courage and commitment. It's a reminder that community impact is never achieved alone; it is built through generosity, shared purpose, and people choosing to show up.

I'm deeply grateful, and I look forward to continuing to serve the community.

Helen is a 2019 Medal of the Order Australia (OAM) recipient for service to pregnant women in need and a Frankston Mornington Peninsula Regional Group Victoria Branch member.

Photo courtesy LinkedIn L-R: Cr Kylie Spears and Helen Parker OAM

Members making a difference in the community

Vivienne Nguyen AM

Victorian Multicultural Commission Chair Vivienne Nguyen AM had the honour to attend and speak at the 2025 Remembrance Commemoration at the Shrine.

2025 marks many significant and historical events in Australia's modern history, one of which was the end of the Vietnam War and the arrival of Vietnamese refugees to Australia.

On this day, I pay respect to the 523 Australian soldiers who lost their lives protecting freedom in a country they never knew, whose name was taken out of the barrels and who served honourably.

I express my gratitude to the Vietnam veterans for protecting me and many like me in a country they never knew the people they never met.

Lest We Forget

In 2021 Vivienne Nguyen was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the multicultural community of Victoria, she is a Western Suburbs Regional Group Victoria Branch member.

Please read the address from the Governor of Victoria here where she dedicated the address to the Vietnam War, the friendship bonds from the young men of Australia and the importance of remembrance. <https://lnkd.in/gmtiTrSV>



Photo courtesy Nine News

Victorian Senior Australian of the Year

Three Victorian Senior Australian of the Year finalists are Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch members:-

Thi Be Ha OAM, Jane Edmanson OAM and Bryan Lipmann AM



Wintringham Founder and former CEO **Bryan Lipmann AM** has been named Victorian Senior Australian of the Year 2026 in recognition of his lifelong dedication to ending homelessness for older Australians. Bryan stepped down as CEO late July 2025.

In 1999 Bryan Lipmann was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service in the community especially homelessness; he is a Melbourne Central Regional Group Victoria Branch member.

OAA VIC Branch Regional Group Chairs

Barwon

Wayne Myers OAM

Central Highlands Wimmera

John Burt OAM

Eastern Suburbs

Geoffrey Grinton OAM

Frankston Mornington Peninsula

Heather Barton AM

Gippsland

Doug Caulfield OAM RFD

Loddon-Campaspe

Alex Stoneman OAM

Mallee

VIC Branch committee

Melbourne Central

Trevor Clark OAM

North Central Suburbs

Fred Harrington OAM

NE & Goulburn Valley

Mary-Lou Davis OAM

South Central Suburbs

Felicity Frederico OAM

South West Vic

Georgina Gubbins OAM

Western Suburbs

June Kane AM



Thank you to everyone who provided articles and photos for inclusion in the OAA VIC Branch E-Newsletters in 2025