



Dated November/December 2025

Vision Impaired Accessible Document



The front cover this issue is a group photo taken at Government House, Canberra, on 26 September 2025 showing this year's O.A.A Foundation Scholarship winners (L-R) Nazia Safdari; Jake Barnett; Isum Malawaraarachchi; Ockert Visser; Zeph Hardie and Miriam Grice; with Dr Helen Nugent A.C, Chair of the Order of Australia Association Foundation and The Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon. Sam Mostyn A.C.

## NOTICES & EXCLUSIONS:

This version of our national magazine is not intended for general distribution to the wider public but is prepared as a service for those of our members who require the use of vision-impaired screen-reader technology. Thus, certain pages of the hard-copy version involving complex graphics or page layout have been omitted.

## GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION.

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National Secretary – Graham Hyde O.A.M Email: [natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:natsec@theorderofaustralia.asn.au)

## MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE MS SAM MOSTYN A.C

The last few months have seen many moments of celebration. In late September, we hosted a wonderful week of investiture ceremonies at Government House in Canberra. We welcomed more than 100 recipients of Australian honours and awards, as well as their families and friends, to celebrate our latest honourees. Similar sessions have been hosted in Government Houses around Australia. It is an immense privilege of my role as your Governor-General to meet so many remarkable Australians, and hear firsthand their stories of care, kindness, respect and generosity.

I also presided over two special and intimate investiture ceremonies at other locations, where the recipients could not join the formal events due to significant health issues.

Emeritus Professor Anthony Johns A.M was a leading scholar in the fields of Islamic and Southeast Asian studies who pioneered the global establishment of Indonesian as a subject for academic instruction and analysis. I was honoured to join his family at The Canberra Hospital and invest him as a Member of the Order there. Sadly, he passed away in the weeks that followed, making his investiture all the more poignant.

His son told me that those moments will be cherished in Professor Johns' family.

At an investiture ceremony later in the week, recipient Dr David Bagnall O.A.M was invested for service to rowing, but his wife, Evelyn, could not join due to her significant physical challenges. I was pleased to travel to RSL LifeCare in Lyneham, where she now lives, so she could witness her husband receiving his medal. As Patron of RSL LifeCare, and as Chancellor of the Order of Australia, it was important

and moving to invest Dr Bagnall with his O.A.M, surrounded by his family.

On the final day of ceremonies, we were delighted to welcome the six recipients of the Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship for 2025 to Government House. Sixty-six students have now received these scholarships. They are generous – with \$45,000 to cover tuition and student fees, living allowance, and other educational expenses. The students are most excited about being paired with a mentor who has been recognised in the Order of Australia – someone who is eminent in the awardee’s chosen field of study – to guide them throughout their development and education.

The 2025 scholars are quite remarkable, embodying already so many of the values of our honours and awards system. Jake Barnett, Miriam Grice, Zeph Hardie, Nazia Safdari, Ockert Visser and Isum Malawaraarachchi all have aspirations to use their scholarships, and subsequent careers, to contribute to our community in profound ways.

The scholarship and mentorship facilitated by the Order will be transformative for these scholars. It was wonderful to be part of their journey. I commend the members of the Order who make this possible and thank you for your continued care for the next generation.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION**

**VICKI O’HALLORAN, A.O, C.V.O**

As I reflect on my life’s journey to date, I am filled with gratitude for the two regions that have had the most profound impact on me: Tasmania, my hometown of Smithton where I grew up, and the Northern Territory, my now hometown of Darwin where I reside and where I have spent the majority of my career. Both places have left an indelible mark on my heart and soul, shaping me into the person I am today.

Growing up in Smithton, Tasmania, was a magical experience. The safe and nurturing environment allowed me to flourish, and I have countless fond memories of my childhood. The rugged beauty of our countryside and beaches, the closeknit community, Gibson Street and the simple carefree days of youth all contributed to a sense of wonder and awe that has stayed with me throughout my life. I am forever grateful for the foundation that Tasmania provided, laying the groundwork for the person I was to become.

In contrast, the Northern Territory has been a place of professional growth and opportunity. Darwin, with its vibrant lifestyle, stunning natural beauty, the best sunsets and storms, and warm, welcoming community, has been a gift to me and my family. The NT has wrapped its arms firmly around me, providing a platform for me to pursue my passions and make a meaningful contribution to the community. The opportunities that have arisen have been numerous, and I have been fortunate to have had the chance to work alongside incredible people, serve

Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Majesty King Charles III, and grow as a professional.

One of the most humbling and unexpected experiences of my life was being awarded an Order of Australia. This recognition was a testament to the opportunities that the NT has provided, and I am deeply grateful for the trust and support that the community has and continues to show me. It was a moment that reminded me of the power of community, the importance of perseverance, the value of hard work. Receiving an Order is most certainly life-changing. I ask you to keep that in mind and I encourage you to nominate fellow Australians so they too can experience this acknowledgement and share it with family, friends and the broader community.

As I think back while writing about my journey today, I am reminded of the profound impact that both Tasmania and the Northern Territory have had on my life. They have both shaped me, inspired me and continue to provide me with encouragement and confidence to pursue my dreams. I will always be grateful for the experiences, the people and the opportunities that both regions have afforded me. To Tasmania, I thank you Smithton for the safe and magical childhood that you provided. The Northern Territory, I thank you, in particular Darwin, for the opportunities, the challenges, the warmth that you have and continue to show me. I am proud to call both places home and I look forward to continuing to contribute and learn more life lessons during the latter part of my career journey.

This is my last article for 2025; thank you to our National Chair, Board and Branches for their countless volunteer hours this year. You are all remarkable individuals.

There are only weeks left before my favourite time of year where the joy of Christmas unfolds in our household. I wish you all the very best over the summer months. Stay safe and spread kindness wherever you are.

Go well.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE O.A.A CHAIR**

**MAJGEN BARRY NUNN A.O R.F.D E.D (Retd)**

We are approaching the end of another successful year for our Association. It is pleasing to look back over 2025 and see an increase in awards in the Order of Australia, the recruiting of a satisfying number of awardees to our ranks, our participation in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Australian honours system and the completion of our first national member survey. Members are congratulated on their contribution to another good year.

The Honours Secretariat has modified the Order nomination process, as explained below. This is anticipated to reduce the time between nomination and award.

Our Australia has changed considerably in this first 50 years of the honours system.

It is easy to recall with nostalgia how much simpler life was 'back in the day' in 1975. We are however very fortunate to live in the Australia of today, with a lifestyle that is the envy of all. Not so appealing is the emergence of hate speech, intolerance and violence towards others. Australia has long been the home of the 'fair go', where the individual is accepted for his or her contribution to the community irrespective of background. All of us holding an award in the Order of Australia are seen as community leaders and have an ongoing duty to show tolerance and respect to differing views and to speak out against un-Australian activity.

The OAA National Member Survey has exceeded our expectations both in the number of responses and the breadth of ideas. Later you will find a report on progress with putting these ideas into plans for action. Success with this will depend on all of us accepting and enthusiastically supporting some changes in the way we do business. This will require Branch and Regional committees that are prepared to try new approaches while keeping the 'tried and true'.

Branches will be holding their annual general meetings in first quarter of 2026. I encourage members who have the time, energy and experience to nominate for committee positions and participate in an exciting change process.

Preparations for the 2026 National Conference in Brisbane from 16 to 19 April are now well under way and are reported later in this issue. My term as Chair of the National Board will come to an end following the National A.G.M on 18 April. I have enjoyed my nine years as your National Chair, seeing the pleasing development of our Association over that period, working with colleagues who are prepared to volunteer for sometimes demanding tasks, and Margaret and I making lasting friendships throughout the Association. I will miss not being directly involved in the delivery of the results of our survey.

I thank our President, fellow members of the National Board, Branch and Regional committees and all members for the team effort that has resulted in another very successful year. I hope that you and your family enjoy the coming Festive Season and a rewarding 2026.

## **CHANGES TO HOW TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR AN AWARD**

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 in 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.

Referees will then automatically 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 are available on the website.

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

## **NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Members are invited to nominate for three positions on the Executive Committee of the National Board. A member of the Association is any member who is currently financial, in accordance with the Constitution (Clause 13.1).

The National Board includes five Executive Directors and a Branch Nominated Director from the Branch in each State and Territory. The Board determines the policies and strategic direction of the Association.

The Executive Committee (National Chair, Deputy National Chair, Treasurer, Membership Director and Secretary) are responsible for putting Board policy into action.

In April 2026, Barry Nunn A.O R.F.D E.D will have completed his third and final three-year term as National Chair. The Deputy National Chair William Lye O.A.M KC and Treasurer Frank Crawley O.A.M will have completed their term of appointment. Both officers are eligible for re-election.

Directors are appointed to the Board for a term of up to three years and may renominate for up to two succeeding terms.

In line with the O.A.A Constitution (Clause 43), the current term of the National Secretary (Graham Hyde O.A.M) ends in 2027, and the current term of the National Membership Director (Dot Haynes O.A.M) ends in 2029.

The Nomination Form is included in the 'G2 Board Charter', a link to which is at the end of this advice. It is to be completed by two members and the nominee.

Nominees are requested to provide a resume of no more than 400 words noting their skills and experience relevant to the responsibilities of the position.

Nominations are to be lodged with the Chair of the Nominations Committee on or before 5pm (A.E.D.T) 27 February 2026 as follows: Mr Clive Robartson A.M, Chair Nominations Committee

Email: [dirnsw@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:dirnsw@theorderofaustralia.asn.au) Mobile: 0419 485 071

**Note:** Nominees are advised to read 'Welcome and Information' which provides information on the organisational governance of the OAA and the 'G2 Board Charter' which includes a Position Description and Application Form for the three Executive Director positions. Both these documents are available from the Chair of the

Nominations Committee and on the Association website at:

**Welcome:** <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Welcome-and-Information-from-National-Chair-current-June-2025-1.pdf>

**G2-Board Charter:** <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/G2-Board-Charter.pdf>

Intending nominees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the statutory and legal requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (A.C.N.C) and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC): <https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-standards%20>

Those considering nominating for these positions are welcome to contact the National Chair, Barry Nunn, for additional background. Email: [NatChair@theorderofaustralia.asn.au](mailto:NatChair@theorderofaustralia.asn.au), mobile: 0408 540 082 (note – W.A time).

## **NATIONAL SURVEY: FROM IDEAS TO PLANS FOR ACTION**

Member responses to the recently conducted national survey far exceeded expectations, both in the number of replies and the value of the several hundred responses to the questions seeking commentary. In total, 1,742 members responded, providing several thousand text comments.

### **Member Views**

It is all too easy to manage an organisation such as ours assuming we know what members want. Many of you have identified real barriers to your full participation in the activities of the Association including cost, geographic isolation and technology awareness. You have expressed the view that we need to demonstrate clearly our focus on our goal of ‘celebrating and promoting outstanding Australian citizenship’ and take it to the wider community.

### **Our Response**

The OAA National Strategy 2024-26 is at present under review. Your survey responses provide timely input to this work and offer some concrete proposals for achieving, and in some cases modifying our strategic goals.

Work has now begun, both nationally and in Branches, to transform your ideas and suggestions into actions. Nationally we are concentrating our efforts over the next 18 months on four ‘themes’ that are interlinked:

*Citizenship promotion* - expanding youth leadership programmes, launching public awareness campaigns about the Honours system, and creating

pathways for members to actively promote citizenship.

*Better communication* – both within the Association and in communities. We will be addressing your feedback on *The Order* magazine, focusing on members' stories and their work with communities, and seeking wider distribution. We will be updating the Association website and establishing social media as a valuable resource.

*Effectiveness of our organisation* - addressing the problems you identified with costs of participation and seeking ways to make our activities more accessible to those in remote areas. We need to better describe the way the organisation works and to encourage your participation.

*Membership* - widening our recruitment message from social benefits to citizenship promotion, attracting new and retaining existing members who are motivated by our purpose. Cost and accessibility of activities to all is important.

### Measuring Progress

The teams working on the planned changes will be establishing measurable action plans that will be made available, and on which progress will be reported to you by eNews, *The Order* and Branch reports.

### Your Role

The changes that are being considered should benefit our Association, enhance its active involvement with the community and make it more attractive to both new awardees and those who might otherwise leave us. This will require your involvement by participating in events, continuing to bring forward ideas and joining teams where you believe you can contribute.

Together, our 8,200 members represent an extraordinary resource, spanning every profession and community sector. By putting aside our natural modesty and sharing what we know, we can inspire the next generation and demonstrate what outstanding citizenship truly means.

Barry Nunn A.O  
National Chair

Daid North O.A.M  
Board Marketing Committee Chair

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **S.A. CHAIR TONY METCALFE O.A.M'S REPORT**

In recent months, several of our members have attended commemorative

services and events, and our Branch committee members have supported the Government House Open Day, strategically stationed near the medals display to explain the nature of the Order of Australia to members of the public, and to promote the Association to recipients of awards.

We have held our second New Recipients' Reception for the year; Regional Groups have met for their luncheon events; and we had interesting speakers at our honours recipients fellowship luncheons. At each of our events, we have paused to reflect on the day 50 years ago that the Order of Australia was instituted by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

South Australia has agreed to host the 2027 National Conference in Adelaide from Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 May 2027, with the Annual General Meeting and Members' Forum being held on Saturday 15 May. A preliminary planning committee has been established to begin working on the event. We look forward to welcoming you to Adelaide in 2027!

On behalf of the Branch committee and members of the S.A Branch, I wish you all a relaxing holiday break and a joyful Christmas, and we send you our best wishes for the new year.

## EVENTS

### *STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AWARDS 2025*

The Student Citizenship Awards programme is conducted annually as the flagship programme of the S.A Branch. Awards Convenor Noel Hender O.A.M B.E.M advises that in 2025 there were 47 submissions received for consideration, from 33 schools and colleges. The Top Ten students for 2025 have been identified for presentation to Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson A.C, Governor of South Australia and Patron of the S.A Branch, at a special reception at Government House where they will receive a 'With Distinction' award. Her Excellency will then announce the 2025 Student Citizen of the Year, recipient of the Keith 'Chook' Fowler O.A.M Award.

Senior students are nominated by their schools and assessed against four criteria: leadership, contributions to the school and/or community, contributions to the environment and/or community development, and pride in Australian citizenship.

The S.A Branch is continuing the tradition of presenting all award recipients with a special medallion. From 2025 for three years, these medallions are being

provided through the generous support of the Government of South Australia. In addition to the Top Ten, a further 37 students will receive a certificate and medallion, 19 of these were rated as 'Highly Commended'. The balance of the certificates and medallions will be presented by members of the Association to the successful students at school assemblies in Term 4.



*Photo of Ingrid Heinrich receiving her Student Citizenship Awards 'Highly Commended' certificate and medallion at the Adelaide High School Senior Years Speech Assembly on 23 October*

### **COMMEMORATIONS**

Branch members have attended a number of commemorative events recently. On Monday 18 August, the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Service was held at the Vietnam War Memorial at Torrens Parade Ground to honour the service of all Australian, New Zealand and Republic of Vietnam service personnel who fought in the Vietnam War, and particularly those who lost their lives.

The principal guests were the Governor's Deputy, His Excellency Dr Richard Harris S.C O.A.M, and Mrs Fiona Harris. Dr Harris received the Star of Courage on 24 July 2018 for 'acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril' while playing a crucial role in the rescue of 12 Thai children and their soccer coach from a cave system in northern Thailand. He also received the O.A.M, *for service to the international community through specialist response roles during the Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand in 2018*. On 7 September 2018, the King of Thailand appointed Dr Harris a Knight Grand Cross (First Class) of the Most Admirable Order of the Direkgunabhorn. Dr Harris was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia on 25 January 2024.

Dr Harris was also the principal guest at the 2025 Malaya & Borneo Veterans Day Commemorative Service held on 29 August by the S.A & N.T Branch of the National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association Australia Inc. This service marked the 65th anniversary of the End of the Malayan Emergency, the 63rd anniversary of the suppression of the Brunei Revolt, and the 59th anniversary of the end of

confrontation. A ceremonial detachment of Air Force Cadets was again provided by No 604 Squadron (Hampstead Barracks) – the members of the Catafalque Party carried innocuous .303-inch S.M.L.E rifles representative of the era of the Malayan wars.

Several events were held in Sarawak, Malaysia, in September relating to the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Sarawak from Japanese occupation by troops of the 9th Australian Division, A.I.F, in 1945. These ceremonies also honoured the service of Brigadier Tom Eastick D.S.O E.D from South Australia, who was Commander Kuching Force at the end of World War II, and Military Governor of Sarawak from 10 September until December 1945, when the territory returned to local civilian rule. He was subsequently knighted. A considerable number of Eastick family members attended these events in Kuching, including descendants of Sir Tom's eldest son Dr Bruce Charles Eastick A.M, a member of the S.A Branch, who was Mayor of Gawler (1968-72 and 1993-2000), M.H.A for Light (1970-93), South Australian Leader of the Opposition (1972-75) and Speaker of the South Australian House of Assembly (1979-82). Dr Bruce Eastick was made a Member of the Order of Australia, *in recognition of service to the South Australian Parliament, local government and the community* (A.D.96).

All Australians who attended greatly appreciated the support, friendship and hospitality of Datuk Dr Philip Ting PGBK A.M, the Australian Honorary Consul to Sarawak, who is in fact Australia's longest serving honorary consul. Datuk Philip Ting was made a Member of the Order of Australia (Honorary) on 1 July 2010, *for service to the Australian Government as the Honorary Consul of Australia – Kuching, in Sarawak, Malaysia*. Philip is also a Commander of the Order of the Star of the Sarawak Hornbill (Panglima Gemilang Bintang Kenyalang, PGBK), an appointment that carries the title 'Datuk'.

The ceremonies were planned and coordinated by Dato Lim Kian Hock P.S.B.S J.B.K O.A.M, former Sarawak Tourism Federation Heritage Advisor and former Chair of the Sarawak Tourism Federation's History and Heritage Development Committee. For decades, Dato Lim has dedicated himself to commemorating the service of the Australian Armed Forces and those who served alongside them in Sarawak and Borneo between 1942 and 1945, paying homage to all the Allied Prisoners of War and the Australian Army liberators who entered Sarawak during the occupation to finally bring freedom to the local people. Dato Lim was awarded an O.A.M (Honorary) on 1 September 2021, *for service to Australia-Malaysia relations, particularly to commemorating the role played by Australians in Sarawak, Malaysia, during World War II*. Lim is a Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of Sarawak (Panglima Setia Bintang Sarawak, PSBS), an appointment that carries the title 'Dato'.

## QUEENSLAND BRANCH

### CHAIR RONDA NIXON O.A.M's REPORT

It has been a busy two months for the Queensland Branch committee since my last report. By the time you read this I expect that online registration for the 2026 National Conference will be available on the Association website. Accommodation at the Conference Venue, Rydges South Bank Hotel, is already available online. I am particularly thrilled about the speakers we have engaged for the Conference. They are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and professions reflecting not only the current makeup of the population of Queensland, but the increasing multicultural nature of Order of Australia awardees.

From 9 to 11 September, investiture ceremonies for the King's Birthday awardees were held at Government House, followed by a Welcome Dinner for the new recipients and their families. A private investiture ceremony for world renowned film and stage costume designer Catherine Martin AC was held at Government House on 12 September attended by her family and friends. Irene Cayas O.A.M represented the Qld Branch Committee.

Our Annual Secondary School Awards presentations were held in the presence of Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young A.C P.S.M, Governor of Queensland, at Parliament House on 19 September. Students travelled from schools across the state to receive their awards. Our Awards Coordinator, Geoffery Cowles O.A.M, flew to Cairns on 24 October to deputise for me at a function to recognise Far North Queensland recipients in the King's Birthday honours. While in Cairns he presented a Secondary Schools Award to a Cairns High student who could not attend the presentations at Parliament House.

I could not be in Cairns because I was representing The Order of Australia Association at a highly significant ceremony at The University of Queensland. The beautiful sandstone Great Court at the University is adorned by sculptures of significant people connected with the history of Queensland and the University. One last space out of a total of 50 remained vacant for many years. The honour was finally given to Dr Margaret Valadian A.C M.B.E, the first Aboriginal woman to graduate from an Australian University back in 1966. It was unveiled on Friday 24 October 2025 in the presence of family members. The carving is the work of Dr Rhyl Hinwood A.M, who has been the official sculptor for the University since 1976. Dr Hinwood has designed and produced more than 700 commissioned public artworks in her career. At the 2026 National Conference, Dr Hinwood will speak on the significance of the art in the Great Court. Members and partners who select this option will be able to tour the sculptures of the U.Q Great Court.

I encourage all members throughout Australia to join us in Brisbane for the Order of Australia National Conference, a very special event, from 16 to 19 April next year.

## EVENTS

### *CELEBRATING QUEENSLAND'S BEST FROM THE 2025 KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS*

On Thursday 11 September, the Queensland Branch hosted a Welcome Celebratory Dinner in the Blue Pacific Ballroom at Kedron Wavell Services Club, Chermside, to welcome a dynamic dozen: 12 of the best from the 2025 King's Birthday award recipients.

While the number of award recipients being welcomed may have been low in quantity, their presence did not lack in quality. We were introduced to some simply wonderful, inspiring examples of why these honours are so important to the nation and to the communities that these fine people serve and represent.

A satisfying 135 guests attended including an outstanding member response of 31 members attending.

### *THE GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND ATTENDS HER FIRST SECONDARY SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP AWARDS PRESENTATION*

Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young A.C P.S.M, the Governor of Queensland, presented the Queensland Branch's Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards in the Undumbi Room at Parliament House, Brisbane on Friday 19 September 2025.

A record 162 guests including students and their families, school representatives and Association members attended.

Her Excellency took great pleasure in presenting the awards and was captivated by the inspiring student citations that were read out, as well as the students' acceptance speeches. Twelve students from across the state received this prestigious award in recognition of their selfless community service in helping and supporting others and promoting true Australian citizenship. This was Her Excellency's first presentation for these awards in her tenure as Governor of Queensland.

Musical accompaniment with a difference was provided by the Lourdes Hill College's Vocal Group, 'The Diamonds'. What absolutely delightful harmonious voices!

The awards began in 1999 and since that time 317 outstanding students from 137 secondary schools have had the privilege of receiving this award.

## TASMANIA BRANCH

### CHAIR ALASTAIR DOUGLAS O.A.M'S REPORT

A reception hosted by Her Excellency, the Honourable Barbara Baker A.C, Governor of Tasmania, was held in early October to celebrate the 50 years since the establishment of the Order of Australia. Her Excellency spoke of the importance of

Australia's system of honours and noted that nominations have significant value because they can be made by any Australian citizen. More than 100 Association members and guests registered to attend what was a most pleasant event. We thank Her Excellency for her generosity in holding the reception for our Association.

The three Regional Groups continue with a variety of events for members, winding up what has been quite a busy year, culminating in Christmas lunches and afternoon teas. Speakers have covered a wide range of topics with all being well received by members. The Southern Region members had a most informative visit to the Maritime Museum of Tasmania. We were pleased to have the company of former National Membership Director Kathy Wooldridge O.A.M and her husband Peter from Queensland with us for the tour and lunch afterwards

## FEATURED MEMBER SUSAN HAWICK A.M

Susan Hawick A.M began her career as an educator in 1963 at Liverpool Girls School in the western suburbs of Sydney. The student population was mostly drawn from immigrant and low socioeconomic families and at the time the school counsellor was not considered to be a vital part of the school and was rarely asked to visit. As a result, Susan's passion for psychology-based counselling services was ignited and in 1968 she trained as a school counsellor.

Her first appointment was to the far west of New South Wales and what a challenge it was having 45 schools to support over a large area! Susan was the first woman to do that job, and the locals said, "She won't last. As soon as her car breaks down at the back of Bourke she'll burst into tears and fly back to the city!" However, Susan was a determined lady and says, "That stiffened my spine, but I did the very best I could".

One experience made Susan an outspoken advocate. Together with a local G.P, she decided that a day programme for young people with disabilities was much needed in the community. An advertisement was placed in the local paper and parents came from across the district requesting that their child be enrolled. Before this, some young adults with moderate intellectual disability had never left their homes. Today we know that, with early intervention, many disabilities are manageable and happy productive lives for all the family are possible.

As educators, Susan and her colleagues had no training to work with Indigenous populations, and consequently a group of principals and counsellors formed a group to upskill themselves. It was a steep learning curve.

On her return to Sydney, Susan had various appointments including school

counsellor, district guidance officer and assistant regional director/student services. Along with her colleagues, she helped develop a professional organisation to provide training and support for counsellors. Initially state-based, the organisation evolved into a national body, the Australian Guidance and Counselling Association (A.G.C.A), with Susan serving on committees at both state and national levels at various times. She was National President of the A.G.C.A from 2001 to 2003. Today the national organisation is called ASPECT, reflecting the significant role of psychology in school counselling. Susan also joined the International Association for Counselling and the International School Psychologists Association, and was an active participant.

Susan was made a Member of the Order of Australia (A.M) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 2013 *for significant service to education, particularly through the school counselling profession.*

When she was a 'young' 80 years old, Susan relocated to Launceston in Tasmania where she is enjoying Launceston life with new friends and acquaintances.



Photo of Susan Hawick A.M

## VICTORIA BRANCH

### CHAIR FRED HARRINGTON O.A.M.'S REPORT

I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend the two investiture services for King's Birthday Honours recipients conducted in September by the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardener A.C. Over the two investitures, 170

recipients were acknowledged and received their medals. Investitures are always

enjoyable days and provide the opportunity to meet new recipients.

Our Vic Branch End of Year Dinner was held on Thursday 20 November at the Stamford Plaza Melbourne and was well attended by members and guests, Guest speakers were Georgina Gubbin O.A.M and O.A.A Foundation Scholarship recipient Ayman Miaizi.

The next Vic Branch event is the *Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians Oration* being held on Friday 20 March 2026 at Angliss Conference Centre in Melbourne C.B.D. Kathryn Fagg A.C will deliver the Oration. In addition, O.A.A Foundation Scholarship recipient Chelsea Allen will provide an update on her journey following receipt of her Foundation scholarship. At the conclusion of the Oration refreshments will be served and the Vic Branch Annual General Meeting will be held. Full details will be provided closer to the event.

The Vic Branch and Regional Groups have started planning and setting dates for events in 2026. Please ensure you keep up to date with all Victorian events through the website [www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/](http://www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/).

As our year draws to a close, I thank the Vic Branch committee and all Regional Group committees for their support and particularly as they ensured our members were provided with a wide range of events and activities throughout 2025.

On behalf of the Vic Branch committee, I offer our best wishes to all members and their families and loved ones for a joyful and relaxing festive season over Christmas and New Year. Please stay safe. We look forward to catching up with you in 2026.

## **FEATURED MEMBER**

### **JOHN ROBINSON O.A.M**

The awarding of the Order of Australia medal in 2025 to John Robinson O.A.M is an acknowledgement of service to the community of Victoria.

Among John's various roles are his work as Founding Honorary Chairman, WestVic Helicopter Rescue Service (now HEMS 4 - Warrnambool, Victorian Ambulance Service), 1996-2008 and Founder and Leader, District 5 Aviation Unit, Country Fire Authority, 2011-2014.

John has always drawn on lessons from his experiences as a member of Victoria Police (including Police Inspector, Warrnambool), flying planes in the Royal Airforce, and growing up on a farm in Horsham. These have shaped his unwavering commitment to community and his ability to cut through bureaucratic red tape to get things done for the community.

He recalls that, one night, he woke up at 4.30a.m thinking of the bushfire situation

in Mallacoota. His concern focused on the elderly, young, people with disabilities and others overcome by fear who would find it difficult to access evacuation arrangements in a timely way. He knew aviation had a role to play and by 6.30am he had written up his plan and submitted it early that morning to critical incident control. What followed was a flurry of activity as he assembled his former networks in offshore gas supply entities, RAF and volunteers to take helicopters and planes into the beachside town ready to move in as soon as the heavy smoke cleared.

John remembers being flown by police helicopter to Mallacoota and looking across the landscape identifying and reporting fires from Bairnsdale to Mallacoota, "There was one long line of fires which, it was clear, was forming into one hellish fire. I have never seen anything like it – and hope never to again," he says.

John's community contributions span many roles, formal and informal. He was a member of the Australian Institute of Emergency Services; Board Member, Brophy Family and Youth Services, 2005-2014; Member, Community Advisory Committee, 2002-2009 and Life Member; Board Member, Southern Way Direct Care Service, 2010-2012; Founder and Honorary Chairman, Australian Bravery Foundation since 2011; Founding Member, Bravery Institute of Australia, since 2014; and, Past National President, Australian Bravery Association, 2005-2010. John has certainly gone above and beyond over decades to make a difference in numerous sectors and communities.

John's ability to understand the nature of people and establish impactful community interventions led him to be a Founding Member of the Koori Court in Victoria in 2000. He was initiated as an 'Uncle' in the Kirrae Wurrung community, since 2005. As a proud Gunditjmara man, John understands the significance of this important recognition.

Uncle John realised that the justice system was failing young Aboriginal people. He and his wife embarked on research into models for Indigenous communities in South Australia and globally. He became the advocate for establishing a Koori Court system in Victoria, pounding on government doors to ensure it happened. The first Koori Court was set up in Shepparton. Uncle John is particularly concerned that young people, from all backgrounds, should be provided with the guidance and support they need, as can be seen through his community service roles.

Uncle John has been a recipient of various awards in recognition of his commitment to service, for instance, the Bravery Medal, 1998, 'for participating in the removal of four aircraft at an air show, after a bomb threat'; the National Police Service Medal and VicPol Ethical and Diligent Service Medal (35 year clasp); and the CFA Service Award Medal (35 year clasp).

When asked about his motivation for his long commitment to community service, he explains simply that that is how he was brought up. He grew up in Horsham and there he was part of a collective effort. "When one farmer had a heart attack

during harvest season, we all got together and took care of his harvest,” he says. “The women ensured the family had food and were taken care of. That is how it was”.

John’s service to the C.F.A has also spanned decades. He went out to his first fire with the local C.F.A as a 13 year-old. His job was to cut wire fencing so that the sheep could escape the approaching flames of an out-of-control fire.

At 16, John formally joined the C.F.A which led to a 39 year-long commitment. He soon realised that the C.F.A did not have an aviation ‘brigade’ so he drew on his experiences to address this gap. “The farmers were good at handling the equipment. They knew how to use pumps, so training was fairly easy”.

John is proud and pleased to have been awarded the O.A.M. He insists, however, that it belongs to all that have contributed alongside him. He says, “life is a team effort”. Particularly special to that team effort is his wife, Sue Alt O.A.M, a 2018 Australia Day recipient *for service to the community through voluntary roles*. As a team they have worked together, often in the same organisation, focused on the same causes.

Today they have ‘retired’ to their small farm outside Warrnambool which “seems to attract rescue animals”, but they remain active members of the community.

## U.K/EUROPE GROUP

### CHAIR CAROLINE HOFFMAN O.A.M.’S REPORT

#### **Celebrating 50 years of the Order of Australia in London, UK**

U.K/Europe group members of the O.A.A and their guests gathered on a mild autumn evening in a private dining room in Belgravia, London, on 16 October 2025 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Order of Australia.

It was a joyful occasion with members and their guests coming from as far afield as France, Monaco, Luxembourg as well as different parts of the U.K. It was a pleasure to see not only members who have been involved in the O.A.A for several decades but also new members of the Association attending an event for the first time.

The Chair, Dr Caroline Hoffman O.A.M, welcomed guests on this special occasion, reminding them of the origins of the Order of Australia 50 years ago under the Royal Patronage of the Late Queen Elizabeth II. She read a message of good wishes sent by the current Patron, King Charles III. This was followed by a Toast to His Majesty The King and then to The Order of Australia.

During an excellent dinner, lively discussions took place recalling what the group has achieved over many years and how it has more recently widened its

activities beyond London and the U.K to France, where two events have been held in Paris in the last 18 months. The wonderful members who are no longer with us were also remembered.



The photo shows (L-R): David Milligan O.A.M, Kathleen Smalley, William Smalley, Anna Stanley, Dr Margaret Humphreys C.B.E A.O, Dr Caroline Hoffman O.A.M, Veronica Comyn A.M, Penelope Thwaites A.M, Richard York O.A.M, Heather Hogan, James Hogan A.O

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### CHAIR JUDY HOGBEN O.A.M.'S REPORT

The end of winter and the start of spring always heralds a time for refreshment and a reset – the opportunity for both reflection and to incorporate this into the planning for the new year; and so it has been in the W.A Branch of the Order of Australia Association. The analysis of the national survey and the need to develop the business

plan and budget for the forthcoming year provided the ideal backdrop to this reflection and development of future Branch directions.

There is no doubt that events such as our annual dinner are highly successful. The combination of socialising, keynote speaker, good food and a great venue combine to produce a much-anticipated evening in our calendar of events. This year's keynote speaker was the State's Governor, His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson A.C A.P.M who gave a fascinating talk, including personal insights and the importance of ongoing commitment to service. Both the survey and verbal feedback reinforce the importance of including some more formal social events such as the annual dinner.

The importance of regional events and the connections that they enable was also highlighted at the recent South West organised lunch at Busselton. More

than 70 people attended the lunch at the newly finished Hilton. The atmosphere of warmth and friendship was evident to all. Regional events are often hard for the volunteers to put together, and the WA Branch's business plan highlights that ongoing support is planned.

The analysis of the 2025 national survey showed that a diverse range of events and offerings would be most welcomed. Along these lines the WA Branch held its first Sundowner, featuring Professor Kingsley Dixon A.O F.T.S.E as keynote speaker. It was a wonderful success and more sundowners and events at varying times of the day will be organised.

The Police Patron's Cadets' Lunch for patrons will be held on 14 November. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Police Patron's Scheme which is a signatory programme for the W.A Branch and, while the lunch is restricted to patrons, it will be a fitting way to celebrate the cadets' achievements, the contribution of patrons and the ongoing value of the scheme. Christmas Dinner will close off the Branch's activities for 2025.

## EVENTS

### KING'S BIRTHDAY AWARDEES' RECEPTION

The City of Canning made us very welcome when they hosted the 2025 King's Birthday Honours Reception on a beautiful winter evening. Judy Hogben A.M, Chair of the WA Branch, welcomed all the dignitaries and especially the new recipients and their guests. The Mayor, Patrick Hall, also welcomed everyone, including the Mayor of Gosnells, Teresa Lynes, Deputy Mayor and Councillors. He pointed out the importance of voluntary work in the community and how "Life lived for others is worthwhile." Fourteen new Recipients attended; the ages ranged from the youngest, Scott Guerini O.A.M, age 19 years, and the oldest, Marjorie Jessie Baker, age 95! Those present came from near and far, locally and from around the state. (a local from Gosnells, and country: Esperance and Woodanilling). Their citations were varied and comprehensive in so many different fields of endeavour. All had gone above and beyond what is expected. MAJ GEN Barry Nunn A.O R.F.D E.D (Retd), National Chair, congratulated the recipients and noted that these awards are a team effort and he thanked and congratulated the "ground crew, family, friends and co-workers." Barry recommended joining the Order of Australia Association, which will be 50 years old in five years' time and has more than 8,000 Members. A delicious supper was served after the formalities.

## FEATURED MEMBER

**SCOTT GUERINI O.A.M: "DID YOU KNOW, YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD"**

Scott Guerini is only 19 years old. His citation reads, *for service to the community through charitable organisations.*

'Scott's Great Walk for Telethon' was founded in 2010 when Scott was just four years old.

A lesson at kindergarten in Southern Cross triggered his wish to raise money for babies and sick children. He started walking from the family farm to the nearest town 25 km away. In those days, he would sit at a table in the town asking passers-by to sponsor him. For three years, Scott walked 25 km and then progressed to annual marathons of 42+ km, treadmill challenges of 50km (2017 – 2025) and in 2016 completed the 82km Berg Lake Trail in the Canadian Rockies. Through these amazing feats, Scott raises money for his Telethon, now using posts on social media and online donations.

Scott has been a motivational speaker since 2015, a podcaster and author. In 2017, he wrote a book entitled: *Did you know, you can change the world.*

Living in the country has not been easy for Scott. He has a younger brother with autism. The family bought a house in Alkimos, that was only just developing as a northern township, 43 km from the city of Perth. At the age of seven, Scott attended a nearby school, and his brother was able to access the specialist therapy unavailable locally in Southern Cross, 401km east of Alkimos.

The family would be together for school holidays only, with father managing the family farm.

At present Scott is in his second year at Edith Cowan University, where he is studying cyber security online. He works part-time on the family farm, with frequent visits to Perth.



Photo of Scott Guerini O.A.M

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY CHAIR ANDREW PHELAN A.M's REPORT

On 20 August, we held our annual Student Citizenship Awards evening, and I had the great privilege of hosting Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn A.C, Governor-General of Australia and Patron of the Order of Australia Association, who addressed the evening and presented awards to an exceptional group of Canberra students. The evening celebrated young people who embody the values of citizenship, service and leadership through fundraising, volunteering, music, coaching, tutoring and developing programmes that enrich the lives of others. The evening highlighted the positive impact young Canberrans are making in our community, with the strong support of their families, schools and education sectors.

Our Spring New Recipient Reception on 1 October was a wonderful celebration of outstanding Australian citizenship by 16 new recipients from the 2025 King's Birthday list and another from the 2025 Australia Day list, along with their families, members and guests. It was particularly pleasing to see several new recipients join our Association as members.

On 22 October, Emeritus Professor Mark Howden A.C gave the 2025 Australian National University Order of Australia Lecture on the topic, 'Go hard or go slow on climate change? What's in the national interest?' His presentation was not only timely and thought-provoking but also deeply grounded in decades of scientific rigour, policy engagement and public service, offering a much-needed lens through which to understand the complex and often polarised public discourse surrounding Australia's climate trajectory.

We have several important events over November: the Branch Committee staffed a stall at the Government House Open Day on 1 November; Chief of Defence Force, Admiral David Johnston A.C R.A.N will deliver the OAA-Australian Defence Force Oration at Russell on 25 November, addressing our national defence strategy, transformation of capabilities and defence culture; and finally we will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Australian honours and awards system with a lunch on Thursday 27 November, at which our Branch Patron, Dr Sue Packer A.O, will speak.

Once again, I thank all the members of the A.C.T Branch committee for their great voluntary work in organising Branch events and administering the Branch's affairs.

### EVENTS

#### **ACT STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AWARDS – WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST 2025**

Around 130 members, friends, school children and their families and school officials celebrated the outstanding community service of winners in our 2025 A.C.T Student

Citizenship Awards at the Royal Canberra Golf Club. We were privileged to have Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn A.C, Governor-General of Australia and Patron of the Order of Australia Association present the awards to the students.

The Branch extends thanks to the Student Citizenship Awards judging panel, Julie Long O.A.M, Dr Joseph Johnson C.S.C, O.A.M, A.A.M and Professor Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt A.O. Her Excellency presented 19 Citizenship awards to students ranging from year 3 to year 12. These included Medallions, Highly Commended Awards, Commended Awards and Group Awards.

Diya Sreesan – Year 12, St Clare’s College 2025, was honoured with the A.C.T Branch of the Order of Australia Medallion Award for Exceptional Citizenship, Leadership and Achievement. Diya is a dedicated leader known for her empathy and commitment to social justice. She organised the World’s Greatest Shave at St Clare’s, raising \$20,000 for blood cancer support, and started the Walk for Life to promote organ donation awareness among students. As a college tour guide and school representative, she advocates for learning and service. Diya’s strong communication skills and active involvement in school events inspire others and exemplify positive leadership.



The photo shows Student Citizenship Award winners with Her Excellency the Governor-General and Branch Committee members. Photo courtesy the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### CHAIR JOHN GULLOTTA A.M’S REPORT

It has been a very busy time for the Branch over the past few months. We attended the King’s Birthday 2025 investitures at Government House Sydney. It

was heart-warming and very moving to see awardees from all walks of life in a myriad of diversity and different professions, being acknowledged for many decades of hard work serving our community. The citations were a testament to their dedication in promoting Australian citizenship in all fields. On behalf of the N.S.W Branch committee, I would like to congratulate all new K.B.25 awardees, and I hope you join the Association and become involved in our events and activities.

On 22 August 2025, we held our Annual Youth Community Service Awards Presentation Ceremony at Government House Sydney. Our Patron and N.S.W Governor, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley A.C K.C, hosted the awards and acknowledged the contribution of 25 N.S.W high school children, and presented them with a special certificate and trophy.

This year we held a combined luncheon for both Australia Day 2025 and Kings Birthday 2025 new recipients at N.S.W Parliament House on Friday 19 September 2025, with 150 attendees. This was a great opportunity for new recipients to celebrate with their guests and family and meet fellow new recipients with great networking and camaraderie!

On 26 October 2025, we held a special Art and Opera event in conjunction with the Paddington Art Prize. My thanks to Marlene Antico O.A.M, Founder of the Paddington Art Prize, for her support and generosity.

It is pleasing to see that our membership is slowly increasing. There has been increased diversity in our new recipients as well as a close match now in gender. It is pleasing that our Governor-General has recently streamlined the nominations process which should shorten the time from nomination to award and hopefully decrease the number of posthumous awards given to family members which is very sad to witness.

Several of our Regional Groups have been very active in arranging local functions which are generally well attended. For groups that need some extra help, we shall be arranging meetings in our major regional hubs to assist them, as it is my aim as NSW Chair to visit as many Regional Groups as I can.

The no-cost member forums to enable some events to be affordable and accessible to all our members should be launched in 2026.

On 22 July 2025, the N.S.W Branch celebrated 45 years, and we have arranged a special celebratory Long Lunch on 6 December 2025 to commemorate this milestone in conjunction with our Christmas event. I look forward to seeing you all at our upcoming events.

On behalf of the Branch committee and members of the N.S.W Branch, I wish you all a Joyful and Merry Christmas, and we send our best wishes for the new year.

## EVENTS

### **2025 Youth Community Service Awards**

On 22 August 2025 we held our Annual Youth Community Service Awards Presentation Ceremony at Government House Sydney. Our Patron and N.S.W Governor, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley A.C K.C, hosted the awards and acknowledged the contribution of 26 N.S.W Year 11 and 12 High School Children and presented them with a special certificate and trophy. Our special thanks go to our Convenor, Dr Frank Kelleher O.A.M for successfully organising and guiding these awards over the past nine years. The N.S.W Branch is committed to promoting and recognising the inspirational achievements and exceptional community service of our youth. The citations are certainly true inspiration to us all.

The O.A.A Youth Community Service Award is conducted annually by the N.S.W Branch of the Order of Australia Association and recognises community service by individual students that would not normally be recognised by their school systems, which usually reward academic, sporting and leadership achievements. It recognises the significant service performed by students beyond their school boundaries in the wider community. This is in the areas of Campaigning and Fundraising, Mentoring and Volunteering.

The Award was initiated in 1992 by Dr John Lincoln A.M and first offered in 1993. It has been offered each year since then (except in 2020 due to Covid). 2025 marks the 31st year of the awards.



Photo of the student awardees with the Governor and N.S.W Branch committee members at Government House Sydney

### **2025 New Recipients Luncheon at N.S.W Parliament House**

This year we held a combined luncheon for both Australia Day 2025 and Kings Birthday 2025 New Recipients at N.S.W Parliament House on Friday 19 September 2025 with 150 attendees including 67 new recipients. This was a great opportunity

for new recipients to celebrate with their guests and family and meet fellow new recipients with great networking and camaraderie!

In his opening address, N.S.W Chair, Dr John Gullotta A.M said, *This event is an opportunity for our Association to celebrate your great achievements.*

*Every year I am truly amazed by the extremely high calibre of recipients that are honored and all of you here today are certainly no exception. You come from all walks of life, a myriad of professions and of course the quiet achievers working away in your local communities especially in rural and remote parts of N.S.W.*

*All of you have an unique and special story that you should be very proud of and that we acknowledge and honour here today.*

*As you all know, membership is the lifeblood of any organization. So if you are not a member of the association please join so you can help us “to celebrate and promote outstanding citizenship!”*

Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua M.P, member for Drummoyne and temporary speaker of the N.S.W Legislative Assembly was our Parliamentary Host and Ms Sally Loane A.M, Chair Destination N.S.W & Ignition Advice and 2025 New Recipient was our guest speaker.

## THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION

### Report from Foundation Chair Dr Helen Nugent A.C

#### **2025 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES: AN EXTRAORDINARY COHORT**

On 26 September 2025, Her Excellency, the Governor-General graciously and generously hosted the six 2025 Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship winners at Government House, Canberra. After attending by invitation the morning investiture for the Order of Australia, the awardees engaged with Her Excellency at a Round Table Conference, before being honoured with a guided tour of Government House. The day provided them with a lifetime of memories.

While Her Excellency recognized and applauded the distinctive academic and community contribution of each awardee, she insightfully identified common themes that underpinned their success to date and their vision for the future.

**Their aspiration to make a difference to Australia’s future in non-traditional and traditional areas shone through.** Jake Barnett, undertaking a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) with a major in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Western Australia, is committed to tackling the big problem of renewables, potentially exploring the possibility of wave energy. Zeph Hardie specializing in computer and software systems, while undertaking a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at the Queensland University of Technology, aspires to branch into neuromorphic computer research (where chips and sensors reflect the structure and function of the human brain).

Ockert Visser, in his second year of a Bachelor of Advanced Computer Science (Honours) at the University of Western Australia wants to pursue a career in Quantum Computing. Nazia Safdari, who is undertaking a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and a Bachelor of Business Management at the University of Queensland, wants to give back to disadvantaged and underrepresented communities by becoming a human rights lawyer, possibly becoming a Protection Officer with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Miriam Grice, who is undertaking a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours) at the University of Queensland, is committed to making a major difference to improve mental health services in rural and regional Australia. And Isum Malawaraarachchi wants to work in Emergency Medicine after he completes his Bachelor of Medical Studies at Bond University.

**They identified the key role played by their family in shaping who they are and their vision for the future.** For instance, Isum is determined to live a life with purpose in emergency medicine after witnessing the commitment of a doctor who went out of his way to treat his mother when she was ill. Nazia's human rights commitment was driven by her family's experience fleeing from Afghanistan and then Pakistan because they were Hazara's. And Miriam's commitment to regional mental health has been influenced by her observations of suicide arising from the geographic reach of her father's ministry in Inverell, Geraldton and Rockhampton, as well as by her deep and abiding Christian faith.

**Their academic excellence was recognized with the award.** Each awardee has achieved superior academic results and a Grade Point Average of well above 6 out of 7. This includes Isum's achieving straight High Distinctions and being placed each semester on the Vice Chancellor's list for Academic Excellence, and Jake's receiving straight high distinctions in all but one subject in his degree.

**Their superior leadership and their community commitment was acknowledged with the award.** For example, Miriam, Isum and Ockert have all been school captains in various guises. Jake has given back to the community as a volunteer to the W.A Rogaining Association, while he has shown dedication to music through his involvement with endeavours as diverse as ensembles involving gamelon, the saron and as the bass player in a band. Miriam has been awarded an Australian Olympic Change Maker Award for exceptional leadership and an outstanding contribution to regional sport, especially female-focused cricket programs in Central Queensland. Zeph is an accomplished swimmer, musician and an active member of the Q.U.T Robotics team. Isum was a member of his School's 1<sup>st</sup> eight rowing crew; became a football referee in Victoria, officiating as part of the referee academy; and has raised funds for the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal. He has also been active in helping aspiring students prepare to gain access to medicine. Nazia volunteers at her local mosque and has been assisting recently arrived families navigate the intricacies of integrating into their new life. Ockert volunteers as a Rugby Union Referee and has

been actively involved with Surf Life Saving.

**Each awardee expressed their profound gratitude to the Scholarship donors.** Jake's scholarship was awarded by the Goodeve Foundation; Miriam's by the Order of Australia Association; Zeph's by the late and hugely respected Mrs Angela Wheelton O.A.M D.S.J and Ms Beverley Pinder O.A.M; Isum's by Dr Helen Nugent A.C, the Chair of the Order of Australia Association Foundation, and previous Chancellor of Bond University; Nazia's by the Order of Australia Association Foundation from its endowment, reflecting a previous significant anonymous donation; and Ockert's by the McCusker Charitable Foundation.

**In turn, each awardee looks forward to the financial and other benefits provided by the Scholarship.** Each scholarship is worth \$45,000, paid in equal instalments over two years. The first instalment has been made. This will go some way to alleviate the financial pressures facing each awardee. In turn, the Foundation is in the process of identifying a mentor who will be able to assist each awardee with their career ambition. Their mentors will be announced in the near term.

This cohort of six worthy participants brings to 66 the number of Scholarships that the Foundation has awarded. The Governor-General will present this year's Scholars with their certificates at the Brisbane Annual Dinner of the Order of Australia Association on 18 April 2026.

-ENDS-