



Queensland Branch **ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

Presented by Mrs Ronda L. Nix OAM, Chair, Queensland Branch



Happy 50th (Golden) Anniversary to The Order of Australia 1975-2025

Main photo - At the Cutting of the Anniversary Cake ceremony at Tattersalls Club, Brisbane at the special Gala Dinner on Monday 11 June 2025. From L-R – Mrs Nina Schrinmer, Lady Mayoress of Brisbane; Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP, Deputy Premier of Queensland; Mrs Ronda Nix OAM Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch and Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland - Full story on page 11

46th Annual General Meeting Monday 16 March 2026

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

To celebrate and promote outstanding Australian citizenship'

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



Contents

1. Summary	3
2. Queensland Branch Committee 2025	4
3. Queensland Branch Annual Dinner 2025.....	6
4. Queensland Branch Celebratory functions to Welcome 2025 Award Recipients.....	8
5. Gala Dinner celebrating 50 th anniversary of The Order of Australia & King's Birthday....	11
6. Members' Fellowship Christmas Lunch.....	14
7. Queensland Regional Groups – 2025 Conveners.....	15
8. Queensland Regional Groups – 2025 Functions	17
9. Queensland Branch 2025 Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards	22
10. Queensland Branch 2025 Senior Volunteer Awards.....	24
11. Government House Activities	25
12. Queensland Branch Communications.....	27
13. Queensland Branch Activity at the National Level	29
14. Membership Trends	30
15. Queensland Branch Chair's Closing Remarks	31
Appendix A - Membership Trends -Statistics – Award recipients 2022 to 2025.....	35
Appendix B - Honours and Citations – Committee and Regional Group Conveners.....	38

1. Summary

It is with great pleasure that I present the forty-fifth Annual Report of the Queensland Branch of The Order of Australia Association, as Branch Chair.

It has been an extremely busy year in 2025 with a great variety of events organized by a hard working Queensland Branch Committee, as well as some excellent functions organized by our regional groups throughout the State. Indeed, the Queensland Branch Committee has been working particularly hard throughout the year with the added responsibility of organizing and planning for the 38th National Conference in Brisbane with limited lead time.

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

- The Annual Dinner following the AGM on Monday 17 March at Kedron Wavell Services Club, with *Mrs Jenny Woodward OAM*, Australia's longest serving television weather presenter as the guest speaker.
- The Welcome Celebratory Dinner for award recipients in the 2025 Australia Day Honours held at Kedron Wavell Services Club on Tuesday 29 April just prior to the National Conference in Sydney;
- A most memorable "Once in a Lifetime" Black Tie Gala Dinner to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of The Order of Australia and the King's Birthday at the Tattersall's Club in Brisbane on Monday 9 June. The special guests were *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland and her husband *Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD*; *The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP*, Deputy Premier of Queensland; and *Mrs Nina Schinner*, the Lady Mayoress of Brisbane.
- The Annual Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards Presentation at Parliament House, Brisbane on Friday 19 September, attended for the first time by *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeanette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland.
- The Welcome Celebratory Dinner for award recipients in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours held at Kedron Wavell Services Club on Thursday 11 September; and
- A first time Members' Fellowship Christmas Lunch held at Wynnum Manly Leagues Club, Manly West, Brisbane on Wednesday 26 November with *Pastor Linda Sivyer OAM* – our inspirational guest speaker.

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

Additionally, our regional groups across Queensland arranged eleven entertaining and interesting functions throughout the year, comprising seven lunches, two morning teas, a mayoral reception and a dinner. Members enjoyed hearing from some fabulous guest speakers at these functions. Reports on all eleven functions are included in greater detail later in this report commencing on [page 17](#).

The total number of bookings received for the combined Queensland Branch functions in the metro area and the eleven regional group functions was 1265, marginally more than last year with 1205 bookings. The six metro functions totalled 788 bookings and the ten regional group functions 477. Achieving this has been a collective job well done by the Queensland Branch Committee and the Regional Conveners and I thank all who contributed to this success.

The Branch continued using the Humanitix online booking platform in 2025 for all functions organized, both metro and regional. Members have found the system easy to navigate and it is now our system of choice for members registering for our functions.

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

2. Queensland Branch Committee 2025

The following members of the Association were elected or re-elected under their three year terms to the Branch Committee at the 45th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on **Monday 17 March 2025**.

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

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

- *Mr Kelvin Brown OAM* (Merchandise Officer)
- *Mrs Irene Cayas OAM* (Multicultural and Diversity Officer)
- *Ms Kate Copeland AM ** (Newsletter editor since September 2025)
- *Mr Geoff Cowles OAM* (Awards and Metro Events Coordinator and Queensland Branch Webmaster)
- *Mrs Jenny Gregory OAM **
- *Mr Graham Hyde OAM* (Newsletter Editor – until September 2025)
- *Ms Paula Penfold AM* (Queensland Branch Nominated Director on the National Board)
- *Mr Darryl Seccombe OAM* (Regional Groups Coordinator)

* *Ms Kate Copeland AM* and *Mrs Jenny Gregory OAM* were elected for a three year term for the first time. Kate and Jenny filled the two positions on the Committee that became vacant with the retirement of *Marjorie Voss OAM* and *Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ*.

Both Marjorie and Peter were thanked for their long service on the Committee and a special presentation was made to both at the Annual Dinner that followed the AGM.

The 2025 Queensland Branch Committee



From L-R

Kate Copeland AM

Kelvin Brown OAM

Geoff Cowles OAM

Robyn Porter OAM (Secretary)

Dr Mick Davis AM ASM (Deputy Chair)

Jenny Gregory OAM

Darryl Seccombe OAM

Ronda Nix OAM (Chair)

Dr Dennis Young AM (Treasurer)

Irene Cayas OAM

Paula Penfold AM

Absent from photo -*Graham Hyde*

OAM – see inset below



With the Queensland Branch having agreed to host the 38th National Conference of The Order of Australia Association in 2026, the Branch Committee appointed a Conference Committee to organize the planning for the Conference. The Conference Committee comprised members of the Branch Committee and the following additional appointed Queensland Branch members – *Rhonda Weston AM* from Toowoomba; *Marjorie Voss OAM* from Bribie Island; *John Clark OAM* from Brisbane (formerly Charters Towers) and *David Kerrigan AM* from Barcaldine. *Rhonda Weston* agreed to take on the important role of Secretary of the Conference Committee, which allowed our elected Branch Secretary *Robyn Porter OAM* to devote her time fully to administering the affairs of the Queensland Branch, without adding Conference Committee tasks to her portfolio. I am very grateful to the Branch Committee members for taking on the extra workload involved in organizing the Conference and also I thank the additional Queensland Branch members for putting up their hand to assist.

During 2025 the Branch Committee members were involved in 21 meetings (11 Branch Committee plus 10 Conference Committee). Most of the meetings were conducted by Zoom for convenience with only 5 face-to-face. In the latter half of 2025 it was agreed that the Branch Committee and Conference Committee Zoom meetings would be held on the same afternoon – the Conference Committee meeting first followed by the Branch Committee. This arrangement had a two-fold advantage as Branch Committee members avoided meeting twice on different days and the non-Branch Committee members on the Conference Committee did not have to travel to Brisbane for face-to-face meetings. All meetings were well attended, with the business of the meeting dealt with expeditiously with positive outcomes.

The honours and citations for each Committee member are listed in **Appendix B** on **page 38**.

3. Queensland Branch Annual Dinner 2025

One hundred and fifteen guests attended a most memorable and enjoyable Annual Dinner on **Monday 17 March 2025** in the Blue Pacific Ballroom at Kedron Wavell Services Club in Brisbane. Everyone present enjoyed good fellowship in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The previous 2024 Annual Dinner attracted 101 guests. To have 14 more attendees was a pleasing outcome.

A well attended Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Queensland Branch in the VC Suite preceded the Dinner.



Our Guest speaker *Jenny Woodward OAM* (left) with *Dina Browne AO*, the interviewer.

The Branch Committee always aims to attract good guest speakers at each Annual Dinner. This year it was the turn of *Jenny Woodward OAM*, credited with being Australia's longest serving television weather presenter. Jenny was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2024 Australia Day Honours for service to the broadcast media, particularly to television. Jenny began her television career at Channel 10/4/5a in Toowoomba where she produced and directed children's programmes, variety shows and special events and was also a newsreader and weather presenter. In the early 1980s she moved to Brisbane and joined Channel 7. There she was the assistant producer of the award winning children's program "Wombat" and co-authored "The Wombat Book". Since joining ABC News in 1986 as the weeknight weather reporter, Jenny has presented the weather from across the State. She is well known for her colourfully entertaining reports from the Brisbane Ekka surrounded by a menagerie of animals of all shapes and sizes.

Jenny chose to be different to past Annual Dinner guest speakers, opting for an informal interview. The interviewer was our own *Dina Browne AO*, who herself was heavily involved in children's television and who has known *Jenny Woodward OAM* for many years. The interview was bright and breezy and very informative and also featured a great Q and A session from members afterwards.



At the Dinner three outstanding Queensland senior volunteers (*Dennis Cayas* from East Brisbane; *Kerry Devine* from Bundaberg and *Jill Williams* from Barcaldine) were recognized with a Queensland Branch Senior Volunteer Award. Dennis and Kerry were present to receive their award from *Michael Rayner AM* representing Blight Rayner Architecture, the

award sponsor). Jill could not be present at the Dinner so *Sean Williams*, one of Jill William's sons accepted the award on Jill's behalf from *Michael Rayner AM*.



Displaying their appreciation plaques are *Marjorie Voss OAM* (left) and *Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ*

At the Dinner I presented Commemorative Plaques of Appreciation to two retiring members on the Queensland Branch Committee – *Marjorie Voss OAM* and *Peter McMurtrie AO KStJ*. Marjorie joined the Committee in 2015 and was also the Convener of the Sunshine Coast Regional Group from September 2017 to February 2024. Peter joined as a Committee member in 2014. His term also included six years as the Queensland Branch Nominated Director on the National Board. Both Marjorie and Peter made valuable contributions to the running of the Queensland Branch and I thank them both for their excellent service and wish them well in their retirement from the Branch Committee. – Marjorie, however, has chosen to continue to serve the Queensland Branch and lend us her organizational experience as a member of the Brisbane 2026 National Conference Committee, which we appreciate.



Top left –“Table 13” guests at the Dinner clockwise from front - *Kathy Wooldridge OAM*; *Dr Cheryl Hayden*; *Professor Paul Stevenson OAM*; *Mary Mennis MBE*; *Professor Colin Mackerras AO*; *Desley Miller OAM*; *Adele Rice AM* and *Peter Wooldridge*.

Top Right – Regional Group representation at the Dinner – from L-R *John Hardy OAM* (Far North Qld); *Grant Cassidy OAM* (Central Qld); *Carmel Daveson AM* (Whitsunday-Isaac-Mackay); and *David Jackson OAM* (Townsville) with *Darryl Seccombe OAM* (Qld Branch Regional Group Coordinator-Brisbane) (far right).



Bottom left - The happy Dennis Cayas (Senior Volunteer Awardee) party enjoying a moment in front of the Association Banner at the Dinner. Dennis is fifth from the left and his wife *Irene Cayas OAM* (Queensland Branch Committee member) is by his side (fourth from left).

4. Queensland Branch Celebratory functions to welcome 2025 Award Recipients

Two successful Dinners were organized around the time of the investitures of new awardees held at Government House, Brisbane – Tuesday 29 April 2025 for Australia Day Award Recipients and Thursday 11 September 2025 for King’s Birthday Award Recipients.

While the number of new award recipients in attendance at these functions was lower than in previous years it needs to be pointed out that there were substantially less Queenslanders receiving awards in 2025 to draw upon, compared with the previous year (119 in 2025; 167 in 2024).

4.1 The Welcome Dinner to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2025 Australia Day Honours – Tuesday 29 April 2025

Eighteen of 58 living Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards from the Australia Day Honours (31%) were special guests at the Dinner on **Tuesday 29 April 2025** in the Blue Pacific Room, Kedron Wavell Services Club, Chermside, Brisbane. There were 160 guests present, including recipients, their families & friends and 30 Association members and their guests.

Achieving 31 per cent of the award recipients accepting our invitation to our welcome celebratory dinner was still a good outcome when you compare the figures for the equivalent function held last year on 14 May. At the 2024 function 21 of 94 award recipients attended (22.3% of the total award recipients).

It was a privilege to be at the 2025 function to welcome the Order of Australia award recipients in attendance, and to celebrate their fine achievements leading to their awards. Their achievements, from a perusal of their citations, were diverse and varied. Collectively these wonderful Queenslanders have made an outstanding contribution to their communities and to our Nation. Our sincere congratulations to them all.



Portion of the 160 guests that attended the Welcome Celebratory Dinner on 29 April 2025 for the 2025 Australia Day Award Recipients

Australia
Day 2025
awardees



Our eighteen outstanding new award recipients on parade.

Back row standing from L-R

Dr Alex Moule AM - for significant service to dentistry as a clinician and academic, and to professional associations

Daryl Scott AM - for significant service to youth in leadership roles, and to the community

Dr Catherine Lawrence OAM - for service to tertiary education.

Keith Boulton OAM - for service to community, particularly through history preservation.

Dr Harley Juffs OAM - for service to the community through a range of roles.

Madonna McKenna OAM - for service to netball as an administrator, and to the community.

Dr Andre Conradie OAM - for service to medicine, and to community health.

Wendy Paterson OAM - for service to community health.

Lloyd Clarke OAM - for service to domestic violence support and welfare.

Natasha Johnston OAM - for service to the community through drought relief.

Pamela Hamilton-Smith OAM - for service to basketball as a coach and player.

Stevan Ober OAM - for service to the community, particularly through First Nations health.

Russell Postle AM - for significant service to community health, the accountancy profession, and to the community.

Front row – seated from L-R

Beverley Smith OAM - for service to the museums and galleries sector.

Melissa McGuinness OAM - for service to the community, particularly youth.

Pam Tranter OAM - for service to the community of Redland City.

Ronda Nix OAM – Chair, The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch

Saba Abraham OAM- for service to the Eritrean and African communities of Australia.

Suzanne Clarke OAM - for service to domestic violence support and welfare.

4.2 The Welcome Dinner to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours – Thursday 11 September 2025

Twelve of 61 living Queensland recipients of Order of Australia Awards from the King's Birthday Honours (19.7%) were special guests at the Dinner Reception on **Thursday 11 September 2025** in the Blue Pacific Room, Kedron Wavell Services Club, Chermside, Brisbane. There were 135 guests present, including recipients, their families & friends and 31 Association members and their guests.

At the equivalent function held the previous year on 19 September 2024 there were 18 of 71 award recipients present and there was a bumper near record attendance of 255 guests. While it was highly unlikely this time round, that we would replicate such an attendance as last year, the final number that attended the 2025 function of 135 guests was still very acceptable.

While the number of award recipients being welcomed at the dinner 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.



King's
Birthday
2025
awardees

“A Dynamic Dozen” – the King's Birthday Award Recipients with Queensland Branch Chair

Back rows standing from L to R

The Late Greg Rollason OAM - for service to the community of Moreton Bay.

Dr John Healy AM - for significant service to medicine as a practitioner and researcher.

Shirley Russell AM -for significant service to rugby union as a player, coach and volunteer.

Dr Karin Walduck OAM – for service to community hockey.

Warrant Officer Tony Croft OAM - for meritorious service in support of Australian Army Aviation.

Professor Lewis Perrin OAM - for service to gynaecological oncology.

Associate Professor David Rimmer OAM for service to rural and remote medicine.

Farouk Adam OAM – for service to the Muslim community of Queensland.

Naomichi Hirano OAM - for service to the Japanese community of Queensland..

Robert Craig OAM - for service to the communities of Queensland.

Front row seated from L to R

Rose Nairn OAM - for service to the communities of Canberra and Batemans Bay.

Ronda L Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair

Lorna Heaslop OAM - for service to medicine, and to the community

5. Gala Black Tie Dinner to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of The Order of Australia and the King's Birthday [Our Cover Story]



One hundred and fifty-seven guests attended and thoroughly enjoyed the Queensland Branch's Gala Black Tie Dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of The Order of Australia and the King's Birthday held at the Tattersall's Club in Brisbane on **Monday 9 June 2025**.

The occasion was made special by the presence of *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland and her husband *Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD*; *The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP*, Deputy Premier of Queensland; and *Mrs Nina Schrinner*, the Lady Mayoress of Brisbane.

Her Excellency gave an inspiring opening address and we were all captivated by the informative address "A Golden Commemoration" delivered by our eminent guest speaker *MAJGEN Professor John Pearn AAO GCStJ RFD*. Members interested in reading his presentation in full can find a copy on the Queensland Branch website at <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/queensland/archival-material/>. It makes excellent reading.

Karen Voss Willcocks, a daughter of *Royce and Marjorie Voss OAMs* arranged a splendid celebration cake for the occasion in the form of an impressive cake tower containing around 150 cup cakes. At an appropriate time in the formal proceedings a novel ceremony to cut this cake took place where I, along with Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, the Deputy Premier and the Lady Mayoress symbolically each cut an individual cup cake in unison following which, all present, including the dignitaries, loudly and proudly sang "Happy Birthday" to The Order of Australia, which was followed with three hearty cheers. This segment of the proceedings was a highlight of the evening enjoyed by all.

The evening was capably compered with great style by *Mrs Dina Browne AO* and musical accompaniment was provided by four very talented student musicians forming themselves into the Western Suburbs String Quartet. The proceedings also incorporated the Loyal Toast and a Toast to The Order of Australia.

It was truly a stellar occasion, a once in a lifetime celebration to enjoy and remember.



Photo at left – Arriving at the Tattersall's Club are L-R – *Darryl Seccombe OAM* (OAAQ Committee member); *Professor Keith Nix*; *Ronda Nix OAM* (OAAQ Chair); *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*. Governor of Queensland); *Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD*; *The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP*, Deputy Premier of Queensland; *Mrs Nina Schrinner*, the Lady Mayoress of Brisbane; and *MAJGEN Professor John Pearn AO GCStJ RFD* (Guest speaker).

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GALA 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND KING'S BIRTHDAY DINNER



Cover of souvenir booklet



The wonderful celebration cake that Karen built.



1



2



3



4

Photo 1 Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland delivers her inspiring opening address.

Photo 2 MAJGEN Professor John Pearn AO GCStJ RFD, our eminent guest speaker captivating all present with his address "A Golden Commemoration".

Photo 3 Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair addressing the gathering, thanking Her Excellency and Professor Nimmo for their presence and proposing the Loyal Toast

Photo 4 Dina Browne AO compering the function in great style

PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GALA 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND KING'S BIRTHDAY DINNER – continued



The Parade of Queensland Branch Chairmen at the Gala Dinner
(representing 17 of the 50 years)

From L-R Mrs Ronda Nix OAM (current since 2023); Dr Gary Bacon AM (2020 to 2022); Associate Professor John Harden AM (2015 – 2019); Dr Mick Davis AM ASM (2008 to 2010); Mrs Dina Browne AO (2005 to 2007)

A special moment at the Gala Dinner



“On the count of three all cut your cup cake!”

Enjoying a humorous moment during the novel Cutting of the Celebration Cake are from L-R – Mrs Nina Schrinner, Lady Mayoress of Brisbane; The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP, Deputy Premier of Queensland; Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Chair, OAAQ and Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland



The Late Greg Rollason OAM as a new 2025 King's Birthday award recipient is introduced to the gathering. Greg's announcement of his award occurred on the day of the Gala Dinner – Monday 9 June 2025 – exactly 50 years on from the very first announcements of the awards on Monday 9 June 1975

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
ORDER OF AUSTRALIA – 50 YEARS
1975 – 2025**



6. Members' Fellowship Christmas Lunch



Fifty-nine guests, including 36 OAAQ members, attended a most enjoyable festive Members' Christmas Fellowship Lunch in the Sapphire Room at Wynnum Manly Leagues Club, at Manly West in Brisbane on Wednesday 26 November 2025.

The lunch had a Christmas theme with bon bons on the table. Quite a number of guests got into the Christmas spirit by wearing their coloured crepe paper hats, courtesy of the bon bons. To add to the Christmas spirit, *Geoff Cowles OAM*, who was the emcee for the function, gave a special rendition of "Twas the Night Before Christmas", written by Clement Clarke Moore way back in 1823. This was a hit, as it proved to be an all-time favourite of the majority of those present.

However, the "star of the show" was *Pastor Linda Sivyver OAM*, a regular to our functions and a local from Manly West who accepted our invitation to be our after-lunch guest speaker. Linda touched on her current experience as Chaplain at Hilltop, Carinity's aged care community at Kelvin Grove, as well as offering insights and interesting anecdotes from her 22 years until retirement in 2014 as the hard working Executive Assistant to the Mayor of the Aurukun Shire Council at Cape York. Her stories about her work among our indigenous communities struck a chord with the audience and it was a stirring and moving presentation. It was a privilege to be in the audience to hear stories of Linda's experience of living and working in such a remote region of Australia where few have visited and to learn of the unique and valuable contribution she has made to society which led to her receiving her Medal in the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2016 Australia Day Honours.

It was a most memorable function, very informal and a wonderful way to wish each other a Merry Christmas.



Photos

Top left – *Geoff Cowles OAM* recites "Twas the Night Before Christmas"

Top centre - *Pastor Linda Sivyver OAM*, our guest speaker, addresses the gathering.

Top right – *Kate Copeland AM* (left) presents a gift to *Pastor Linda Sivyver OAM* in appreciation

Bottom left – Loads of Christmas cheer and food fellowship from the 59 guests.

7. Queensland Regional Groups – 2025 Conveners

I wish to offer my personal thanks to the following members who have continued their role as Regional Group Convener of our regional groups throughout 2025.

REGIONAL GROUP	CONVENOR
GOLD COAST	<i>Sandra Doumany OAM</i>
SUNSHINE COAST	POSITION CURRENTLY VACANT <i>Rhonda Clayton AM was Convener from January through to March then resigned in March 2025 for family reasons</i>
DARLING DOWNS	<i>Rhonda Weston AM</i>
WIDE BAY BURNETT	<i>Judy Peters OAM</i>
CENTRAL QUEENSLAND	<i>Grant Cassidy OAM</i>
WHITSUNDAY ISAAC MACKAY	POSITION CURRENTLY VACANT <i>Carmel Daveson AM was Convener from January through to November then retired after 10 year's service.</i>
TOWNSVILLE	<i>David Jackson OAM</i>
FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND	<i>John Hardy OAM</i>

Our regional groups play a significant role in servicing Association members outside the Greater Brisbane Metro area and keeping them interested and involved in the Association. Queensland is a very decentralized State with 49.4 % of the total Queensland Branch membership (577 out of 1168 members) residing outside the Metro area in these regions. The importance of having strong regional groups cannot be overstated and I reiterate my thanks to the Regional Conveners for keeping each dispersed Regional Group strong and viable.

I extend my thanks to *Darryl Seccombe OAM* who continued in the role of coordinating the activities of the regional groups in 2025 with enthusiasm, acting as a trusted conduit between the Regional Conveners and the Queensland Branch Committee throughout the year.

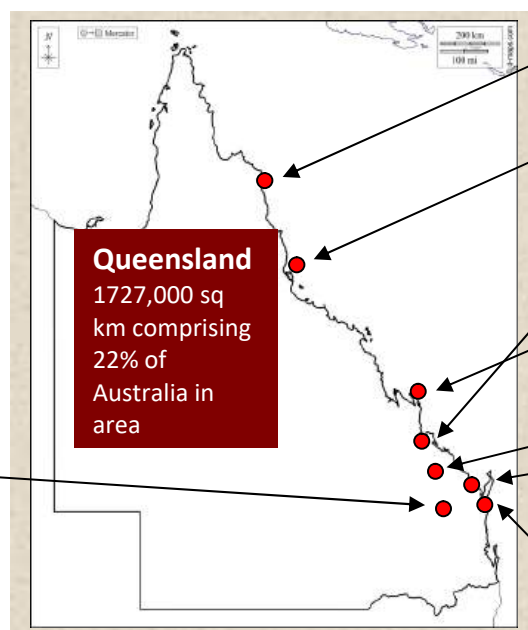
Name of Region	As at 1 MARCH 2026		As at 1 March 2025	
	Members	Percentage	Members	Percentage
Greater Brisbane Metro Area	589	50.43	600	50.37
Gold Coast	140	12.06	135	11.34
Sunshine Coast	168	14.27	170	14.27
Darling Downs	70	5.98	74	6.21
Wide Bay Burnett	40	3.41	43	3.61
Central Queensland	40	3.51	42	3.53
Whitsunday Isaac Mackay	19	1.63	21	1.76
Townsville	49	4.19	48	4.04
Far North Queensland	51	4.27	55	4.61
Interstate Members aligned with Qld Branch	2	0.25	3	0.26
TOTAL	1168	100	1191	100%

8. Queensland Regional Groups Functions

WHERE OUR FUNCTIONS WERE HELD

[Road distances from Brisbane for each town/city in

Toowoomba
[127km]



Cairns [1702 km]

Townsville [1381km]

Maryborough [260 km]

Rockhampton [630km]

Kingaroy [221 km]

Sunshine Coast

Alexandra Headlands [99km]

Greater Brisbane Metro Area

Chermside; Manly West and Brisbane CBD

Queensland Regional Groups Functions in more detail

8.1. Central Queensland Regional Group Lunch – February 2025

On **Wednesday 5 February 2025**, fifty-five guests attended a most interesting lunch at the **Frenchville Sports Club** at Rockhampton with guest speaker *Professor Alan Sandford AM*. Professor Sandford outlined the Regional Medical Pathways programme he has designed and led over the last four years for regional students to obtain their base medical doctor and specialist qualifications locally, through the University of Queensland, CQ University and supported by the Central Queensland and Wide Bay hospital systems.

I attended the event and was very pleased to present *Dr Wallace (Wal) Taylor OAM*, with a commemorative plaque in appreciation of his 5 years of excellent service as the former Convener of the Central Queensland Regional Group from 2019 through to 2023. Wal, who decided to leave the role due to ill health, was extremely pleased to receive this recognition.



Photo left from L-R *Grant Cassidy OAM* (Regional Group Convener); *Ronda Nix OAM* (Qld Branch Chair); *Professor Sandford AM*, and medical students *Jay Warcon* and *Muhammad Abdul Hadi* ("Hadi")
Photo right - *Wal Taylor OAM* (left) receives his appreciation plaque from *Ronda Nix OAM* (Qld Branch Chair)



8.2 Sunshine Coast Regional Group Lunch – February 2025

A bumper crowd of 76 guests attended the lunch event held at the **Alex Surf Club** at Alexandra Headlands on **Thursday 27 February 2025**. The guest speaker was *Professor Lorraine Mazerolle AC*, whose insight into policing and crime issues was very informative. Lorraine gave all in attendance a good overview into crime deterrence going forward.

A huge drawcard was the unique entertainment of *Linsey Pollak OAM*, well known for creating musical instruments from unlikely objects such as vegetables. His performance was very entertaining. I certainly enjoyed being there as Queensland Branch Chair,



Photo left Guest speaker *Lorraine Mazerolle AC* (left) with *Rhonda Clayton AM* (Regional Group Convener)

Photo right - The amazing, novel music presented by *Linsey Pollak OAM* – here demonstrating a most unusual version of the bagpipe.

8.3 Wide Bay Burnett Regional Group Lunch – March 2025

The Regional Group visited Maryborough for a most enjoyable lunch at the **Services Club, Maryborough** on **Saturday 1 March 2025**. 30 guests attended.

The Guest speaker was prominent local identity *Greig Bolderrow OAM* who received his award in the 2020 Queen’s Birthday Honours for service to the broadcast media, and to the community of the Fraser Coast. Greig leaned on his extensive knowledge of local history and highlighted the importance of community and leaving a legacy.

Prior to the lunch, Greig hosted an optional tour for those interested of the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial in Maryborough. This was well received by all who attended.



Left: *Greig Bolderrow OAM* explains an aspect of the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial during the tour there before lunch

Right: Seen at the lunch are L-R *Graham Hyde OAM* (Qld Branch Committee); *Greig Bolderrow OAM* (Guest speaker); *Paula Penfold AM* (Qld Branch Committee); *Judy Peters AM* (Regional Group Convener) and *Marjorie Voss OAM* (Qld Branch Committee).

8.4 Darling Downs Regional Group Morning Tea – April 2025

Forty guests attended the morning tea event at the **Downs Club** in Toowoomba on **Friday 11 April 2025** with local ABC broadcaster *David Iliffe* as the entertaining guest speaker.

David shared the remarkable story of his father’s daring escape following the fall of Singapore during World War II and he also spoke of his family’s experiences with autism, sharing that both of his sons are autistic. His honesty and courage in discussing such personal matters resonated deeply with all in attendance.



At the Toowoomba morning tea are L-R - *Ronda Nix OAM*, Qld Branch Chair; *David Iliffe*, Guest speaker; and *Rhonda Weston AM*, Regional Group Convener.

8.5 Gold Coast Regional Group Lunch – May 2025



Des Lacy OAM addresses the gathering

There were 49 guests in attendance at the lunch event organised at the **Southport Golf Club** on **Monday 19 May 2025**.

The interesting local guest speaker was *Des Lacy OAM* a retired Queensland Police Superintendent of 37 years of service across various roles including senior command roles and also a graduate of FBI National Academy.

Darryl Seccombe OAM, Queensland Branch Committee member, was the emcee for the function and I was also in attendance.

8.6 Townsville Regional Group Lunch – May 2025

Thirty guests attended **Tom's Tavern** in Townsville for a lunch on **Saturday 3 May 2025**. Sickness among some members affected the final expected attendance.

Townsville Regional Group committee member *Pauline Woolbridge OAM* was the guest speaker offering an interesting insight into the University of the Third Age as her topic.



Photo at left
Guest speaker – *Pauline Woolbridge OAM*

Photo at right
Desley Jackson (left) and Beth Honeycombe meet up at the Townsville Group Lunch



8.7 Townsville Regional Group Annual Dinner – August 2025

Thirty guests also attended the Annual Group Dinner on **22 August 2025** at the **Townsville RSL Club**. Sickness once again affected the final attendance.

The function took on a decidedly military flavour with guest speaker *Jeff Jimmieson*, the event producer of the Victory in the Pacific (VP) 80th anniversary celebrations, reflecting on past VP commemorations in Townsville and highlighting the VP80 celebrations that Townsville had just experienced. I was delighted to attend as Queensland Chair with my husband Keith and I addressed the Members.



Photo at left – Guest speaker *Jeff Jimmieson*

Photo at right - At the Townsville Annual Dinner are L-R – new award recipient *Felix Reitano OAM*; *Judy Reitano*; *Derek Smith OAM*; *Rhonda Smith* and another new award recipient *Bill Tweddell AM*.

8.8 Sunshine Coast Regional Group Lunch – October 2025

The Sunshine Coast Regional Group has been without a local Convener to organize its functions following the sudden retirement for family reasons in February 2025 of *Rhonda Clayton AM*. Despite seeking expressions of interest from interested local members, the position had not been filled.

So, against this background the Queensland Branch Committee stepped in and organized a lunch event at **Alex Surf Club**, Alexandra Headlands on **Thursday 9 October 2025**.

Our Queensland Branch Treasurer, *Dr Dennis Young AM* put his hand up to be the guest speaker providing insights into the important support role that DrugARM Queensland plays in the lives of Queenslanders caught up in drug and alcohol issues. He was ably assisted by *Bradley Strong*, DrugARM's Executive Officer. 48 guests attended.

I wish to thank *Kate Copeland AM* and *Paula Penfold AM* from the Queensland Branch Committee for agreeing to be the key organizers. I addressed the Members and explained that the Queensland Branch Committee cannot be expected to permanently run functions for the Regional Group. The search for a suitable local member to take on the role continues.



At the Sunshine Coast lunch are L-R -*Colin Brewer AM*; *David Woodrow AM RFD*; *Allan Quartermaine OAM*; *Tom Holden OAM*; *Dr Dennis Young AM*, Guest Speaker; and *Bradley Strong*, Executive Director, DrugARM

8.9 Wide Bay Burnett Regional Group Lunch – October 2025



Sylvia and Danny Wilson

On **Saturday 18 October 2025** a lunch was organized at the Kingaroy RSL with 34 members attending. The interesting guest speaker was *Sylvia Wilson*, the founder of BarkBusters, one of the largest dog training companies in the world.

Bark Busters was founded in Australia over 35 years ago by *Sylvia and Danny Wilson*, both expert dog trainers. During her 10 years managing an RSPCA shelter, *Sylvia* would observe and analyse the behaviour and communication methods of the hundreds of dogs that came into the shelter. Saddened that so many dogs were abandoned or euthanized for behavioural issues, *Sylvia* knew these problems stemmed from a lack of consistent leadership. She also knew that she could help resolve them and thus the Bark Busters method was born. I attended and found the talk most interesting.

8.10 Far North Queensland Mayoral Reception – October 2025

Mayor Amy Eden hosted the annual mayoral civic reception, attended by 40 guests, recognizing the five new local Order of Australia recipients at **Cairns City Council** on **Friday 24 October 2025**.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend as the Queensland Branch Chair and so *Geoff Cowles OAM* attended in my stead. Geoff presented a speech at the event highlighting in particular the 50th Anniversary of The Order in 2025.

John Hardy OAM, the Regional Group Convener did his usual polished presentation explaining the Order of Australia and how to nominate worthy citizens and Mayor Eden addressed the group highlighting how it was important to recognize people who contribute to their community.

A highlight was the excellent background music provided by two local young violinists.



Photo left: Mayor Amy Eden addresses the gathering.



Photo right – John Hardy OAM (Regional Group Convener) presents his Power Point Presentation about how to nominate for awards.

8.11 Darling Downs Regional Group Morning Tea – October 2025

The **Downs Club** at Toowoomba was the venue for the 2nd morning tea organized in 2025 by the Darling Downs Group on **Friday 31 October 2025**. 45 guests enjoyed listening to *Geoff McDonald*, the Mayor of Toowoomba who provided an insight into the exciting prospects for the City with Brisbane having been awarded the 2032 Olympic Games.

Mayor *Geoff McDonald* has described Toowoomba’s selection as host for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic equestrian events as a “watershed moment” for the region. He believes the Games present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure lasting benefits for the Darling Downs through upgraded facilities, economic participation, and improved transport connectivity.



Ronda and Rhonda meet the Mayor
L-R *Ronda Nix OAM* (Qld Branch Chair); *Geoff McDonald* (Mayor of Toowoomba); and *Rhonda Weston AM* (Regional Group Convener).

9. The 26th Queensland Branch Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards



Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, 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 were in attendance.

This was the 26th occasion the Awards were conducted by the Queensland Branch and it was another inspirational and memorable occasion. We were very pleased with the response from a record 66 secondary schools this year comprising both state high schools and private colleges from across Queensland and we received a creditable 101 student nominations compared with 109 last year.

Awards were presented to eleven of the 'year 12' winning school students, recognized for their selfless community service in helping others and promoting true Australian citizenship. The stirring acceptance speeches from the students as always were a highlight and the students brought great credit to the schools they represented. Five schools, (Assisi Catholic College, Gold Coast; Ipswich State High School; St Ursula's College-Yeppoon; Holland Park State High School, Brisbane and Mitchelton State High School, Brisbane) enjoyed success for the first time with their award winning students.

Musical accompaniment with a difference was provided by the Lourdes Hill College's Vocal Group – "The Diamonds". What absolutely delightful harmonious voices. The event was again capably compered by *John McCoy OAM*.

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

One of the students, *Sydney Richter* from Cairns State High School was unable to be present at the Parliament House Presentation. Arrangements were made for *Geoff Cowles OAM*, the Awards Coordinator, to attend the Schools Year 12 Valedictory Awards Night in Cairns on Friday 24 October 2025, and present Sydney's award there. Geoff spoke to all the assembled guests about the awards programme and the value of Australian Citizenship. I thank Geoff for taking the time to visit Cairns to perform this fine gesture.

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

Pictorial highlights are included on the next page ➡

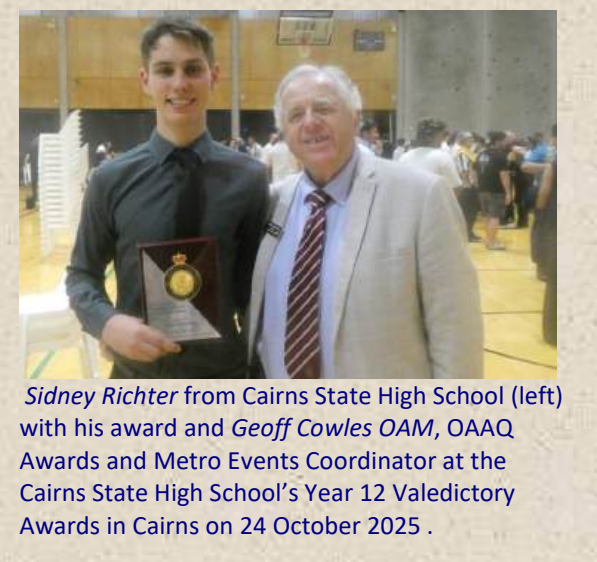
**PICTORIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 26th ANNUAL
SECONDARY SCHOOLS CITIZENSHIP AWARDS**



Our Awardees for 2025 with our Guest of Honour and Queensland Branch Chair- Back row from L-R – Grace Hemmings (St Ursula’s College-Yeppoon!); Joshua Golato (Assisi Catholic College); Ava Hetherington (Toooloa State High School); Ethan Cavanagh (Ignatius Park College); Amayah Hague (Ingham State High School); Rocco Harder (Ipswich State High School); Front Row from L-R Ruby Zsadony (Maroochydore State High School); Eve Reimers (St Ursula’s College - Toowoomba); Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland; Sharnicqua Morsh-Ivey (Mitchelton State High School); Anastasia Jordan Wright (Holland Park State High School); Emilie Cresswell (Lourdes Hill College); and Mrs Ronda Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair. Absent Sydney Richter (Cairns State High School)- see *INSET*

The four photos on the right hand side

- Photo 1** - Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland addresses the gathering
- Photo 2** - Ronda Nix OAM, Qld Branch Chair gives Vote of thanks to Her Excellency
- Photo 3** -A highly polished performance from emcee *John McCoy OAM*
- Photo 4** -*Deirdre Young*, St Ursula’s College, Toowoomba delivers the response on behalf of all schools



Sidney Richter from Cairns State High School (left) with his award and *Geoff Cowles OAM*, OAAQ Awards and Metro Events Coordinator at the Cairns State High School’s Year 12 Valedictory Awards in Cairns on 24 October 2025 .

The Queensland Branch acknowledges Mrs Gina Fairfax AC for generously sponsoring the 2025 Awards

10. Queensland Branch 2025 Senior Volunteer Awards

The Association continued its Senior Volunteer Awards programme in 2025 and received 11 nominations from Queensland Branch Members for the judging panel to consider.

The judging panel for the 2025 awards, comprising *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM* (Chairman of the Panel), *Professor Paul McNally OAM*, and *Mrs Kathy Wooldridge OAM* have selected three worthy volunteers from the nominations submitted to receive this Award. My thanks to Mick, Paul and Kathy for agreeing to be on the judging panel again this year. **The Awardees will be announced and presented with their awards during the Annual Dinner tonight.**

The purpose of the Senior Volunteer Awards is to recognize outstanding voluntary contributions made by Queensland Seniors to their communities, independently or through organizations with which they are associated. Any current member of The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch, residing in Queensland may nominate a volunteer who is 60 years or older. This awards programme has been run continuously since 2013.

I encourage members of the Association to nominate worthy senior volunteers in 2026.

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



Two photos – top

At the 2025 Annual Dinner, flanked by *Michael Rayner AM* (Awards sponsor) (left) and *Ronda Nix OAM* (Qld Branch Chair) (right) are 2024 Award winners -

in left photo - *Dennis Cayas* from Brisbane and

In right photo - *Kerry Devine* from Bundaberg.

THE 2024 AWARDEES PRESENTATION AT THE 2025 ANNUAL DINNER



Two photos – bottom

Left photo - At the 2025 Annual Dinner, flanked by *Michael Rayner AM* (Awards sponsor) (left) and *Ronda Nix OAM* (Qld Branch Chair) (right) is *Sean Williams* (representing his mother *Jill Williams*, awardee from Barcaldine, who could not be present).

Right photo *Jill Williams* (centre) finally presented personally with her award at a morning tea at Barcaldine from Barcaldine Deputy Mayor *Milanda Rogers* (left) with *David Kerrigan AM* looking on.

11. Government House activities

11.2 Special morning tea to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Honours System – February 2025



Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland and her husband Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD hosted a special morning tea at Government House to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Honours System including The Order of Australia on **Friday 14 February 2025**.

Friday 14 February 2025 was a significant date to host this special celebration because it was on Friday 14 February 1975, 50 years earlier to the day that the Australian Honours System was instituted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and established as an exclusively Australian Honours system for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens for achievement or meritorious service and their contribution to Australian society.

All the current Queensland Branch Committee members and their spouses or partners formed part of the invited guests at the celebration. Her Excellency spoke about the importance of the Australian Honours System to Australian society. I was pleased to be invited to speak in response and delighted to take part in the cutting of the celebration cake with Her Excellency.

I thank Her Excellency and Professor Nimmo for organising this dignified event to celebrate this great milestone. This morning tea set the tone for a number of other celebrations that took place later in the year.

11.2 Government House Investitures



The Association is pleased to be afforded VIP status at Investitures each year for new award recipients in both the Australia Day and King's Birthday Honours. I thank Her Excellency, the Governor, who is our Patron, for this recognition and continuing support. The Association is represented at these investitures by the Queensland Branch Chair or the Queensland Branch Chair can delegate the responsibility to a Committee member who attends on the Chair's behalf.

There were four investitures at Government House for the 2025 recipients of awards in The Order of Australia in the 2025 Australia Day Honours. The Association was represented as follows –

- Tuesday 29 April 10am - attended by me.
- Tuesday 29 April 2pm - attended by *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*, Queensland Branch Deputy Chair.
- Wednesday 30 April 2pm – attended by *Kelvin Brown OAM*, Committee Member.
- Thursday 1 May 2pm – attended by *Jenny Gregory OAM*, Committee Member.

I express my appreciation to *David Jackson OAM*, the Convener of the Townsville Regional Group for representing me at the North Queensland Investiture for North Queensland Australia Day award recipients, that was held in Townsville on Thursday 3 April.

There were three investitures at Government House for the 2025 recipients of awards in The Order of Australia in the 2025 King’s Birthday Honours. I represented the Association at the investitures at 10am on Tuesday 9 September and 2pm on Thursday 11 September and *Kate Copeland AM*, a member of the Branch Committee represented me at the 2pm investiture on Wednesday 10 September.

Attendance by a Queensland Branch representative at investitures for award recipients provides opportunities to meet and congratulate the new award recipients face to face, to let them know about the advantages of joining the Association and encouraging them to take up membership.

11.3 Open Days at Government House

❖ Open Day celebrating the King’s Birthday and the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Honours system –June 2025

On Saturday 7 June, *Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM*, Governor of Queensland opened up Government House and its spectacular grounds to the public of Brisbane to celebrate the King’s Birthday and the 50th Anniversary of the Australian Honours system, including The Order of Australia.

The Queensland Branch was afforded a space in the Investiture Room at Government House to promote The Order of Australia and to answer questions from the public on how to nominate worthy Australians for an award. I thank Committee members *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*; *Graham Hyde OAM*; *Paula Penfold AM*; *Irene Cayas OAM* and *Darryl Seccombe OAM* for giving of their time to man the space and willingly field a range of questions from a very interested public. It was a thoroughly worthwhile exercise to “fly the flag” of the Association at this Open Day.



Spreading the message!

Queensland Branch Committee members informing visitors to Government House about nominating worthy Queenslanders for Order of Australia awards.



❖ **Open Day - Festival of Commonwealth Friendship – August 2025**



The Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship in Queensland (VLQ) organized a most interesting Festival of Commonwealth Friendship at Government House on Sunday 31 August 2025. The Festival featured music and dance performances; food from around the Commonwealth, a bazaar style marketplace and cultural seminars and demonstrations.

The Queensland Branch Committee accepted VLQ's invitation to take part in a novel educational event on the day – a scripted role play in the form of a mock Investiture ceremony, with Government House's approval, designed to promote the public's better understanding of the Investiture process and held in the Investiture Room. My part in the mock Investiture was acting as the Governor, with Committee members filling the other roles as follows - *Paula Penfold AM* as the narrator; *Geoff Cowles OAM* as the Secretary to the Governor announcing the recipients and *Darryl Seccombe OAM* and *Irene Cayas OAM* who were the recipients receiving their awards from the Governor. The morning performance was well attended by members of the public; however, the afternoon performance missed the mark, attendance wise, due to other events being staged elsewhere at the time. Regardless, it was a fun experience and a novel way to promote the Investitures to the general public.

My thanks are extended to *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*, the Branch Deputy Chair and also a member of the VLQ Committee who coordinated all aspects of the mock Investitures by liaising with Government House staff and ensuring all actors stuck to their scripts.

12. Queensland Branch Communications

12.1 *The Order Magazine*

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

Graham Hyde OAM continued as Editor of the Queensland Branch pages of *The Order* for the first part of 2025 and stepped down from the position to allow *Kate Copeland AM* to take over. I thank Graham for his contribution as the Editor since March 2019 and I wish Kate well in her new role and look forward to working with her.



12.2 Communicating to members via Communiqués from the Queensland Branch Chairman



To supplement the quarterly communication that members receive via *The Order* National magazine, I again sent out short Communiqués via broadcast emails, to Queensland members at various times throughout 2025. This has proved an excellent avenue to provide communication to our Queensland Branch membership on matters of interest not covered in *The Order* magazine

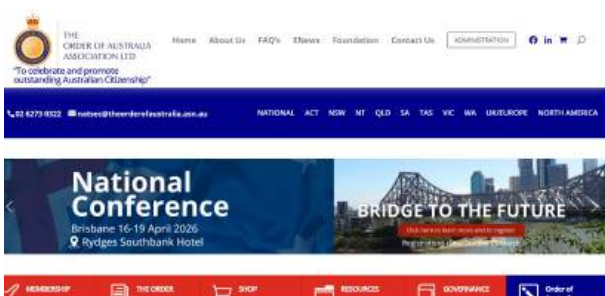
Communiqués were sent out in January, August and December 2025.

12.3 Communicating to members via the Association website

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

A current big focus on the home page of the website is the promotion of and booking process for the 38th National Conference of the Association hosted by the Queensland Branch at Rydges-South Bank from 16 to 19 April 2026. This promotion will be the first item visitors to the site will see until the Conference concludes.

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



The three images

Top left - Portion of OAA Website Home page with how to book for the National Conference in Brisbane

Bottom left – Portion of Home page of the Queensland Branch segment of the OAA website

Top right – Portion of the Upcoming events page under the Queensland Branch segment of the OAA website

13. Queensland Branch Activity at the National Level

Paula Penfold AM continued in her role as the Queensland Branch Nominated Director on the National Board. I thank Paula for providing her timely updates on national policy matters and decisions at meetings of the Queensland Branch Committee throughout 2025.

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

Graham Hyde OAM, a member of our Queensland Branch Committee continued in his role as National Secretary and discharged his administrative duties with due diligence. In addition, *Kathy Wooldridge OAM*, a former member of the Queensland Branch Committee, maintained her role as the National Membership Director on the National Board for most of 2025. Kathy has now retired from the position. I offer my thanks to Kathy for her commitment in advancing innovative projects for the Association at the national level during her tenure in the position.

At time of publication the planning for the National Conference being held in Brisbane Wales from 16 to 19 April 2026 is well advanced. I am hoping that with the Conference in Brisbane, the Queensland Branch members will take the opportunity to attend the Conference in big numbers and enjoy the excellent programme of events on offer.



During August 2025 the National Board conducted a national membership survey which was open to all members from across Australia including the Queensland Branch. In all there were 1742 responses nation wide which was a good response. The survey sought member responses to a range of issues including but not limited to citizenship promotion; better communication; improving membership; and effectiveness of the organization addressing such things as the costs of participation and seeking ways to make our activities more accessible to those in remote areas. A joint meeting of the Queensland Branch Committee and the regional group conveners to discuss the Queensland Branch members' responses was held on 20 January 2026 and a report on the outcomes will be forwarded to the National Board for their attention.

14. Membership Trends

14.1 Membership uptake by new award recipients

There were 122 Queensland recipients who received awards in the Order of Australia in 2025 and 37 of these are now members of The Order of Australia Association, as at 1 March 2026. This represents 30.3 % of the total number of 2025 Queensland recipients joining the Association compared with 37.3 % last year (62 of 166 recipients joining). This represents a sharp decrease in the uptake of new award recipients joining the Association. The very low number of Queenslanders receiving awards this year due to the long delays experienced by the Honours Secretariat in Canberra in processing the backlog of nominations, is a contributing factor to this low membership intake. Long wait times of up to 4 years from time of nominations to announcement of awards have been experienced in many instances. Hopefully a current work review taking place will result in a more efficient process in assessing nominations. I am pleased to report that 31 of the 122 new award recipients accepted our invitation to be special guests at our two Celebratory Welcome Dinners with 25.4% of the total award recipients attending compared to 23.5% last year. Only 18 of these 31 award recipients (58.0%) decided to join the Association which a little disappointing given that 71.8% of new award recipients attending these welcome functions last year ending up becoming members.

14.2 Current Queensland Branch Member statistics as at 1 March 2025

As at 1 March 2026 there were 1168 current members of the Queensland Branch. The following table provides a breakdown of the various types of current memberships, with corresponding statistics as reported in the previous Annual Report in March 2025, in brackets

Type of membership	1 March 2026		1 March 2025	
	Number	% of total current paid members	Number	% of total current members
Paid lifetime members	581	49.7 %	603	50.7%
Lifetime members by installment	-	-	3	0.25%
Annual Members	271	23.2 %	299	25.1%
Three Year Members	286	24.5 %	263	22.1%
Ten Year Members	22	1.9 %	12	1.0%
Ten Year Members by 2 installments	-	0.0 %	4	0.3%
25 year membership	6	0.5 %	3	0.25%
25 year membership by instalment	-	0.0 %	2	0.17%
Honorary Members	2	0.2 %	2	0.17%
Total Qld Branch Members	1168	100%	1191	100%

The number of current Queensland Branch Members is 23 (1.9%) less than last year (1168 as at 1 March 2026 and 1191 as at 1 March 2025). While this is a little disappointing it would appear that the lower than expected number of new award recipients during 2025 would be a contributing factor.

We are seeing a steady increase in three year memberships from 22.1 % of the total membership last year to 24.5 % this year. The ten year membership option introduced by the National Board in 2022 is now at 22 members.

As at 1 March 2025 there were 1114 members out of the total of 1168 members (95.4%) supplying email addresses for the membership database. Broadcast emails are the preferred means of communicating upcoming events and Association news to the wider membership. This uptake of supplying email addresses is very pleasing.

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

I thank *Geoff Cowles OAM*, the Awards and Metro Events Coordinator, for updating membership statistical tables compiled over the past 4 years, which are appended to this report on **page 35** as **Appendix A**. These statistics also include the ratio of male and female award recipients and the number of awardees by Queensland regions.

15. Queensland Branch Chair's Closing Remarks

As you can see from this Report, the past year has been an extraordinarily busy one for your Branch Committee. We welcomed two new Committee members into our midst, *Kate Copeland AM* and *Jenny Gregory OAM* at our last AGM. I feel sure they must have been thinking "*what on Earth have I got myself into*" after their first meeting; however I am pleased to say they have settled in and are both making valuable contributions. Our Regional Group Conveners have also been extremely active on behalf of their members in the past year.



Receiving their new Committee member badges at the May Branch Committee meeting from *Ronda Nix OAM*, Branch Chair (left in both photos) are *Kate Copeland AM* (left photo) and *Jenny Gregory OAM* (right photo)

With the organisation of the 2026 National Conference of the Association in Brisbane, in addition to our normal Branch Committee responsibilities and activities, we have met not only once monthly for our normal Branch Committee meetings, but also twice when we include the 2026 National Conference meetings. At times we have even met three times in a month.

Our Branch Committee has been joined on the National Conference Committee by several willing members who have put up their hands to assist. *Rhonda Weston AM* from Toowoomba has taken on the onerous role of National Conference Committee Secretary, and *John Clark OAM* (initially Charters Towers, now Brisbane), *David Kerrigan AM* (Barcaldine), and *Marjorie Voss OAM* (Bribie Island) have joined us on the Conference Committee to lend us their expertise to make the event a resounding success.

With several of our Conference Committee members living outside Brisbane and our Branch Secretary *Robyn Porter OAM* living on the Gold Coast, in-person meetings have been difficult to convene, so we have mostly met online. We have definitely had good value from our Zoom subscription this past twelve months. *Dr Dennis Young AM*, our Queensland Branch Treasurer; *Dr Mick Davis AM ASM*, *Graham Hyde OAM* and yours truly have also held additional meetings as the members of the Conference Finance Committee setting the Conference budget. I believe we have achieved much in a short time and served our members well this past year. We have also put together a first-class program with a stellar line-up of speakers and events for the 38th National Conference to be held at Rydges South Bank Brisbane from 16-19 April 2026.

We hope our Queensland members will support our efforts and attend the Conference. My sincere thanks to both my colleagues on the 2025 Branch Committee and the additional members who have joined us on the Conference Committee. I am very grateful to you all for both your input and for your support.

This year we are losing long-serving Branch Committee Member, *Darryl Seccombe OAM*, our Regional Groups' Coordinator. Darryl was appointed to the Branch Committee in 2017 and has now served the maximum allowed term of nine years on Branch Committee. I thank him sincerely for his service to the Queensland Branch and wish him well in his retirement. Darryl is always pleasant and courteous, and he has been a pleasure to work with. He performed a special service for me last year when he attended a rare individual investiture at Government House for paralympic swimmer *Alexa Leary*. Alexa won two gold medals and a silver and twice smashed the existing women's 100m freestyle S9 world record at the Paris Paralympic Games in 2024, for which she received an OAM. I would have loved to attend her investiture but was already committed elsewhere.

Also leaving us is *Kelvin Brown OAM*, for personal reasons. I thank Kelvin for his service to the Queensland Branch Committee over the past 30 months and in particular for taking on the role of Merchandise Officer.

There was also one other special individual investiture held at Government House last year. This was for Oscar-winning Australian designer *Catherine Martin* who was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) for her eminent service to the arts. As the most decorated Australian in Oscar history, she was recognized for her extraordinary contributions to film, costume, and production design. Once again, I was committed elsewhere, so *Irene Cayas OAM* our inaugural Multicultural and Diversity Officer, attended in my place. Irene has just completed her first term of three years on the Branch Committee, and she has proved to be a great asset.

We truly do have some extraordinarily wonderful people in our Association. As I travel around the state to visit the various regional groups, I am always amazed at the many and varied ways our members have given service to others and the valuable contributions they have made to our country and its citizens. In 2025 I made a Chair's visit to the following Regional Groups:

- Central Queensland (Rockhampton) for a Lunch at The Frenchville Club on 5 February;
- Sunshine Coast for Lunch at Alexandra Headlands on 27 February;
- Darling Downs for Morning Tea at The Downs Club, Toowoomba on 11 April;
- Gold Coast for Lunch at Southport Golf Club on 19 May;
- Townsville for the North Queensland Annual Dinner on 22 August;
- Sunshine Coast for a Members Lunch at Alexandra Headlands on 9 October ;
- Wide Bay/Burnett for Dinner at the Kingaroy RSL on 18 October; and
- Darling Downs for Morning Tea at The Downs Club Toowoomba on 31 October.

Unfortunately, I couldn't manage a visit to the Far North Queensland Regional Group, but I will make an effort to do so in the coming year. We could not run the Association across this vast State without the services of our Regional Group Conveners organizing functions to bring our country members together. On behalf of all our members outside the capital, I thank you all most sincerely for what you do.



Now for some less pleasant duties. I was twice requested to deliver the Order of Australia Recipient Ode this year at funerals for deceased recipients of awards in The Order of Australia. The first was for *Raymond Young OAM*, a former member of the Queensland Branch Committee and a former Regional Group Convener of the Central Queensland Group. I flew to Rockhampton on 1 September last year to perform this sad task for a wonderful gentleman at a very large funeral service. The second was for the highly respected legendary basketball coach *Norma Connolly OAM* also at a very large well attended service. It was an honour to do so. I also attended the State Funeral for *Sir Leo Hielscher AC* held in City Hall on 28 August last year and signed the condolence book on behalf of the Queensland Branch.

On Sunday 21 December 2025 I attended an enormous and very moving Brisbane Bondi Memorial service held to honour the 15 victims of the Bondi massacre. *The Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Adrian Schrinner.*, the Premier of Queensland, *The Honourable David Crisafulli MP*, and various interfaith leaders spoke. The event was held inside the City Hall auditorium, with crowds overflowing into King George Square. It is my fervent hope that Australia will never witness such a horrific event again.

In closing, allow me to again encourage you get behind your Queensland Branch Conference Committee and attend the National Conference in Brisbane this year from 16 to 19 April. The link to book can be found on The Order of Australia Association website.

As I have noted before, it would not be possible for me to carry out my role of Branch Chair without the support and understanding of my husband Keith. The same is true for most of our hardworking Committee Members and Regional Conveners who rely on the support and understanding of their partners to carry out their tasks. We certainly give a great deal of our time to the Association which could be spent with them, so I thank them all on behalf of our Branch.

I commend my Report to you and move its adoption.

Mrs Ronda L. Nix OAM, Queensland Branch Chair.

Email: chairqld@theorderofaustralia.asn.au

Acknowledgement

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



THE UNIQUE DESIGN OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA INSIGNIA



L-R Companion – Officer- Member – Medal

The Insignia the recipients receive were designed by the Australian *Stuart Devlin AO CMG* in 1976. Stuart, who had been granted the Royal Warrant as Goldsmith and Jeweller to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, had previously designed Australia's first decimal coins.

The Order of Australia design uses the livery colours of the Commonwealth of Australia Coat of Arms— gold and royal blue. An individual ball of wattle blossom features in a simple convex golden disc with a rich texture of beads and radiating lines accentuating a ring of blue enamel representing the surrounding sea.

The disc is surmounted by an enamelled Crown of St Edward signifying the position of The Sovereign as Head of the Order. The blue and gold theme is continued in the ribbon with a central band of wattle.

Extracted from the article compiled by Kathy Wooldridge OAM and Peter Wooldridge for The Order magazine – Edition 78 – February/March 2025

APPENDIX A TO THE 2025 Queensland Branch Annual Report

Item 14, p 30- Membership Trends Award recipients 2022 through to 2025

Compiled by Geoff Cowles OAM, Awards and Metro Events Coordinator

A. 2025

A.1. Australia Day 2025 only (does not include deceased award recipients)

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
61	19	31.1%	19	9	44.4%	31.1%

A.2 . King's Birthday 2025 only (does not include deceased award recipients)

No of recipients	No who have joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
61	18	29.5%	12	7	58.3%	19.7%

A.3. Combined 2024 Recipients – Australia Day and Queens Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
122	37	30.3%	31	16	51.6%	25.4%

B. 2024

B.1. Australia Day 2024 only

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

B.2 . King's Birthday 2024 only

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

B.3. Combined 2024 Recipients – Australia Day and Kings Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches *	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
166	62	37.3%	39	28	71.8%	23.5%

C. 2023

C.1. Australia Day 2023 only

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

C.2 . King 's Birthday 2023 only

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

C.3. Combined 2023 Recipients – Australia Day and King's Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
223	79	35.4%	35	25	71.4%	15.7%*

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

D. 2022

D.1. Australia Day 2022 only

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

D.2 . Queen's Birthday 2022 only

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

D.3. Combined 2022 Recipients – Australia Day and Queens Birthday

No of recipients	No who joined	% of total recipients joining	No who came to Lunches	No of these who joined	% of lunch recipients joining	% of recipients coming to lunch
173	69	39.9%	40	26	65%	23.1%

E. Queensland award recipients by region – Australia Day 2022 – King’s Birthday

2025 [AD = Australia Day: QB = Queen’s Birthday: KB = King’s Birthday]

Honours	Total No.	Metro	Gold Coast	Sunshine Coast	Darling Downs	Wide Bay Burnett	Central Qld	Mackay W'Sunday	T'ville	Far North Qld
AD 2022	99	54	14	11	4	6	1	4	4	1
QB 2022	74	38	12	10	4	1	4	3	1	1
AD 2023	100	39	7	22	6	4	3	2	3	14
KB 2023	123	52	15	23	10	5	5	3	6	4
AD 2024	94	44	13	16	2	2	3	3	5	6
KB 2024	72	38	9	12	2	1	3	1	2	4
AD 2025	64	38	10	7	2	5	0	1	0	1
KB 2025	69	29	10	10	3	5	3	2	3	4
Totals	695	332	90	111	33	29	22	19	24	35

F. Ratio of male (M) to female (F) Queensland recipients – Australia Day 2022 through to King’s Birthday 2025

Honours	Total No.	M No.	M %	F No.	F %
Australia Day 2022	99	52	52.5 %	47	47.5 %
Queen’s Birthday 2022	74	46	62.2%	28	37.8%
Australia Day 2023	100	59	59%	41	41%
King’s Birthday 2023	123	70	56.9%	53	43.1%
Australia Day 2024	94	50	53.2 %	44	46.8 %
King’s Birthday 2024	72	34	47.2 %	38	52.8 %
Australia Day 2025	64	28	43.8%	36	56.2%
King’s Birthday 2025	69	46	66.7%	23	33.3%
Total – AD 2022 to KB 2025	695	385	55.4%	310	44.6%

APPENDIX B to 2025 Queensland Branch Annual Report
Order of Australia Honours and Citations – Branch Committee Members, additional Conference Committee Members and Regional Conveners

A. QUEENSLAND BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
<i>Ronda Nix OAM</i>	QB 2013	For service to hockey.
<i>Dr Mick Davis AM ASM</i>	QB 2000	AM -For service to community health through the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Institute of Ambulance Officers, particularly in the areas of education and training.
<i>Robyn Porter OAM</i>	QB 2021	For service to science, and the community.
<i>Dr Dennis Young AM</i>	AD 2018	For significant service to community health in Queensland through alcohol and drug treatment support programs, and to the community.
<i>Kelvin Brown OAM</i>	AD 1994	In recognition of service to the RAAF
<i>Irene Cayas OAM</i>	AD 2018	For service to the multicultural community, to women, and to the aged.
<i>Kate Copeland AM</i>	QB 2021	For significant service to health infrastructure planning and management.
<i>Geoff Cowles OAM</i>	AD 2007	For service to the community through a range of youth, sporting and church groups.
<i>Jenny Gregory OAM</i>	KB 2023	For service to veterans and their families.
<i>Graham Hyde OAM</i>	AD 2019	For service to medical administration.
<i>Paula Penfold AM</i>	AD 2016	For significant service to the community through support for people with Muscular Dystrophy, to child health ethical standards, and to medical research.
<i>Darryl Seccombe OAM</i>	QB 2011	For service to the community through a range of charitable organisations.
B. ADDITIONAL 2026 NATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
<i>John Clark OAM</i>	AD 2011	For service to education in rural and remote areas, particularly through on-line learning initiatives.
<i>David Kerrigan AM</i>	AD 2024	For significant service to volunteer and social welfare organisations, and regional rugby league.
<i>Marjorie Voss OAM</i>	QB 2024	For service to women, and to youth through the Guiding movement.
<i>Rhonda Weston AM</i>	Refer to entry under next section C. Regional Group Conveners	
C. REGIONAL GROUP CONVENERS -		
<i>Grant Cassidy OAM</i> Central Queensland	AD 2019	For service to the tourism and hospitality industry.
<i>Carmel Daveson AM</i> Whitsunday Isaac Mackay	AD 2009	For service to the Mackay region through a range of social welfare, education and arts organisations.
<i>Sandra Doumany OAM</i> Gold Coast	QB 2021	For service to the community of the Gold Coast.
<i>John Hardy OAM</i> Far North Queensland	AD 2017	For service to veterans and their families.
<i>David Jackson OAM</i> Townsville	AD 2007	For service to the community of the Burdekin Shire, particularly through the Rotary Club of Home Hill and as a journalist.
<i>Judy Peters OAM</i> Wide Bay Burnett	AD 2022	For service to local government, and to the community of Bundaberg.
<i>Rhonda Weston AM</i> Darling Downs	QB 2021	For significant service to aged persons' education, and to the community of Toowoomba.

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

THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA TURNS 50



The Order of Australia, instituted by Her Majesty The Queen on 14 February 1975, was established as an exclusively Australian Honours system for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens for achievement or meritorious service and their contribution to Australian society.



The first Order of Australia honours and awards were conferred on Queen's Birthday – 9 June 1975. One hundred and eight awards across Australia were made, as follows –



- ❖ Companions of the Order (AC) – 6 in the General Division and 2 in the Military Division
- ❖ Officers of the Order (AO) - 8 in the General Division and 5 in the Military Division
- ❖ Members of the Order (AM) – 53 in the General Division and 34 in the Military Division.

Some notable Australians recognised in the first Order of Australia Honours in June 1975 included

- ❖ ***Professor Charles Manning Hope Clark AC*** - Australian historian and the author of the best-known general history of Australia;
- ❖ ***Mr Herbert Cole Coombs AC*** – Australia's first Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia;
- ❖ ***Dame Joan Alston Sutherland OM AC DBE*** - World renowned Australian dramatic coloratura soprano
- ❖ ***Geoffrey Norman Blainey AM***- Australian historian, academic, best selling author and commentator; and
- ❖ ***AIRCDE William Darcy Monaghan AM AFC*** – One of two longest serving Members of The Order of Australia Association, Queensland Branch (both joined 1 April 1980).

It was not until 1990, at the suggestion of the Her Majesty the Queen, that British honours ceased to be available to Australians and only Australian honours and awards would be awarded from then on.

Congratulations to The Order of Australia on reaching its 50th Anniversary milestone.



To celebrate and promote outstanding Australian citizenship'

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