



Welcome from VIC Branch Chair

Greetings and welcome to the April 2026 edition of the Order of Australia Association Ltd Vic Branch E-Newsletter.

It was pleasing to see the many members, their partners and friends attending the Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians Oration.

I am sure all attendees enjoyed and were moved by the Oration delivered by Kathryn Fagg AC. Equally I am sure all attendees were in awe of the presentation by OAA Foundation Scholarship recipient Chelsea Allen, who provided an overview of her life journey and achievements since receiving the OAA Foundation Scholarship.

I thank St Catherine's School Middle Years String Quartet and Viva Voci choir for singing the National Anthem and their inspirational song. I also thank Strathcona Girls Grammar School for their attendance at the Oration and trust they were inspired like everyone else.

Further details of this event are provided later in the newsletter.

Thank you to all members who remained after the Oration to attend the Vic Branch Annual General Meeting.

It was pleasing to see that this year we have gained three new members to the Vic Branch Committee. We welcome Dr Peter Rogers AM to the position of Committee Member/Events Co-ordinator, Geoffrey Grinton OAM to the position of Committee Member/Membership Secretary, and Selvarajah Muraledaran OAM as a Committee Member.

February and March are always busy months for Vic Branch and Regional Groups, as all Annual General Meetings are held.

It is pleasing to see new faces on several Regional Group Committees. I welcome and thank all members who have taken on a role within their Regional Group. I also thank all members retiring from Committee positions, some after many years on their Committee. Your contributions are very much appreciated.

I trust members and their families had a safe and enjoyable Easter and look forward to seeing members at a forthcoming event.

A reminder of the Vic Branch face-to-face events for the remainder of 2026:

Tuesday 28 July – Mid Year Lunch

Thursday 26 November – End of Year Dinner

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



SAVE THE DATE



Victoria Branch 2026 Events

OAA members and their guests are welcome to attend Victoria Branch and Regional Group Events.

All venues selected by the Victoria Branch for Events in 2026 are in the Melbourne CBD and accessible by members and guests of all abilities.

Venues are close to metropolitan, regional and rural public transport options.

Mid-Year Lunch in Melbourne

Date: Tuesday 28 July

Venue: Stamford Plaza Melbourne 111 Little Collins Street, Melbourne

Time: 12.00 noon registration for 12.15pm sit-down.

An invitation to the Mid-Year Lunch noting speaker, topic, OAA Foundation scholarship recipient, cost and TryBooking details will be emailed to members and 2026 Australia Day Order of Australia recipients before the end of April 2026.

End of Year Dinner

Date: Thursday 26 November

Venue: Stamford Plaza Melbourne 111 Little Collins Street, Melbourne

Time: 6.00pm registration for 6.15pm sit-down.

Further details will be included in the next edition of the VIC Branch E-Newsletter.

OAA Victoria Branch Regional Group Events for 2026

Please refer to website:

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



Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians Oration

Katherine Fagg AC delivered the 2026 Paul Wheelton AM Inspiring Australians Oration entitled "Strengthening Our Democracy" at The Angliss Conference Centre on Friday 20 March.

The Oration was well attended by OAA VIC Branch members, friends and a representation of secondary students from Strathcona Grammar School and St Catherine's School. A string quartet from St Catherine's School welcomed guests with background music and their Viva Voci Choir provided a stirring rendition of the National Anthem and an inspirational song to end formalities. Beverley Pinder OAM was the Master of Ceremonies for the event.

Katherine Fagg AC (Photo right) provided a thought-provoking and stimulating Oration. Kathryn was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in June 2019, and elevated to a Companion of the Order of Australia in June 2025 for eminent service to business governance, to the banking, finance and investment industry, to public administration, to the not-for-profit sector, and to women.



Katherine has a particularly fulsome Curriculum Vitae coupled with some profound life experiences which she generously shared with the Oration attendees.

The focus of the Oration was strengthening Australia's democracy, a theme that has underlined much of her work and approach to community life.

Katherine started her Oration with an acknowledgement of the bravery and inspiration of those who "showed extraordinary courage in confronting the shooters; those who protected, sheltered, and cared for others; and everyone who looked to help in whatever way they could" at Bondi last December.

In the face of a terrible tragedy, we saw some of what inspires us most – extraordinary courage and bravery, care, generosity, decency and kindness. And it was shown by such a broad array of people.

Katherine reflected on major Australian institutions and figures, highlighting the importance of integrity, innovation, and public service.

She shared the CSIRO's most significant discoveries, including WiFi, Aerogard, and the polymer banknote. Through these examples guests were able to ascertain CSIRO's long-term work in research that has delivered both national and global impact. Further, the need for persistence and forming the right partnerships. For CSIRO the collaboration between science and industry has proven of service to the community.

The focus then shifted to Sir John Monash, portrayed as one of Australia's greatest leaders. His military innovation on the Western Front during World War I, his care for troop welfare, and his ability to integrate new technologies were emphasised. Monash's post-war contributions to Australian civic life, particularly in education, infrastructure, and remembrance were highlighted by Katherine. Further, the significance of his background as a Jewish Australian who overcame prejudice to earn widespread national respect.



Inspiring Australians Oration continued

Katherine reflected on her experience of serving on the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia. It praises the professionalism, capability, and public-service ethos of the Reserve Bank's staff, while acknowledging that scrutiny of its decisions is inevitable and appropriate. Overall, arguing for valuing character, trust, and long-term thinking in Australia's scientific, financial, and civic institutions. Also, an approach to leadership that is respectful of the person. She shared her history as a cancer survivor – and the learnings she has gained from that experience, that is one of gratitude that science was well advanced to be able to afford her the opportunity to have treatment, and to be in a country where she could access the treatment needed.

Further, on a personal note, she shared that her “parents lack of enthusiasm for education – particularly for girls – made me a determined champion of gender equity at a young age ... one of the joys of my life is that one of the great social changes over my decades has been increased opportunity for women.”

Katherine applauded Paul Wheelton AM for taking a stance to creating change through the Oration itself. Also pointing out that there is a long way to go when the “Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting that women only earn 78% of what men earn”.



The call for both individuals and organisations to step up was clear. Change to ensure fairness and inclusion are still a challenge for industry and community, despite progress achieved.

Photo: Katherine Fagg AC with Paul Wheelton AM

The Oration was inspiring as well as stimulating. It provided a challenge for all members of the audience to consider the theme of strengthening democracy during these challenging times, in ways that reflect contemporary and inclusive social values.



Photo: St Catherine's School string quartet

Inspiring Australians Oration continued

Chelsea Allen (photo below) is a 2023 Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship recipient.



Chelsea provided a thoughtful reflection on receiving the prestigious OAA Foundation scholarship and acknowledged the donor Paul Wheelton AM and explained how it has turned out to be a transformative turning point in her life.

Initially overcoming self-doubt, Chelsea applied with some hesitation. The news of her success in gaining the Scholarship arrived during a particularly difficult period for Chelsea. It was a time marked by chronic injury, pain, and uncertainty – however, it helped restore a sense of hope and direction.

Alongside financial support, mentorship played a vital role in building confidence and clarity. Chelsea acknowledged the mentoring provided by Professor Linda Kristjanson AO, former Vice Chancellor of Swinburne University.

Chelsea drew on the award funding to travel on an overseas exchange which included a remarkable study experience in Sweden and further travelling across Europe and Thailand.

The study and travel experiences helped foster resilience, cultural understanding, independence, and has provided Chelsea with lasting global connections, she notes that the experiences “taught me resilience in a way no classroom ever could, leaving me walking away a stronger person.”

In a practical sense, these experiences later helped Chelsea endure major spinal surgery and aided in getting her through a tough period of recovery.

Returning home, Chelsea has continued on her educational pathway. She has gained professional experience, and has even begun a full-time role.

Chelsea is deeply grateful to the Foundation for the life-changing opportunity it has afforded her. She emphasised that the award profoundly changed her outlook, confidence, and life trajectory well beyond financial support.

If interested in being an Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship donor please refer to the next page.

Photo L-R: Chelsea Allen, Paul Wheelton AM, Katherine Fagg AC and Fred Harrington OAM



The Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship

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

Donations may be made to:

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

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

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

Donations through the Foundation attract DGR tax deductibility.

April 2026 celebrations in our multifaith communities

This year Passover, Christian Easter and Orthodox Easter have all fallen in the same month of April.

Passover is a significant event in the Jewish calendar. It is an eight day period that commemorates the Exodus of Jews from Egypt where Israelites were liberated from slavery.

Easter is regarded as the most significant event in the Christian calendar. It commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. It signifies the tussle and victory over sin, death and despair, offering hope and eternal life.

Orthodox Easter is determined by the Julian calendar. Similarly to Christian Easter, it is marked through fasting and reflection.

Each of these events have a common theme, time to gather with family and loved ones, religious gatherings in churches and synagogues, sharing of special foods, reflection and hopefulness.

Our multifaith communities come together in various ways but always in ways that enrich our culture, economy and society.

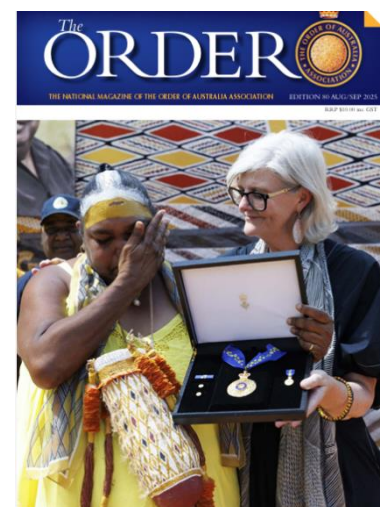
Receive an e-copy of *The Order* national magazine

With a focus on the environment and reducing plastic wrap and printing, members are encouraged to opt for an e-copy of *The Order* the quarterly national magazine.

This approach will reduce the cost of printing, plastic wrap and postage.

If interested please email OAA National Membership Officer (Heather) aaanatmbrofficer@theorderofaustralia.asn.au asking for the national database to be changed to the e-copy distribution of *The Order* national magazine.

Thank you in advance for making a difference.



Upcoming OAA VIC Branch Regional Group Events

Barwon Regional Group

Sunday 17 May movie afternoon in Queenscliff, watching "The Choral"

Booking details have been sent to Barwon Regional Group members, also available on the Victorian website. <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/vic/upcoming-events/>

Thursday 23 July Mid-year Dinner at the Davidson Restaurant at The Gordon

Thursday 20 August Eastern Hub, McKillop Street, East Geelong Primary Schools Awards

Friday 4 December Christmas Luncheon

Central Highland Wimmera Regional Group

Planning is well underway for the re-establishment of the **Student Citizenship Awards** that has been in limbo since COVID. Thirteen Ballarat Secondary Schools and the Beaufort Secondary College have welcomed the news, with presentations being made at a Civic Reception in Ballarat in **September 2026**.

Discussions will be held with Secondary Colleges in the Hindmarsh, Horsham and Yarriambiack Local Government areas during the year with the intention of commencing the program in 2027.

Sunday 24 May Annual Lunch at Midlands Ballarat RSL, with Speaker Dr Phil Roberts OAM who will speak on the subject "An Author's Journey" including winning the 2019 Premiers Prize for the "Avenue of Memories" and recent publications.

Gippsland Regional Group

Sunday 13 September Spring Lunch at the Leongatha RSL, the venue is located at the corner of Smith Street and Michael Place in Leongatha.

The speaker at the lunch is Chelsea Allen, a 2023 recipient of an Order of Australia Association Foundation Scholarship. Chelsea spoke at the Vic Branch Oration in Melbourne last month, her story is truly inspirational. Chelsea is a 'local' whose family comes from Leongatha and those who witnessed her presentation in Melbourne are quite excited to hear from her again in September.

Friday, 23 October the Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet Oration and Dinner at the Traralgon Tennis Association Function Centre in Franklin Street at 6-30pm for dinner at 7-00pm
Further details will soon be on the VIC Branch website.

Loddon Campaspe Regional Group

Friday 15 May Autumn Lunch from 11.30am at Hanging Rock Winery 88 Jim Road, Newham
Owner and winemaker John Ellis OAM will share insights including the winemaking process.
Enjoy the stunning Garden Sculptures and beautiful views.

Lunch will include Hanging Rock Beef pies and salad and a glass of wine. Cost \$50.00per person
GST included payable on the day to Hanging Rock winery.

RSVP to Deb Fleming canddfleming@bigpond.com or 0409542619 by Wednesday 5 May for catering purposes. Please include dietary requirements.

Transport from Woodend Station can be arranged otherwise car is required.

Friday 24 July a formal get together is scheduled at the Chinese Museum Bendigo for lunch and tour of the exhibition, further information will be provided.

South Central Suburbs Regional Group

Thursday 16 July Mid-Year Lunch at Sandringham Club with Speaker: David Parkin

Thursday 12 November End of Year Dinner at The Bridge Hotel with Speaker Colin Neave AM



Upcoming OAA VIC Branch Regional Group Events continued

Western Suburbs Regional Group

Sunday 28 June - 12:30 pm at Pelicans Landing Restaurant in Williamstown. All are warmly invited, whether from our group or beyond. Enjoy the idyllic setting of Pelicans Landing and our speaker the renowned climate expert, William Kininmonth on "The truths and myths of climate change science"

News from the Regional Groups

Gippsland Regional Group

Members and guests of the Gippsland Region Group gathered on a sunny autumn afternoon at the picturesque Black Tie Reception Centre in Warragul to enjoy a pleasant get together, a meal and to hear from one of the regionals foremost experts on reforestation, Tony Rinaudo AM who had an amazing story to tell about his time in Africa where he, and wife Liz, embarked on a fascinating journey that resulted in significant benefit to the local population and the broader community.

As Australian agronomists Tony and Liz Rinaudo arrived at the edge of the Sahara in 1981 to plant trees. Few trees survived in the hostile terrain, and those that did were cut down. While contemplating the futility of their endeavours, Tony discovered an embarrassingly simple method of restoring degraded landscape without planting a single tree.

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), the sustainable system of land management that Tony pioneered, has revolutionised reforestation across Africa and beyond. In Niger alone, local farmers embracing FMNR have rehabilitated over six million hectares of ruined land and doubled crop yields and income. Tony is a Right Livelihood Award Laureate and Principal Climate Action Advisor with World Vision.

Tony was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2019 Australia Day Honours list for significant service to the conservation as a pioneer in international reforestation programs.

After Tony's informative presentation, Regional Group Chair Doug Caulfield OAM RFD invited The Reverend Dr Canon Jim Connolly OAM to thank Tony and his wife Liz for delivering a fascinating insight into the area of reforestation and presented them with a painting on behalf of those present.



Guest speaker at the Autumn Lunch Tony Rinaudo AM author of 'The Forest Underground' which was judged as the winner of the 2022 Australian Christian Book of the Year. A fascinating story of how Tony and Liz pioneered reforestation processes in Africa.

Loddon- Campaspe Regional Group

Following the Loddon-Campaspe Regional Group Annual General Meeting in February a new committee was elected. The Regional Group welcomes new Chair Marion Rivers AM and returning committee members Penny Davies AM, Deb Fleming OAM, Alex Stoneman OAM, John Riches AM and Merlyn Quaife AM.

North East Victoria and Goulburn Valley Regional Group

AGM and luncheon at Wangaratta Gateway on Sunday, 1st March, 2026

The Guest speaker for the lunch was Garry Spencer AM. Garry was one of the people who set up the NEV & GV regional group 33 years ago. He has been a Victorian Secretary and a Director of the Association. It was great to welcome him back to the group.

In 2021 Garry established a national volunteer veteran program "Operation Grain Harvest" to train ADF veterans to successfully transition into full time harvest roles after retirement, operating major equipment in Australia's \$60+ billion grain industry. It has been a very successful program with many former veterans giving wonderful support to grain growers. Operation Grain Harvest will change its name sometime this year to a more comprehensive title, Veterans Supporting Agriculture, expanding its scope to the grains, rice, cotton, cattle and sheep sectors of Australian agriculture. This program is ongoing and still expanding with the hope of more supporters and volunteers in the future.

South West Victoria Regional Group

The South West Branch recently held their Annual General Meeting, featuring distinguished speakers Andrew Lemon AM and James Affleck OAM. James and Andrew, both acclaimed historians, shared their extensive knowledge in regional history in an engaging and insightful manner.



Andrew Lemon is renowned for his work in Australian social and cultural history. He has dedicated many years to researching the history of Australian thoroughbred racing. His latest publication, *Crisp and Sir Chester: The Story of Australia's Greatest Steeplechaser* explores the legacy of Sir Chester, a locally bred steeplechaser from Camperdown. This story holds particular significance for the region's history and the current racing scene.

James Affleck's family owned the historic Minjah property, where his passion for local history first developed. Over the years, James has authored seven books, each focusing on different soldier settlement areas within the region, further contributing to the preservation of local heritage.

The presentation sparked a lively discussion, with numerous questions from the audience. Unfortunately, the session was not long enough to address all of the queries and interest generated.

Photo: Supplied. Left to Right: Edwina Cornish AO, James Affleck OAM, Andrew Lemon AM, Richard Walter AM.

Western Suburbs Regional Group

The AGM of Western Suburbs Regional Group was held on Sunday 22 February at the Pascoe Vale Hotel. After many years of sterling service, June Kane AM stepped down as Chair. We sincerely thank June for her outstanding work over the years; we are delighted that she remains on the committee. Justijana (Jana) Katerinskaja AM and Faye Berryman OAM were elected as co-

Which medal to wear when?



Day Functions

The full-size insignia (Main Piece) is generally worn at day functions where decorations have been prescribed by the event, for example OAA Events or Anzac Day

Evening Functions

At events such as evening receptions and dinners where decorations have been prescribed, the miniature insignia is generally worn. The main exception to this is Neck Decorations (AC and AO), which are worn in full-size.

Every day Wear

A lapel pin may be worn on civilian clothes at any time. Only one badge should be worn at a given time and not when other insignia pieces are worn.

Invite Order of Australia recipients to join the Association

At times our paths cross with other Order of Australia recipients who have not joined the Association for various reasons.

Perhaps the time is now right to have the conversation.

Please email a copy of this E-Newsletter to the recipient/s you know who have not joined and the online membership application link - www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/membership-application

Working together we are able to build our future

Order of Australia Lapel pin and Medals



For **additional** Order of Australia lapel pins or medals or **replacements** please contact the Honours Secretariat. **Tel:** 02 6283 3533 **E:** honours@gg.gov.au

Reminder: The Order of Australia Association (OAA) Lapel Badge with **magnetic** fitting is not the Order of Australia (OA) lapel pin recipients receive with the medal pack at their Government House Investiture.



This lapel badge can be purchased from the Merchandise Shop
<https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart/>

How to clean Order of Australia Medals

Tarnish can appear over time due to humidity, particularly near coastal regions. The medals do typically have a silica gel pack in the box under the insert to absorb moisture, but these become less effective over time.

Next time you purchase any item, and it comes with a silica gel pack, place the pack in the box with the medal and replacing it every 1-2 years.

For cleaning the tarnish off medals, the Honours Secretariat does not recommend an abrasive metal polish as it can damage the medal surface.

Use Goddards Silver Polish Foam as it is a non-abrasive chemical cleaner which you use to clean the medal at home.

Alternatively, you can approach a local replica dealer/medal shop to seek assistance with cleaning the medal.

The following replica dealers would be able to assist:

Cary Corporation - <https://medalshop.com.au/>

Christies - <https://www.christies.net.au/>

Medals of Service - <https://www.medalsofservice.com.au/>

Rainbow Medals - <https://medalseller.com.au/>





THE
ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
ASSOCIATION LTD
VICTORIA BRANCH

AGM
Annual General Meeting

The Order of Australia Association Ltd Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 20 March 2026 at The Angliss Conference Centre.

The draft minutes of the AGM are on OAA national website:

[2026 Vic Annual General Meeting Papers - The Order of Australia Association](#)

The OAA VIC Branch welcomed two new committee members at the 2026 Annual General Meeting:-

Dr Peter Rogers AM – Committee Member/Events Co-ordinator

Geoffrey Grinton OAM Committee Member/Membership Secretary

Following the AGM the VIC Branch committee co-opted Selvarajah Muraledaran OAM as a committee member.

Victoria Branch Office Bearers, Committee and Branch Nominated Director

Office Bearers

Chair	Fred Harrington OAM
Deputy Chair	Trevor Clark OAM
Secretary	Jill Page OAM
Treasurer	Alan Brook OAM

Committee

Events Co-ordinator	Dr Peter Rogers AM
Membership Secretary	Geoffrey Grinton OAM
Merchandise	Barb Brook OAM
Minute Secretary	Beverley Pinder OAM
Regional Group Co-ordinator	Barb Brook OAM
Vic Editor/Social Media	Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM
Assisting Vic Editor	Dr Helene Bender AM
Committee	Connie Boglis OAM
Committee	Selvarajah Muraledaran OAM

Branch Nominated Director Grahame Leonard AM

The Order of Australia Association (OAA) website

<https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au>

Home page providing access to National; eight Australian and two overseas Branches; merchandise shop; Governance, Resources, FAQ's, membership, OAA Foundation and more.

Merchandise Shop

Online shopping: <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart/>



Blank greeting card with envelope pack of 5 for \$10



Compact navy 53cm auto opening & closing umbrella \$30

Roll up beanie (unisex) \$18 – other hat/cap options available



Ties \$30, aqua and white striped and charcoal grey also available



Blue silk scarf **extended** to 150cm in length \$52



Costs are GST included.

Plus postage & handling noted on merchandise shop online website

Above is a range of OAA Merchandise available from the Merchandise Shop online for members, family and friends to buy.

Online shopping: <https://theorderofaustralia.asn.au/shopping-cart/>



2026 Australia Day Member Profile

Tony Pignata OAM received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) as part of the 2026 Australia Day Honours, recognising his service to football at both national and international levels. He was acknowledged for his 50-year contribution to Australian football, highlighting his leadership, vision, and lasting impact on the sport.

Pignata's achievements are numerous, and always visionary. Whilst working at Football Victoria (then Victorian Soccer Federation) his major focus was bringing financial stability to the Association which was facing financial woes at the time.

His love for football stemmed from his own journey as a young player at Salesian College and then progressing to play with Box Hill Inter.

As a young man, alongside football, Pignata also pursued academic studies to become an investment banker. During his banking life, he worked for NAB, AXA Australia and HSBC, honing his skills in governance, strategy and financial administration.



Later he went on to graduate with a Global Master in Sports Management and Legal Skills (Madrid University, ISDE-FC Barcelona).

Overall, Pignata is seen as a visionary administrator whose strategic thinking, ambition, and deep commitment helped shape modern Australian football

and elevate its global profile. Photo: Tony Pignata OAM

OAA VIC members making a difference in the community

Peter Jones AM

Past OAA VIC Branch committee member and Events Co-ordinator Peter Jones AM has joined the Australian Event Awards as Co-Chair.

One of Australia's most respected event producers, Peter has spent more than 30 years creating and delivering major events, while also championing the growth and development of the events industry.

A recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Australian Event Awards, Peter was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2018 for significant service to tourism, hospitality and the events sector. He is a VIC Branch and Eastern Suburbs Regional Group member.

As Peter puts it: "The Event Awards are a true reflection of how our industry recognises the amazing work so many individuals and organisations are doing every day."



In 2025, Peter was made a Life Member of the Victorian Tourism and Events Industry Council. Peter has continually dedicated a great deal of time to representing and supporting the industry at many levels.

OAA VIC members making a difference in the community

Natalie Wischer OAM

In her role as President of the Waratah Beach Surf Life Saving Club it was an honour for Natalie to open the Sandy Point Art Show over Easter alongside Danny O'Brien MP.

Natalie in her opening speech focused on the strength of communities like Sandy Point. Not because of any one group, but because of how the groups work together. It is not just a collection of groups; it is a connected community.

Across environmental care, arts, events, lifesaving and community initiatives, there is a shared commitment to contributing, supporting and showing up when it matters most. This connected approach helps communities like Sandy Point be as prepared and resilient as possible, as Natalie has learned from a recent experience.



Natalie is a Chief Executive Officer and senior leader with a strong background in healthcare governance, strategy and national program delivery. She enjoys working at a systems level, bringing people together to solve complex problems and deliver practical, sustainable outcomes. Alongside her executive role, Natalie has a strong commitment to community. She has volunteered in her local communities since early childhood and is currently honoured to serve as the first female President of Waratah Beach Surf Life Saving Club in its 60-plus-year history. This role provides hands-on governance experience and keeps her closely connected to community, teamwork and service.

In June 2023 Natalie Wischer was a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) recipient for service to the community, particularly to people living with diabetes. She is a life member of the VIC Branch Gippsland Regional Group.

This month Natalie also contributed to the National Diabetes Summit at Parliament House in Canberra joining a panel discussion on Care that Connects: Integrating Services Around the Person.

Bringing together perspectives across primary care, specialist services and lived experience, the discussion reinforced a shared view that improving outcomes for people living with diabetes depends on how well we connect care across the system.

A consistent theme was that many of the building blocks already exist. The opportunity now is to better integrate, scale and support what is working.

Photo courtesy of LinkedIn: Natalie Wischer OAM and Danny O'Brien MP

Order of Australia Nominations via the online Portal

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.

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 receive an email generated by the portal, seeking their comments. Nominators will not have access to the comments provided by referees.

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

Further information and guidance is available on the Office of the OFFICIAL SECRETARY to the GOVERNOR-GENERAL website:

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

If you need help to complete your nomination form, call (02) 6283 3604 (business hours) or email honours@gg.gov.au.

ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE

April invites reflection and remembrance as we approach one of the most significant days on our calendar—Anzac Day.

This month The Shrine is unveiling a new exhibition, *SPARTANS & ANZACS*, exploring extraordinary courage in the face of impossible odds, and the enduring power of sacrifice, duty and remembrance.

Anzac Day Dawn Service we come together to pause and reflect on the service and sacrifice of generations of Australians, and all those who suffer the consequences of war.



LEST WE FORGET

The service is held at dawn to coincide with the time of the Gallipoli landing in 1915—the first major military action by Australian and New Zealand forces (ANZACs) during the First World War.

The event includes recitations, hymns, wreath-laying, and an address by the Governor of Victoria. Screens around the Shrine enable participants to view proceedings.

The Dawn Service is scheduled to finish at 6.30am. Following the service, visitors may place a poppy at the Stone of Remembrance inside the monument.

With easy access from Anzac Station, and free public transport throughout April, it's the perfect time to visit the Shrine.

