



The Order of Australia Association

NSW Branch Newsletter

March - August 2026

Patron: Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW

PO Box 561, Parramatta, NSW 2124 | www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au/nsw



From your NSW Chair John Gullotta AM

Dear NSW Members,

It has been a very busy time with several important initiatives, events and activities taking place across the Branch and throughout our regions. My apologies for the delay in this newsletter but it's certainly now a bumper issue for your reading pleasure!

We have been working closely with our regions on the bank account rationalisation process, which is now nearing completion. This has been an important piece of work in strengthening our governance and ensuring greater consistency and accountability across the Association. I would like to sincerely thank all our Regional Convenors and their committees for their cooperation, assistance and patience in facilitating this very important process. My special thanks go to our Hon. Treasurer, Louise Paisley OAM; Regional Director, David North OAM; and Branch Nominated Director, Gary Smith AM, for their tireless work, commitment and dedication in helping bring this important governance matter towards completion.

The Branch also held its annual Archibald Prize Private Viewing at the Art Gallery of NSW, which, as always, proved to be a very popular and successful event. The viewing was a sellout with excellent attendance. It was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some of Australia's most significant works of art in the unique atmosphere of a private viewing.



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We also enjoyed a wonderful evening attending Anastasia the Musical, starring the legendary Nancy Hayes AM, together with Rhonda Burchmore OAM. It was a fantastic performance and a memorable evening for all who attended. Our members and guests were also treated to a special meet-and-greet following the show, which provided a wonderful opportunity to meet them and hear a few stories of their career highlights.

Looking ahead we have the NSW Branch Youth Community Service Awards on the 20th August at Government House Sydney where 25 students will receive an award. My thanks to newly appointed Convenor Di North OAM and one again thanks to DR Frank Kelleher OAM for his guidance and stewardship over this transition period.

The 2026 King's Birthday Investitures will be held in late September. The NSW Branch will proudly attend the Investiture ceremonies at Government House Sydney, representing and promoting our Association and recognising the outstanding achievements and contributions of the new recipients.

In October, we will hold our Welcome Luncheon at NSW Parliament House for both Australia Day 2026 and King's Birthday 2026 recipients. Following the great success of last year's event, we are also planning another Christmas Long Lunch. The wonderful response to last year's celebration demonstrated how much our members enjoy the opportunity to come together socially.

The NSW Branch continues to place great importance on maintaining a strong connection with our regional members. We are attending as many regional events as possible and remain committed to ensuring that our members across regional and remote NSW are well represented and supported. Our regions are truly the lifeblood of our Association and their contribution, enthusiasm and dedication are greatly valued.

I look forward to meeting you all at our upcoming events.

Kind regards

John

Dr John Gullotta AM

NSW Chair

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2027 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ADELAIDE - 13TH -16TH MAY 2027
CLICK FOR MORE DETAILS

The 2027 National Conference will be held in Adelaide.
There is an exciting program being developed with more details
via clicking the above link.
We hope you can all attend and support our National Conference.



From your NSW National Director Gary Smith AM

I am delighted to provide my first National Director report.

The National Board continues to focus on strengthening the Association, supporting members and planning for the future. Key highlights from the recent Board meeting are outlined below.

Membership

Membership continues to remain steady. While new recipients are joining the Association, subscriptions to the 25-year membership option remain lower than anticipated. Pleasingly, the conversion of Australia Day and King's Birthday award recipients to membership remains consistent with previous years, at approximately 30–40%. Branches are encouraged to continue inviting new recipients to Branch events and to maintain regular follow-up with members whose subscriptions are due for renewal.

Investment Committee

The Investment Committee is seeking a person with appropriate investment expertise. Should you know someone in New South Wales who may be suitable, please let me know, as the NSW Branch may be able to nominate them as a co-opted member to support this important work.

National Committees

National Committee membership for 2026–2027 has now been confirmed, with several co-opted members bringing valuable additional skills and experience to the various committees. I am pleased to continue representing the NSW Branch on the Strategy and Investment Committees, enabling NSW to contribute directly to the ongoing development of the Association at a national level.

2026 National Conference – Brisbane

The 2026 National Conference in Brisbane received outstanding feedback from delegates, particularly regarding the quality of the speakers and the overall program. The Conference is also expected to return a modest surplus.

The NSW Branch extends its congratulations and thanks to the Queensland Branch for delivering such a successful event.

2027 National Conference – Adelaide

Planning for the 2027 National Conference in Adelaide is progressing very well. The venue has been secured, a keynote speaker confirmed, and the program continues to be developed for 13–16 May 2027.

Members are encouraged to promote the Conference whenever possible, including at Branch Annual General Meetings, and to direct members to the promotional video available on the Conference webpage.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee continues its review of cyber and information technology security across the Association. The Committee is also considering updated Sponsorship and Donations and Artificial Intelligence policies.

Strategic Plan 2027–2029

Development of the Strategic Plan 2027–2029 is progressing, with Branches shortly to receive the draft plan and the results of the recent member survey for comment.

The plan focuses on four priority areas:

- Membership and Growth
- Promotion
- Community
- Organisational Sustainability and Development

These priorities will guide National and Branch activities over the coming years.

Menzies Leadership Foundation

The Menzies Leadership Foundation has completed the recording of its first podcast series, with links to be distributed to Branches following its release.

The Foundation supports emerging Australian leaders through scholarships, leadership development and educational opportunities that encourage excellence in public service and community leadership.

I look forward to providing a more detailed report in the near future on how the NSW Branch may become actively involved in supporting the Foundation's important work.

Foundation Scholarships

Foundation scholarships continue to flourish, with six scholarships to be presented at the 2027 Adelaide Conference.

Despite recent market volatility, the Foundation remains in a sound financial position. Branches wishing to make a smaller contribution towards a scholarship may be eligible to have that contribution matched by the Foundation, subject to approval by the Foundation Board.

Association Merchandise

Association merchandise remains well stocked in anticipation of increased awards and appointments.

Our NSW Branch Regional Coordinator, David North OAM, and NSW Branch Secretary, Dianne North OAM, have been displaying merchandise during their regional visits. These quality items make ideal gifts for newly appointed recipients while also helping to promote the Association.

Kind regards



Gary Smith AM

NSW Branch Nominated Director

Email: dirnsw@theorderofaustralia.asn.au

New Members

The Order of Australia Association NSW Branch welcomes the following new members and we look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events.

Professor Alexander (Alex) Baitch AM

Mr Roger John Downs OAM

Mr Gregory John Budworth OAM

Mr Phillip George Greentree OAM

Mr Brian Henry Davidson OAM

Mrs Kay Marie Burton OAM

Mrs Elizabeth Anne Bowditch OAM

Mrs Anne Louise Johnston OAM

Ms Kristin Stubbins AM

Mr Kenneth George Little OAM

Dr Lana Adele Leslie-Henfling OAM

Professor Emad Walid Shublaq OAM

Dr Peter Robert Hill OAM

Mr Darryl Charles Clout AM

Mr Franciscus Joseph Pikardt OAM

Assoc Professor Christopher Stephen Pokorny OAM

Mr Matthew Vertzonis OAM

Dr Andrew Alder Beattie OAM

Ms Lucinda Lee Corrigan AM

Professor Valsamma Eapen AO

Mr Michael Timothy Kelly OAM

Dr Jonathon Leigh Howard AM

Mr Christopher John McCormack AM

Mrs Bijinder Dugal OAM

Mr Matthew Robert Laverty OAM

Mr Robert Dunn AM

Mr John Langley Watsford OAM

Prof Sheikh Salim Mahmoud Alwan OAM

Mrs Mary Frances Hoodless AM

Mr John Oliver Cook OAM

Mr Brian Warwick Ralph OAM

Ms Marianne Birch OAM

Mr William Arnold Oates OAM

Professor Raymond Sacks AO

Mr Peter Morton Kinsey OAM

New Members - Continued

Dr Roger Hampson OAM
Mr Robert (Bob) Wilton Webster OAM
Mr Paul William Griffiths OAM
Mr Brian Anthony Lulham OAM
Mr Kevin Harold Stokes OAM
Mr John Patrick Cleary OAM
Mr Fawaz Sankari OAM
WOFF Bradley Valentine Lahey AM
Mr Shane Murray Walsh OAM
Mrs Deborah Coakley AM
Mr David Ian Dinte AM
Mr Roderick James Cooke OAM
Mr Timothy John Murphy OAM
Mr Daniel Joseph Murphy OAM
Professor Eliathamby (Ambi) Ambikairajah AO
Mr Gregory Raymond Biddle OAM
Mr Anthony Sean Keating OAM
The Hon Robert Bruce McClelland AO
Dr Michael Jeffrey Hooper AM
Dr Thomas Nathaniel Tseng AM
Dr Alain Guy Middleton AO
Mr Paul Darren Scurrah AM
Mr Kenneth James Packham OAM
Mrs Cathy Anne Mason OAM
Mr Geoffrey Neame Sharrock AM
Em Professor Prem Ramburuth AM
Mr Shaun Keith Bonett OAM
Ms Megan Donnelly OAM
Mr John William Weeks OAM
The Hon David Kirby AM
Mr Sebastian Robertson OAM
Mr Graham Keith Johnston OAM
Mr Ian Norman Mackay OAM
Mrs Lyn Judith Anderson OAM
Mr Satwant Singh Calais OAM
Mrs Sybil Milliner Jack-Ungar OAM
Mr Geoffrey Noel Davidson AM
Mr David Charles Macallister OAM
Mr James Russell Godfrey Bell OAM
Mr Winwood Howard OAM
Mr John David Devine OAM
Ms Kay Beverley Spencer AM

Archibald Prize Private Viewing

Art Gallery of NSW – 6th June 2026

On Saturday, 6 June, 72 OAA members, family and friends gathered at the Art Gallery of NSW for our annual private viewing of the highly anticipated Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prize exhibitions. The morning was a wonderful combination of art, culture, friendship and shared enjoyment.

Arriving at the Art Gallery at 9:30am, before the doors opened to the general public, provided us with the rare opportunity to explore the exhibitions in a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere, away from the usual crowds. It was a wonderful way to begin the morning and allowed everyone to take their time appreciating the works on display.

Divided into two groups and equipped with headsets, we were expertly guided through the exhibitions by experienced gallery guides, Annabelle and Jenny. Their enthusiasm and engaging commentary brought this year's finalists to life, providing fascinating insights into the artists, their subjects and the stories and ideas behind many of the works.

The guides also offered interesting background information about the history of the three prestigious prizes, helping us to better appreciate the diversity of styles, subjects and artistic approaches represented in this year's exhibitions. There was plenty to admire and discuss, from striking portraits and thought-provoking contemporary works to the landscapes and other outstanding pieces featured in the Wynne and Sulman Prizes.

Following the tour, many members and guests continued the morning at the Art Gallery café, enjoying brunch together and sharing lively conversations about their favourite works, the artists and, of course, the eventual prize winners. It was a lovely opportunity to relax and catch up with friends while continuing the discussions sparked by the exhibition.







Order of Australia Merchandise

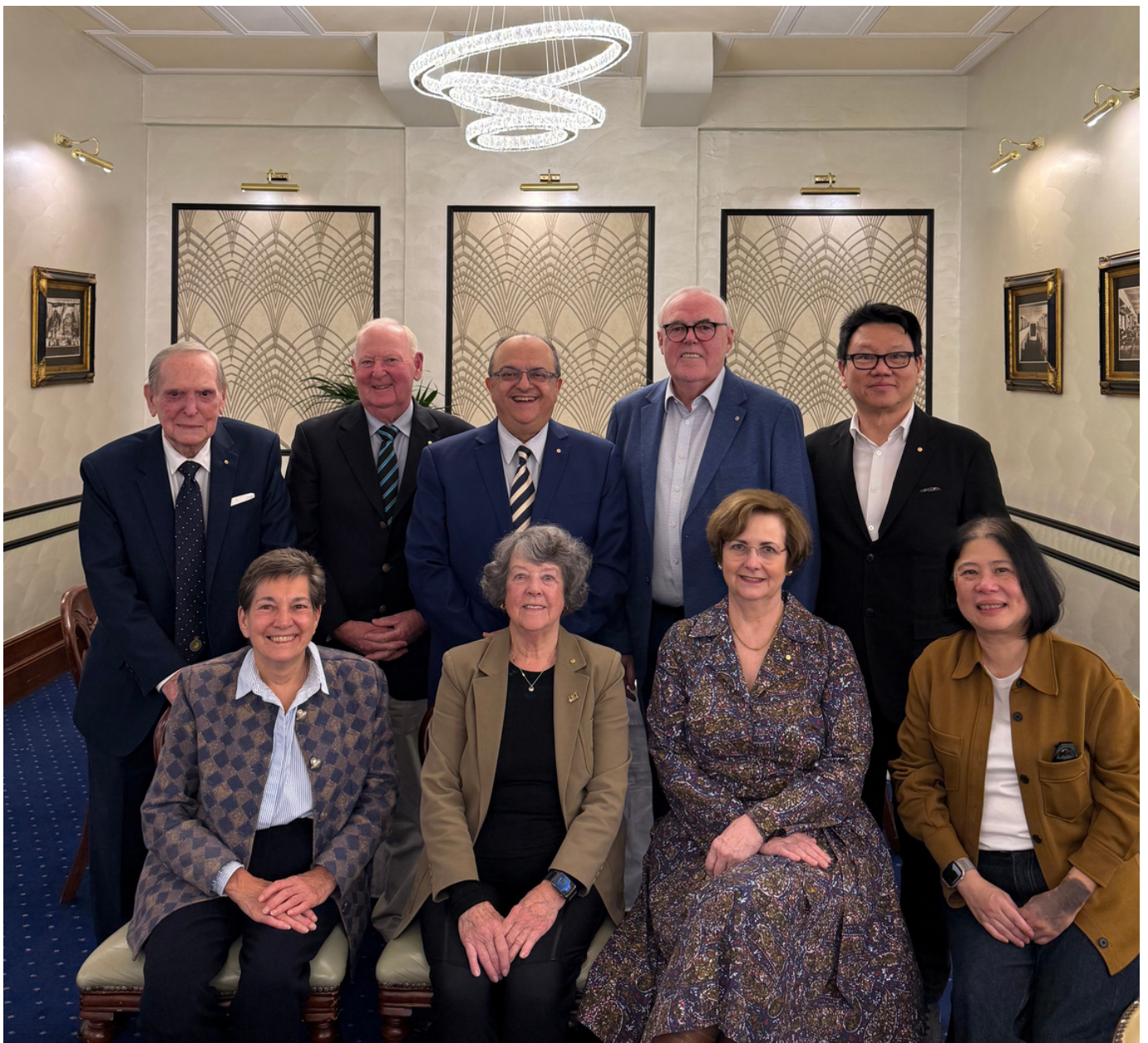
To see the range of OAA Merchandise available for purchase please click on the link

[OAA MERCHANDISE SHOP](#)

A tip to save on postage and handling is for regional groups to place a “group order” to reduce and spread the postage and handling costs. Multiple items will be put in one postage pack where possible.

For any enquires please call Barb on 0413 008 571

We welcomed our new National Chair William Lye OAM KC to our NSW Branch Committee Meeting



A Star-Studded Afternoon with OAA NSW at *Anastasia The Musical*

On Saturday, 4th July, 35 OAA members, family and friends enjoyed a matinee performance of *Anastasia* at Sydney's Lyric Theatre. The production delighted the audience with its spectacular costumes, stunning sets and captivating performances, making for a wonderful afternoon of musical theatre.

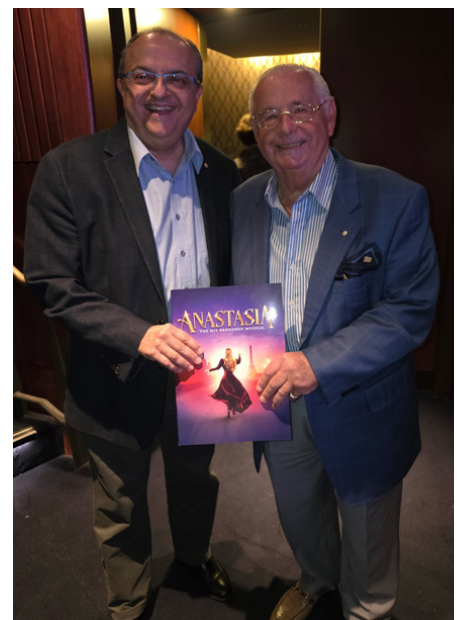
What followed the performance elevated the occasion from memorable to truly extraordinary. Two of the stars of *Anastasia* and highly respected OAA members, Nancye Hayes AM and Rhonda Burchmore OAM, generously took the time to meet with the group. During a relaxed and engaging session, they answered questions, shared stories and insights from their distinguished careers, posed for photographs and graciously signed programs.

Their warmth and genuine camaraderie were evident to all present. It was a privilege for attendees to spend time with two of Australia's most celebrated theatre performers, creating memories that will be cherished for many years to come.

Nancye and Rhonda were able to spend approximately 40 minutes with the group before being called away by the stage manager to prepare for the evening performance. As a token of appreciation, OAA NSW Treasurer Louise Paisley OAM presented each of them with a magnificent bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Association.

Following the theatre visit, a smaller group continued the celebrations with dinner at Sokyō, rounding off a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The afternoon was a wonderful celebration of Australian theatre and was made truly unforgettable by the generosity and presence of Nancye Hayes AM and Rhonda Burchmore OAM. The OAA NSW Branch sincerely thanks both performers for giving their time so willingly and helping to create such a special experience for our members and guests.







From your Regional Group Co-ordinator David North OAM

One of the greatest strengths of our Association is that, although we belong to different regions, we are all members of one national organisation. Your membership doesn't stop at your regional boundary—it opens the door to friendships, ideas and experiences across Australia.

Whenever you're travelling, why not look up what another region is doing? You'll always receive a warm welcome, and it's a wonderful way to meet fellow members, share ideas and strengthen the connections that keep our Association vibrant. Equally, inviting neighbouring regions to your own events helps build participation and supports the long-term sustainability of every region.

Many members recently joined the NSW Branch Teams information session on the Banking Rationalisation project. I thank our NSW Branch Nominated National Director, Dr Gary Smith AM, NSW Branch Chair, Dr John Gullotta AM, and NSW Branch Treasurer, Louise Paisley OAM, for clearly explaining the changes. The reassuring message was that, for most regions, there will be very little impact beyond a change to bank account details.

While we're thinking ahead, now is also the time to plan for our upcoming National Conferences. **Adelaide, 13–16 May 2027**, Hobart in May 2028, and especially **Canberra in 2030 for our 50th National Conference** are dates well worth putting into your diary. These conferences are always highlights of Association life—bringing together members from across Australia to learn, exchange ideas, celebrate achievements and, most importantly, enjoy the fellowship that makes our Association so special. If you've never attended a National Conference, make one of these your first—you won't regret it.

Regional members can also make the most of visits to Sydney by timing them to coincide with Branch events. Several members recently enjoyed combining a visit with Anastacia and the Archibald Prize exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Looking ahead, the Long Table Christmas Lunch and the New Year Harbour Cruise promise to be equally memorable occasions and provide excellent opportunities to catch up with friends from across the State.

Another series of events worth watching is the growing program offered by the Menzies Foundation. Established to honour Sir Robert Menzies, the Foundation encourages excellence in leadership, education, public policy and community service. Its webinars and public conversations feature outstanding Australian and international speakers and provide thought-provoking insights on issues that shape our nation. They are well worth adding to your calendar.

One of the year's highlights was the conclusion of the NSW Branch Youth Community Service Awards. It was particularly pleasing to see such strong regional involvement, with around 60 nominations received from across New South Wales. Twenty-five outstanding young people were invited to Government House to meet Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales. Each year our regions play an increasingly important role in contacting High School principals to encourage identifying and recognising these remarkable young people, and the continued growth of this program reflects our shared commitment to encouraging the next generation of community leaders.

Thank you to everyone who gives their time to organise events, welcome new members and support your region. Every contribution, large or small, strengthens our Association. I look forward to catching up with many of you at regional, branch and national events over the coming months.

Kind regards

David

David North OAM
NSW Regional Group Coordinator
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AROUND THE REGIONS

We look forward to invigourated engagement in all our regional groups in 2026!

The NSW Branch is able to assist in coordinating events if required via our Regional Group Coordinator, David North OAM.

OAA Hastings Region - Coffee Catchup | 10th February 2026

The Order of Australia Association Hastings Region Convenor Laurie Smith OAM organised a Coffee Catchup meeting for Tuesday 10th February to recognise and congratulate the Region's Australia Day recipients of honours. Also present to offer their congratulations were National Branch Nominated Director David North OAM and Honorary Secretary Dianne North OAM, representing the NSW Branch of the Order of Australia Association.

Ten people gathered at the Port Macquarie Bowling Club to congratulate a Port Macquarie resident, Linda Olive OAM, on receiving her OAM.

Linda Olive OAM (Aunty Linda) is an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer at the Hastings Secondary College, where she has played a central role in strengthening connections between schools and the aboriginal community.

She has lived and worked in Port Macquarie for the past 26 years but previously worked in Moree and many remote communities in western NSW. Throughout her career she has dedicated her life to helping aboriginal children to get the best education possible. She shared examples of personally visiting homes, turning off their computer games, getting the child ready for school and transporting them to school, just to encourage consistent attendance and engagement. Aunty Linda's longstanding commitment includes life membership of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), a group set up in the 1970s to promote community-led input and cultural respect in schooling. The aim is to give Aboriginal parents and carers a voice in decisions affecting their children's education. Aunty Linda's advocacy in this has helped shape education policy and practice in NSW for decades. Aunty Linda expressed her aspiration to leave a legacy of equality and high-quality education for Aboriginal children.

Following on, many attendees remained at the Bowling Club to continue conversations over lunch, reflecting on the achievements celebrated and the ongoing importance of community leadership.



Back row from left: Barbara Smith OAM, Convenor Laurie Smith OAM, Gordon Gray OAM, David North OAM, John Ross OAM, Ian Campbell (QPM)

Front row from left: Helen Ross OAM, Patricia Johnson OAM, New recipient Linda Olive OAM, Dianne North OAM.

OAA Illawarra Region High Tea | 20th February 2026

The Order of Australia Association Illawarra Region gathered on Friday, 20 February, at the Fraternity Club in Fairy Meadow to celebrate this year's Australia Day Honours recipients. The event brought together 57 attendees, including eight awardees from the Illawarra and one from the Shoalhaven.

Convenor Phil Thompson OAM introduced each recipient, acknowledging their outstanding contributions to the community:

- Jennifer King OAM – for service to youth through Scouts
- Robert Lambourn OAM – for service to basketball as an official
- Ian Mackay OAM – for service to the Illawarra community
- Margaret Snelling OAM – for service to hockey
- Ross Taylor OAM – for service to surf lifesaving and to the Illawarra community
- John Weeks OAM – for service to secondary education
- Shane Wicks OAM – for service to the community through emergency response organisations
- Anthony Zuiderwyck OAM – for service to youth and to the community
- Ken Hutt OAM (Shoalhaven) – for service to the Shoalhaven community through a range of roles, including Rotary

Representing the OAA NSW Branch, Gary Smith AM congratulated the recipients and reflected on the 50th anniversary of the Australian Honours system, established by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1975. He presented each recipient with a commemorative 50th anniversary lapel pin. The OAA NSW Hon.Secretary, Di North OAM, spoke about upcoming activities and encouraged members to register for the National Conference in Brisbane.

OAA National Board member, David North OAM gave an update on National activities.

Guests enjoyed a delightful High Tea featuring scones, savoury pastries, slices, and sandwiches, adding to the warm and celebratory atmosphere.

The Illawarra Region was especially pleased to welcome several members from the Shoalhaven, including Joan Crabb OAM, who received her award in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours for her contributions to speleology and community service. Now in her 90s, Joan remains an active and inspiring community member.

The event was a heartfelt celebration of service, dedication, and the remarkable individuals who continue to strengthen communities across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.



Hunter Region Australia Day Honours Celebration

28th February 2026

On Saturday morning, 28 February, around 150 members, family, and friends gathered at the Wallsend Diggers Club to celebrate the Hunter Region's recipients of the Australia Day Honours. MC Gerry Collins opened the event with a warm welcome and an Acknowledgement of Country, and recognised representatives from the OAA NSW Branch: Regional Co-ordinator and Branch-Nominated Director on the National Committee, David North OAM; OAA NSW Vice Chair, Martha Jabour OAM; and OAA NSW Hon. Secretary, Dianne North OAM.

The audience once again enjoyed the spirited leadership of Val Harvey-Hamilton OAM, who in her nineties, led the singing of the National Anthem and received a standing ovation.

Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM introduced the region's 14 Australia Day awardees, seven of whom were present:

- **Dr John Manning PSM AO** — for distinguished service to surveying, mapping and geodesy, to research and education, and to international governance roles.
- Group Captain Aleisha Broadhead AM (Military Division) — for exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force in the introduction of the F-35A II and the sustainment of air traffic management capabilities.
- **Dr Gordon Campbell OAM** — for service to obstetrics and gynaecology.
- **Mr Gavin Fry OAM** — for service to the arts.
- **Ms Katherine King OAM** — for service to nursing and midwifery.
- **Mr Robert O'Toole OAM** — for service to the community through support of survivors of childhood abuse.
- **Ms Jill Stuart OAM** — for service to community health in the Hunter Valley.

Two previous recipients who had not previously been able to attend a regional function were also acknowledged:

- **Mr John Kilborn OAM (2011)** — for service to cricket.
- **Ms Carol Peterson OAM (2025)** — for service to youth, particularly through Girl Guides.

Following a morning tea of sandwiches, slices, and fruit prepared by the Diggers Club, guest speaker Martha Jabour OAM addressed the gathering. She spoke with deep sincerity about life, love, and loss, sharing the story of her seven-week-old son's death from SIDS and how this tragedy shaped her lifelong commitment to supporting families in crisis. Her work spans support for families affected by SIDS, the establishment and leadership of the Homicide Victims Support Group, and the establishment of Grace's Place, a residential facility providing counselling and care for families of homicide victims.

Charles Stephens OAM was also presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his many years of service as Treasurer of the Hunter Region.

MC Gerry Collins concluded the event by reminding attendees that the next regional function will be held in Port Stephens in June to honour the King's Birthday awardees.



OAA Far South Coast Region Lunch | 25th March 2026

The beautiful Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden in Mogo provided a picturesque backdrop for the Far South Coast Region's celebratory lunch honouring this year's Australia Day award recipients. Thirty-six members gathered to enjoy a delicious committee-catered meal and to recognise the outstanding contributions of four remarkable community volunteers, two of whom were able to attend.

Philip Armstrong OAM was acknowledged for his extensive service across a wide range of volunteer roles. With a family history steeped in community service, Philip has long embodied the spirit of volunteering. He has chaired Meals on Wheels, served as a dedicated Rotarian since 2000, and played a pivotal role in the Rotary District's bushfire recovery efforts during the Black Summer bush fires. Through international Rotary support, he helped channel funds into restoring the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden and providing essential services to displaced residents in Moruya. His volunteer work also extends to aged care and employment support through Campbell Page. Philip is a Life Member of Aged and Community Services NSW.

William "Bill" Baker OAM was recognised for his service to the Queanbeyan community. A solicitor for more than 50 years and a cattle farmer, Bill has contributed to preschool boards, school P&F associations, swimming clubs, the YMCA and the NSW Law Society. Inspired by his mother, also an OAM recipient, Bill founded Treehouse, supporting children with developmental delays or disabilities, and established Karabar, providing affordable housing for women in crisis.

Two additional awardees were unable to attend: **Stephanie Stanhope OAM**, Bega dairy farmer, CWA President, community leader and member of various dairy organisations was honoured for her service to the Bega community. **Dr Michelle Bruniges AO**, recognised for her distinguished contributions to public administration, education policy and addressing educational disadvantage.



OAA Northern Beaches Regional Group Morning Tea | 23rd May 2026

On Saturday 23 May 2026, Gail Dunne OAM of the Northern Beaches Regional Branch, held a morning tea at the Pittwater RSL Club to welcome the new awardees from the Norther Beaches area.

The new awardees attending the function are, Peter Collings OAM with his lovely wife Joanne, Maile Carnegie AM, and Geoffrey Davidson AM and his lovely wife Deborah. Also attending the morning tea were Romano Di Donato OAM Goeffrey Glassock AM and Trish Hart OAM from the NSW Order of Australia Association. Each of the new awardees were asked to stand up and tell their story on how they achieved their awardees. Listening to each member speak, of their involvement in their communities and their dedication to making a huge difference in the lives of others, certainly endeared a wonderful friendly environment for all who attended the morning tea.



Peter Collings OAM, Joanne Collings Maureen Rutlidge OAM & Mike Rutlidge



Romano Di Donato OAM, Geoffrey Glassock AM, Dianne Hart OAM & Trish Wetton OAM



Geoffrey Davidson AM, Deborah Davidson & Maile Carnegie AM



Dianne Hart OAM, Peter Achterstraat AM & Vicki Achterstraat



Roberta Conroy OAM. Carolyn West AM. Susan Martin OAM. Maile Carnegie AM Julie Emerson OAM

OAA Illawarra Region Luncheon | 12th June 2026

Australia Day Awardees

On Friday 12 June, a special luncheon was held at the Fraternity Club in Fairy Meadow to honour recipients of the Australia Day Honours. Master of Ceremonies Bill Dowson OAM warmly welcomed guests, setting the tone for a celebratory afternoon.

Among those in attendance were OAA NSW Deputy Chair Martha Jabour OAM, representing the NSW Committee, along with OAA NSW Honorary Secretary Dianne North OAM and Deputy National Chair David North OAM.

Four recipients of the 2026 Australia Day Honours joined the gathering. Anthony Zuiderwyk OAM received his award for service to youth and to the community. Jennifer King OAM, received her award for her service to youth through Scouts. Ian Mackay OAM received his award for his service to the community of the Illawarra. Cathy Mason OAM from Caringbah also attended. Cathy received her OAM for her service to community organisations, including Rotary, and to the sport of weightlifting. Convenor Phil Thompson OAM congratulated each recipient and presented them with an OAA commemorative pen.

A highlight of the event was an inspiring address by guest speaker Martha Jabour OAM, founder of the Homicide Victims Support Group. Drawing on her extensive experience supporting families affected by tragedy, Martha shared the story behind her work, including the establishment of Grace's Place in Doonside, a world-first trauma recovery centre. Her deeply personal reflections on life, loss and resilience resonated strongly with all in attendance.

The 49 guests enjoyed a delicious two-course lunch, accompanied by lively conversation and warm camaraderie. It was a memorable and meaningful afternoon.



From left: Phil Thompson OAM, Cathy Mason OAM, Jenny King OAM, Tony Zuiderwyk OAM, Ian Mackay OAM and Martha Jabour OAM.

OAA Hunter Region Morning Tea | 23rd June 2026

On Tuesday, 23 June, a gathering of 35 members, along with family and friends, came together at Harbourside Haven, Salamander Bay, for a delightful morning tea to celebrate the Port Stephens recipients of the 2026 Australia Day and King's Birthday honours. The event was held in the recreation hall of one of the Port Stephens Veterans and Citizens Aged Care facilities (PSV&CAC), providing a warm and welcoming setting for this special occasion.

Master of Ceremonies, ABC broadcaster Gerry Collins, once again guided proceedings with professionalism and warmth, opening with an Acknowledgement of Country. Ian Lovell APM provided a brief history of the facility, highlighting the significance of the venue, before CEO Paul Fitzpatrick welcomed attendees and spoke about the broader PSV&CAC network.

A spirited rendition of the National Anthem was led by nonagenarian entertainer Val Harvey-Hamilton OAM, who brought both energy and inspiration to the room.

Hunter Region Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM recognised the achievements of the three award recipients present, outlining their outstanding contributions.

Group Captain Aleisha Broadhead AM (Military Division) was acknowledged for her exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force, particularly her leadership in introducing the F-35A Lightning II aircraft and sustaining air traffic management capabilities.

Bruce Townsend OAM was honoured for his longstanding service to the Raymond Terrace community. Bruce is a retired pharmacist and has served his community well over many years. Margaret-Rose Thompson OAM was recognised for her dedication to croquet and her role in establishing the Port Stephens Croquet Club.

David North OAM, the OAA National Deputy Chair and OAA NSW Regional Co-Ordinator, provided an update on national and state activities of the Order of Australia Association, including the recent Brisbane National Conference in April and the upcoming Adelaide National Conference in 2027.

The guest speaker, Group Captain Aleisha Broadhead AM, shared insights from her distinguished 25-year career in the Royal Australian Air Force. She was born in Burnie, Tasmania. She is married to Scott and has three teenage children. She joined the Royal Australian Defence Force in 1998 when she was 18 years old. She graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2001 with a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering with Honours. Williamstown was her first posting, but she had enjoyed a variety of postings in maintenance, regulatory sustainment and capability roles. In 2007 she was posted to the newly formed C-17 Logistics Management Unit in Dayton, Ohio, USA where she was deployed to the Middle East. She was promoted to Wing Commander in 2018 and was posted to the Air Transition Office responsible for the transition from Classic Hornet to the F-35A Lightning II. She has been the Commanding Officer of the Surveillance and Control Systems Program Office since 2024. From her early days as an officer cadet to senior leadership roles, she spoke of her experiences, challenges, and achievements, particularly as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field. Her inspiring address concluded with an engaging Q&A session led by Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM.

The morning concluded with thanks from MC Gerry Collins, marking a memorable celebration of service, leadership, and community.



MC Gerry Collins, new awardee Bruce Townsend OAM, Hunter Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM, new awardee Margaret-Rose Thompson OAM, new awardee Group Captain Aleisha Broadhead AM, Regional Co-Ordinator David North OAM



Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM presenting a Kangaroo Paw plant to guest speaker and new awardee Group Captain Aleisha Broadhead AM



CEO of Port Stephens Veterans and Citizens Aged Care Paul Fitzpatrick receiving a gift from Hunter Convenor Maree Gleeson OAM

OAA Hastings Region Morning Tea

Port Macquarie Bowling Club | 14 July 2026

On Tuesday, 14 July, 16 members and guests gathered at Port Macquarie Bowling Club to celebrate Hastings Region King's Birthday Honours recipient Ken Little OAM.

The morning tea was chaired by Patricia Johnson OAM, in the absence of Convenor Laurie Smith OAM and his wife Barbara, who were overseas. Patricia welcomed guests, including David North OAM, NSW Regional Co-Ordinator and Deputy Chair of the National OAA, and Dianne North, OAA NSW Honorary Secretary.

Ken Little OAM was recognised for his outstanding contribution to the Port Macquarie community. Born in Glen Innes and the youngest of 13 children, Ken moved to Port Macquarie in 1960 and established Ken's Fruit and Vegetables in 1983. Today, the business employs around 50 people, including many young and part-time workers.

Ken is well known for his generosity and support of local organisations. He regularly donates fresh produce and vouchers to the local Soup Kitchen, OzHarvest, Rotary and numerous community fundraising initiatives. He is also a Life Member of the Port Macquarie Hockey Club, where he was involved as a player and coach for many years.

Other OAM and AM recipients attending shared their inspiring stories of service. Sister Marjorie OAM spoke about her 36 years running the local Soup Kitchen, which provides meals for up to 120 people each Tuesday, while John Drinan AM reflected on his career in agricultural science, university administration, environmental work and community service.

Jeannette Rainbow OAM spoke about her decades of dedication to education and young people, while Wayne Evans OAM reflected on his contribution to law and the community, including establishing the Traffic Offenders Program.

Ian Campbell APM shared highlights from a distinguished NSW Police career that included the Mounted Police, detective squads, country postings and senior leadership roles before retiring to Port Macquarie.

It was a warm and inspiring morning, providing an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of local award recipients and hear the remarkable stories of service, dedication and generosity that have enriched the Hastings community.



OAA Illawarra High Tea | Friday 17th July

On Friday, 17 July, 36 people gathered at the Fraternity Club, Fairy Meadow, to celebrate and recognise one of the region's King's Birthday honourees, Denis Walsh OAM.

Convenor Phil Thompson OAM welcomed attendees and acknowledged several guests, including Dr Gary Smith AM, NSW Representative on the National OAA Committee; The Rev. Dr Geoffrey Glassock AM, NSW Membership Director; David North OAM, NSW Regional Coordinator and Deputy National Chair; and Dianne North OAM, NSW Honorary Secretary.

During the gathering, Phil introduced King's Birthday 2026 recipient Denis Walsh OAM, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to the community through social welfare organisations. Denis has been a dedicated volunteer with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW since 2005 and has served as president and state president. Denis has also served in numerous other leadership roles, including Conference Secretary, Conference President, Regional Council President, Central Council President.

Guests enjoyed a sumptuous morning tea featuring a variety of hot and cold refreshments, providing an opportunity for fellowship and camaraderie. The event was a fitting celebration of community service and the achievements of local honour recipients.



In Memoriam

We remember our members that have recently passed as well as their selfless service and the significant contribution they made to our community.

“Forever in our hearts”



**Dr Kim Alexander Ostinga OAM
Mr Ronald Edward Cussen OAM
Dr John Edmond Frawley AM
Mr Ronald Charles Keys OAM
Mr John Francis Miner OAM
Mrs Helen Christian AM
Mrs Sheila Mary Grace Prior AM
Mr Walter Geoffrey Thomas Miller AO
Prof Richard Anthony Scolyer AO
Mr Edward (Ted) Lionel Gillroy OAM
Mr Graham Charles Gibson OAM
Prof John R Glastonbury AM
Maj John David Bridle OAM
Mr Leslie John Howard OAM
Mr Edward Leigh Maughan OAM
Prof Sonia Allan OAM
Mr Bohdan Bilinsky AM
Mr Kenneth Borge Marslew AM
Mr Robert James Heffernan AM
Mr Lindsay James Fraser AM
E/Prof Saxon William White AM
Mr Roger John Adams OAM
Dr Brian Somerville Gillett AM
Prof Elie Leslie Bokey AM
Mrs Vera Entwistle AM
Mr Grahame Edgar Mapp AM
Mrs Thelma Mary Crawley OAM
Mrs Catherine Elsie Smeal OAM
Dr John Alexander Sweaney AM
Mr Michael Anthony Gleeson-White AO
Mr Aziz M. Akbar OAM
Cav Gennaro Abignano AM
The Hon Graham Frederick Richardson AO
Mr Graham Claud Dark OAM
RADM Rothesay Cathcart Swan AO CBE
Ray Donald OAM
The Hon E W Kirkby OAM
Albert John Maxwell OAM**

*On behalf of the NSW Committee
Thanks for reading!*