



THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA-ACT BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 24 NOVEMBER 2011

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

It is always a privilege to serve ones fellow members. It is an added privilege to serve our Branch in the company of an enthusiastic Committee - equally resolved to ensure the effective running of the Branch - and providing a choice of events and functions through 2011.

On behalf of your Committee I present an overview of our year's stewardship from election on 7 December 2010:

CHAIRMAN: Mr Len Goodman AO; **SECRETARY:** Mr Bruce Trewartha OAM;
TREASURER: Mr Brian Acworth AM.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Ms. Trish Keller OAM; Dr Andrew Lu OAM; Mr Ian Meikle AM; Mrs Jennifer Muir OAM; Mr Derek Robson AM. Ms. Diane Kargas AM was later appointed to the Committee and Dr Ray Newcombe OAM was co-opted.

VISION: The Branch strongly upholds the Association's purpose to "Foster love and pride in Australian Citizenship, to raise Community Awareness of the significance of the Order and to provide opportunities for fellowship between members of the Order".

We have worked to maintain and raise the Association's "profile" within our membership and abroad in the community. To that end Branch functions have been reported in the media, in particular our thanks to "The City News" for photo roundups and articles such as our Studentship Awards; "OAA-ANU Oration" and "OAA-ANU Lecture".

Nationally "The Order" carried a synopsis of the CDF's Oration and articles about media coverage of the Association.

POTENTIAL MEMBERS: Internally we have asked members to encourage others to join the Association and stressed the importance of identifying men and women worthy of being nominated to the Honours Secretariat for recognition.

Externally - all too often we hear strident criticism in the media of some recipients, citing others not "on the list". Usually the negativity is by people ill-informed about the process - and who could well have made a nomination of someone who has gone "above and beyond".

As Chairman I have gone to press along these lines - spurred on by the Honours Secretariat's concern about the **low level of nominations** and the evidence of reduced numbers in this year's lists - noticeably on the Queen's Birthday.

The Media's attention has also been drawn to misinterpretations or incorrect "short cuts" in describing the Honours system and referring to recipients - such as being awarded an "Order of Australia", instead of being "appointed Companion, Officer, and Member - or awarded a Medal. Perhaps pedantic - but the misuse of a person's title or position also rankles!

MEMBERSHIP: The Association's National and Branch Membership has fallen off this year - both renewals and new members, which may be due to the necessary increase in annual and life membership fees last year, residual effects of the GFC and concern for an as yet uncertain economic future. After a rise to 584 the Branch now stands at 562. We mourn the

loss of several long serving members and I write to their families. All potential members have been sent written invitations, but the joining rate from investitures has declined.

TWO FLAGSHIP BENEFITS of our Association Membership fee is support for the National Foundation Scholarships and our ACT Branch's "Studentship Citizenship Awards".

Three \$40,000 Scholarships were awarded at the National level, augmented by member sponsorships. 2009 ACT awardee Mark Hassall has been awarded a Rhodes scholarship.

ACT SCHOOLS STUDENTSHIP AWARDS: On 3 November our Branch Patron General Peter Gratton AC OBE presented three individual Awards - Gemma Armarego of St Clare's College; Natalia Nuutinen of Melba Copland Secondary School and Jeeven Nadanakumar of Marist College - and a School Award to Giralang Primary for their work in indigenous reconciliation, the National Arboretum and the Rats of Tobruk Association. For 2012 consideration is being given to adding a further schools award for year 11 and 12 programs.

We gratefully acknowledge the **ACTEW Corporation's** three year sponsorship of \$3,300 a year which supports the launch and presentation ceremonies, the distribution of quality brochures and this year an attractive poster. Also for the endorsement of the ACT Department of Education and Training; the Association of Independent Schools; the Catholic Education Office and the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Ready for Education and Employment Transitions.

AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST saw a record 140 members and guests enthralled by former Governor General and Branch member MAJ GEN Michael Jeffery AC, AO (mil) CVO, MC address us on "Australia - Future Challenges and Opportunities". His clarion call was for we who have been recognised through the Order to commit to challenges like the environment, family dysfunction, indigenous health and education. That challenge will be taken up further when we host the 2013 National Conference.

The "BALLETS RUSSES: The art of costume" special tour and morning tea presided over at the National Gallery of Australia by the Curator and Branch Member Dr Robert Bell AM was highly commended by members.

We instituted the inaugural "**OAA-ADF ORATION**" on 19 April - delivered by the Chief of the Defence Force Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston AC AFC in the Russell Offices Theatre. This new initiative is focused on the many military personnel recognised through our Honours system. ACM Houston spoke about Australia's strategic environment, current and future operations, women in combat and the ADF responses to National disasters.

"LOOKING BACK IN RETROSPECT" - presented by our member Dr Allan Hawke AC, highlighted our first new Recipients Reception at the Regatta Point Business Centre on 18th May, attracting an appreciative audience. Allan's lively account of life from Queanbeyan through the public service, High Commissioner to New Zealand and Chancellor ANU - to heading up recent government studies was laced with good humour.

The Annual '**MULTI FAITH OBSERVANCE**' - at the RMC Anzac Chapel of St Paul on 21 August focused on environmental issues and interfaith responses. It was led by The Rt Rev George Browning, former Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn and Convenor of the World Wide Environmental Network - with presentations by Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faith communities. The new Chief of Defence Force General David Hurley AC DSC read a lesson.

It was a novel '**PRE INVESTITURE RECEPTION**' on 22 September with Mrs Kate Carnell AO speaking on "**Reflections**" over a career spanning pharmacy, Chief Minister of the ACT and now Chief Executive of the Australian Food and Grocery Council. Her reminiscences struck a chord with several members and then followed a lively question session.

MORNING TEA at the Southern Cross Yacht Club on 19 October featured Dr Sam Prince described as a prodigy in a hurry. A medical doctor, entrepreneur and aid worker, he spoke of

his dedication to empowering children around the world and projects such as the E-magine Foundation and curing One Disease at a time.

October 31 saw the second “**OAA-ANU LECTURE**” presented by Emer. Prof. John Warhurst AO in the Great Hall at University House. His theme “What’s the Matter with Parliament” drew an attentive audience of members, ANU folk and several guests, including students. The following Q and A was lively and could have run well over time! The Lecture was instituted to recognise recipients within the Academic community.

COMMUNICATIONS: The Committee appreciates the increasing number of members providing email addresses to receive our Newsletter and other Branch information.

Our Branch **WEBSITE** has expanded, carrying news of upcoming events and copies of keynote speeches such as Maj Gen Jeffery’s Australia Day address; ACM Angus Houston’s Oration; Dr Allan Hawke’s speech and Prof John Warhurst’s Lecture.

MEMBERS GOING THE EXTRA MILE: As reported in our September Newsletter the Committee set out to focus on what we stand for as an Association and as individuals - and what our Association is about. While we might share the basic sentiment of our Motto, opinions may vary about how we express “going the extra mile” in our professions, business or voluntary pursuits.

To that end we have endeavoured to present a varied schedule of programs and asked members to encourage others to join our Association. We have also sought to highlight the wide range of skills and service above self contributed by members starting by profiling Committee members on our Website.

NEWSLETTERS: Quarterly editions of “**ACTOAA**” with event booking forms have been produced and special thanks are due to our Editor Ian Meikle AM for his professional expertise and considerable contribution to editorial and production excellence. There have been many plaudits locally and from State Branches. Some 54% are now distributed via email with considerable cost savings.

It was a privilege to represent the Branch at four Government House **INVESTITURES** in 2011. I never cease to be uplifted by the diversity and considerable commitment of recipients. All recipients receive written invitations to join and to attend New Members Receptions.

KINDRED ASSOCIATIONS: Your Branch has invited members of the Order of the British Empire Association to attend some functions and Bravery Association Members to our Multi Faith Observance, including National President James Long from Melbourne.

MERCHANDISE: We maintain stock of Association ties, scarves, cuff links and new and improved embossed wine glasses.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION: ACT Branch members provide core leadership to our movement with the election of Air Cdre (Retd) Peter McDermott AM CSC as National Chairman; the re-election of Col (Retd) Roger Dace AM QGM as National Secretary and with Prof Brian O’Keeffe AO as Secretary of the National Foundation.

I have served as a Director on the National Board through 2010-2011 with my term to conclude at the Darwin AGM in April 2012.

Some key Board outcomes are the introduction of a new and personalised Membership Program; concise National Strategic and Business Plans and Reporting Systems; Director’s portfolios; a Draft revised Constitution and By Laws; an application to the ATO for Deductible Gift Recipient status; proposals for sponsorship; advertising support for “The Order” and I have proposed and am drafting a generic National promotion brochure.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2013: It is fitting that our ACT Branch will host the Conference in Canberra to coincide with the National Capital’s Centenary. A Committee has been working

on establishing the basics such as the venue, RYDGES Lakeside 15-17 February. The preliminary program will include a Symposium with an iconic panel Chaired by Maj Gen Michael Jeffery AC AO (Mil) CVO MC focusing on challenges facing our Nation. Please watch the planning unfold on our Branch website

The **2012 CONFERENCE** will be staged in Darwin over 12-14 April - all details and booking forms are available on the National Website.

APPRECIATIONS: We are most fortunate that our Patron General Peter Gratton AC OBE is an active member, a diligent attendee at functions - with his wife Anne, ever willing to propose the Loyal Toast and an inspirational presenter of our Schools Citizenship Awards.

None of the above initiatives and programs would be possible without the enthusiasm and commitment of Branch Committee members - I thank them sincerely for their time and energy in planning and convening events and functions through 2011. It has been a stimulating and enjoyable team effort embracing venues, speakers; promotion; banners and flags; name badges; printed programs; introductions; votes of thanks and gifts – and troubleshooting!

Especially to Secretary Bruce Trewartha OAM for his diligence, reminders and attention to our membership list and website - and to Treasurer Brian Acworth AM for applying his financial expertise in managing our accounts and presenting our **Annual Financial Statements**.

I am grateful to Committee members for supporting me in introducing a focus group concept such as the Oration, Lecture and specialised morning teas

Thanks to Derek Robson AM and his gracious staff for making us welcome to the superb meeting room at the National RSL HQ for our Committee meetings.

Ms. Diane Kargas AM has been a very active events Convener but is unable to continue on the Committee. Sincere thanks to Diane - she will be missed.

For me it has been an incredible privilege to serve over the past two years as Chairman - and two before that as Secretary. Having now served my allotted five years on the Committee, I stand down and conclude with a year as Immediate Past Chairman.

Finally, and fittingly eternal thanks to my wife Joyce for her ceaseless understanding and support - and her countless hours as "Honorary Personal Assistant"!

The core of our Association is that we share common values and equalities - irrespective of background or achievement. I therefore leave you with a verse which has long inspired me:

**"Isn't it strange ----
That Princes and Kings
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings
And common folk like you and me
Are builders of eternity?
Each is given a bag of tools
A shapeless mass and a book of rules
And each must make ere life has flown
A stumbling block or a stepping stone!" By Edgar Guest**



Len Goodman AO, Chairman

STOP PRESS: Congratulations to our 2011 "orators" - Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston AC AFC as ACT "Australian of the Year" (and earlier as "Australian Father of the Year") - and Dr Sam Prince as ACT "Young Australian of the Year". Good wishes at the Nationals!