

Order of Australia Association - ACT Branch

AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST 2010

The Chairman Len Goodman AO Welcomed members and guests and invited all to be seated. He especially welcomed:

- Branch Patron and Guest Speaker, Gen Peter Gration AC OBE and Ann
- Committee Colleagues who were invited to stand
- Prof Brian O'Keefe AO, Secretary of Order of Australia Foundation
- Mark Hassall, one of only 3 - 2009 Australian Awardees - a young man from the ACT enrolled in double degree Medical and Surgery courses at the University of Adelaide. Mark had delayed his return to Adelaide to be at the breakfast

The ACT's Awardee Sara Farnbach, has graduated in Nursing at the University of Canberra and is now completing her Masters Degree in Public Health and Tropical Medicine at James Cook University in Townsville

Len invited the gathering to join together to Celebrate our National Identity as Australians all - made all the more special by our O of A Award - shared with family and friends.

And also to celebrate today's new Awardees. He gave a synopsis of the lists available on all tables.

Then, as an unashamed Slim Dusty Fan - and a boyhood legacy of early days in the far west of Queensland - Len ended his welcome in the words of Slim's "There's no place on earth like Australia!"

The Program, as Printed there followed:

- 1 Welcome to Country - Trish Keller OAM
"I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the Traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people"
- 2 Grace - Liz Scrivener OAM
"For the wonders of creation,
For the freedoms we enjoy,
For families and good friends,
For our fellowship together this morning
And the privilege to serve our country
through the Order of Australia Association -
We give thanks. AMEN"
- 3 Loyal Toast - Gen. Peter Gration AC OBE
- 4 National Anthem - led by the Chairman
- 5 Breakfast
- 6 Chairman Len then introduced General Gration to deliver
The Australia Day address on "**Active Citizenship**":

"It is my pleasure to introduce our Patron, Gen. Peter Gration AC OBE as our special Australia Day speaker. Peter and Ann are regular attendees at our Branch functions.

We normally place Peter in his role as a former Chief of Defence Force. A few more interesting facts are pertinent this morning.

He is a former Scotch College boy from Melbourne - active in cricket, football and athletics.

Peter Graduated from Duntroon in 1952 with the Queens Medal - going into the Corps of Engineers. Then followed a Bachelor of Civil Engineering Degree while in Melbourne - then a Bachelor of Arts and Economics from University of Qld.

His military postings included Malaysia; PNG; British Army Staff College; Vietnam; United States Army War College, as the first Australian International Fellow; Asst. Chief of Defence Force Staff and promoted Lt Gen in 1984 as Chief of General Staff - followed by promotion to General in 1987 as CDF through to 1993.

He was awarded Officer of the British Empire in 1971; Officer of the Order of Australia in 1984 and made a Companion in 1988.

Since retirement from the Defence Force Peter has served as Chairman of the Australian War Memorial and in business:

Peter was appointed Chairman of Transfield Defence Systems Executive Management Committee in 1994 and in 1997 to the Board of the major Australian industry/technology company, the Tenix group Headquartered in Sydney

General Gratton presented our ACT Branch's inaugural Student Citizenship Awards for Community Service last November -challenging the first recipients from the Holy Family Primary School and Radford College to maintain their zeal for serving others

Please welcome General Peter Gratton to Challenge us all on Australia Day 2010".

**Australia Day address 2010 to the OAA - ACT Branch, by Patron
General Peter Gratton AC OBE**

"THIS is the celebration of our National Day – marking the 222nd anniversary of the establishment of the first settlement in Port Jackson in 1788.

Today is the day that gives us Australians – wherever we may be around the world – an opportunity to come together to celebrate our country and our culture. And we can be sure that in many corners of the world wherever a few Australians gather together, there will be a celebration of some sort.

The mood of the day is celebratory. It is a holiday – a day for picnics, sport and fireworks; a day for citizenship ceremonies around the country to welcome those newcomers granted Australian citizenship. It is the day on which we announce the Australian of the Year Awards and the latest list of recipients of awards in the Order of Australia

I suggest it is also a day to reflect on the achievements of the nation and perhaps to explore ways to make our country even better in the future.

I want to pick up on that theme and in particular to share some thoughts with you about Australian citizenship.

When it comes to citizenship, we are a pretty special group. Every member of our Association has carried out some meritorious act of service to the Australian

community, and has had that service publicly recognised. And the great majority of our spouses and partners here have also contributed, if only by providing essential support. The common bond linking our very diverse membership is therefore service to Australia, or putting it another way, proven good Australian citizenship.

This focus on good citizenship is reflected in our Association's objectives. Two of the most important are to do with citizenship. They are:

- To foster love of and pride in Australian citizenship, and
- To promote good citizenship by example, by encouragement and by awards to individuals, institutions and organisations.
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So our object is to promote good citizenship, but what do we really mean by those words "good citizenship"?

Most of us would be pretty sure that we know what good citizenship is and would recognise it when we saw it, but people do find it hard to describe it precisely. Something to do with "doing the right thing by the community" perhaps, but can we get a bit more specific?

Yes, we can. There is a commonly accepted definition of citizenship as being a member of a political community (in our case, of Australia) who enjoys the rights and assumes the duties of membership.

This is all right as far as it goes, but we know that Australian citizenship is a good deal more than simply enjoying rights and meeting obligations. It is coveted by many who do not have it – and should be highly prized by those of us who do.

Being highly prized does not mean we should become defensive and close the gates to the rest of the world, but it does mean we should continue to be prudent and careful in the way we extend citizenship to others.

Nor does having love of and pride in our citizenship mean that we think of ourselves as living in some sort of Camelot without blemish. Of course Australia has its share of evil-doers and social ills, and we as a nation have made plenty of mistakes since that first Australia Day in 1788. We know that most indigenous Australians do not see today as a day to celebrate. But we also know that we have peacefully assimilated people from many lands, into a stable, democratic, prosperous and multi-cultural society in which the pluses far outweigh the minuses. We can, indeed, take pride in our citizenship. I have lived in other countries around the world, and I can tell you the more I have seen, the better I feel about being Australian.

For we are fortunate to live in a society with a particular and unique quality of its own – different to all the others – a society where the majority of people consciously or unconsciously embrace a set of values we sometimes refer to as the ANZAC spirit. We call it that because the world at large first recognised these values as distinctively Australian during the First World War through the exploits of the men of the 1st AIF fighting on Gallipoli, in Palestine and Syria, and in France and Belgium almost 100 years ago.

I know that some are uncomfortable with the idea that our core national values were founded in war. This is to miss the point. The men of the 1st AIF were almost to a man citizen soldiers who brought to the conflict values that had already emerged over the previous 100 years in the Australian bush, on the outback stations, in the mines, and in the cities too. So the "ANZAC Spirit" was the expression in war of

values that had already formed in our first century and a quarter of settlement. Not all these values are distinctively Australian. Most countries would want to have qualities like courage, integrity, responsibility and so on as national values, but I am talking about uniquely Australian things like the idea of “a fair go” – that everyone deserves a reasonable chance to make their way, free of class or other impediments. And of “mateship” – the idea that we are all Australians and part of the team, and we stick by our mates in hard times, particularly those worse off than ourselves. And of certain “irreverence for authority” for its own sake, and until that authority has proved itself worthy of our respect

And here I come to a key point: The important principle underlying each of these three – fair go, mateship, and irreverence for authority – is the moral obligation to help those less fortunate than ourselves. This line of thinking has led us to an ideal of citizenship that goes well beyond rights and obligations, and we call it “active citizenship”.

Active citizenship is the idea that citizens should work positively towards the betterment of their community through economic participation, public service, volunteer works, and other such efforts to improve life for all citizens. It is an excellent concept, and it is the ideal of Australian citizenship that the Order of Australia Association embraces, and in which we wish to foster Australians’ love and pride.

Let’s look briefly at the elements:

- Economic participation means having and doing a worthwhile job, consistent with your abilities. Theodore Roosevelt once commented that: “The first requisite of a good citizen is that he shall be able and willing to pull his weight.”
- Public service doesn’t mean so much working for the government in the Public Service or the Defence Force (although there is nothing wrong with that), but rather doing things that contribute to the public good, often in your spare time and usually unpaid. Things like helping out with charitable works, or contributing to community development by organising, leading or taking part in community organisations.
- Voluntary means that you will do it of your own free will and from a sense of moral responsibility to be a good active citizen. You won’t expect to be paid, but you will almost always receive a deep sense of personal satisfaction far exceeding the effort you have put in.

That brings me back to our Association and active citizenship. Because every member has already demonstrated and had publicly recognised good Australian citizenship, we above all groups in the country should be taking a lead in promoting active citizenship. It is not enough, having received an award, to sit back. More is expected, and we can’t rest on our laurels. The Association’s objectives require us to promote good citizenship by example, encouragement and awards – in fact, to be active citizens – and it’s very pleasing to know that we are getting on with it, both as individuals and as an Association.

At the Branch level, I was very pleased last November to present the first ACT Branch Student Awards for Citizenship and Community Service. One went to Radford College for an outstanding demonstration of citizenship, whereby Radford students in a Radford/Cranleigh partnership over a five-year period have helped the disabled Cranleigh students in their classrooms, in sporting events, and with the annual Cranleigh art show. A second award went to Holy Family Primary School

Gowrie, which over four years has made a sustained and increasing effort to help those less fortunate by providing support to a very wide range of charities – from victims of the Victorian bushfires, through cancer research and the RSPCA to Christmas giving not only in Australia but internationally.

And at the national level, the Association has now celebrated the tenth anniversary of the OAA Foundation. The Foundation awards scholarships each year to students in the early years of tertiary study, who would greatly benefit from the award. The objective is: “To support the next generation of leaders by helping young Australians from all walks of life to achieve their potential for the benefit of future generations of Australia”. So far 19 scholarships have been awarded, with three more expected next month.

If someone asks you: “What did he talk about?” you could say two things:

- Firstly, that a central concern of our Association is good citizenship, and we, its members, have a special responsibility to continue to promote active citizenship amongst our fellow Australians,
- And secondly, while not ignoring our problems, we can be proud of our Australian citizenship – proud of our heritage, proud of our achievements, and proud of the values that make up that ANZAC Spirit that gives our Australian citizenship its unique quality”.

7 The Chairman called on Derek Robson AM to move a vote of thanks:

“Ladies and Gentlemen

General Peter Gratton AC OBE

I am honoured to be able to propose a vote of thanks to a most notable Australian for his address to us this morning.

- It is fitting that we should regularly be reminded of the particular uniqueness of Australian Citizenship and the various elements that give it such a rich and deep meaning to each of us.
- It is appropriate that we all recognise the history of how our understanding of citizenship came to the fore through the expressions and example of the 1st AIF; and
- it is particularly important that we each understand our own commitment and responsibility to ensuring that the meaning and purpose of citizenship is known to all those who are associated with this country and our way of life.

We have been honoured to hear this presentation this morning

- from a person who has himself made such a commitment to our Nation,
- a man whose individual achievements would leave most of us in awe,
- a man who has personally contributed so much toward ‘Active Citizenship’; and, of course,
- a man who is not only our Patron – but our friend.

Peter, from all of our members and our guests here today, thank you so much for such an enlightening presentation, and may we wish you and Ann a most enjoyable Australia Day.

8 Chairman Len concluded with APPRECIATIONS:

To Convenor Bruce Trewartha OAM - and helpers;
and the Staff of the Southern Cross Yacht Club

NOTICE OF COMING EVENTS:

The 2010 National Conference 12-14 February in Adelaide
The 2011 Conference next February in Hobart
The 2013 Conference to be hosted by the ACT Branch in Canberra

Watch for news in the February "Newsletter" about the Branch's 2010
Program - to be signed off by our Committee meeting tomorrow

Len invited members to:

- keep Wed 14 April in mind for a morning tea {NB: Later set for 31st March}
(Which might even be held in the afternoon?)
 - The 1st Reception and welcome to new awardees:
Early May - dependant on the Investiture date {Now set for 18 May}
 - Special Queens Birthday Function in June
 - Multi Faith Service in August
 - Second Reception for new Recipients in late September
 - Second Morning Tea on Wednesday 13 October
 - "Schools Citizenship Awards" announcement in November
 - The AGM and Christmas function Thursday 25 November

 - Make a date to share Australia Day 2011
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