



NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWSLETTER

NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH
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Patron: His Honour the Administrator, Mr. Tom Pauling AO, Q.C.

From the Editor

Well at least one member read my plea for email addresses in the last newsletter. I had thirty eight email addresses of members at that time. I now have thirty nine. Thank you Tom Lewis.

Email is a fast and modern way to communicate and it creates a whole lot less work for anyone doing a mail-out to a hundred and fifty

people. Please, if you receive this newsletter by ordinary post, and if you have an email address, it means I do not have it. Please send it to me at ebmjames@bigpond.com or to Wendy at the address listed above.

Progress Report - 2012 Conference

Plans for the National Conference to be held in Darwin 12th & 13th April 2012 are progressing well. The Committee is looking forward to welcoming 200 delegates to Darwin and with support from Territory members and other awardees we feel sure this can be achieved. I hope you decide to come, to meet, mingle and learn more about the Association, and have a really enjoyable holiday.

The Theme for the Conference is "AUSTRALIA'S FRONT DOOR". We will certainly be putting out the welcome mat and using the theme to cover our history, the bombing of Darwin and the war years. We will also take the opportunity to explore the future and introduce visitors to our unique and enviable lifestyle.

The Darwin Convention Centre on the waterfront is the venue for most of the program activities. The Centre is superbly positioned with views of the wharf, sunsets, salt water lagoon, wave pool and the Vibe/Medina Hotel where we hope delegates will take advantage of the extremely generous room rates that have been negotiated. The room rates can be found on the NT section of the association's Website

www.tashost.com.au/oaant ... so book early.

In June the National Chairman, Air Cmdr Peter McDermott AM visited Darwin to have a look at venues and meet members of the committee. The NT Conference Committee works with the National Committee to ensure the event is a success. He, like many who visit our tropical city was pleasantly surprised at the facilities available. Darwin has come of age as a Convention destination.

The program for the Conference will be finalized in the next few weeks and will be printed on our website. A four page lift out for registrations and information will be printed in the October issue of the National Newsletter "The Order".

Best Wishes,

**Wendy James,
Chairman, NT
National Conference
Committee.**



My email address is ebmjames@bigpond.com . Please send me your email address - Editor

**THE OAA FOUNDATION
SCHOLARSHIP
NT STUDENT REBECCA EVANS.**

I am pleased to announce that the first Northern Territory student to be awarded an OAA Foundation Scholarship, Ms Rebecca Evans, graduated at the Charles Darwin University Graduation Ceremony on the 19th May this year.

Rebecca was awarded the Foundation's Scholarship of \$40,000 at the Order of Australia Association's Annual Conference Dinner in Brisbane in February 2009.



Foundation Secretary Adj Prof Brian O'Keefe with Rebecca after the event

It was an exciting occasion for her, her family and NT Branch representatives at the function. This was particularly so as the funds for this generous Scholarship were raised and donated by the Association. Normally they are raised from private donations.

The Foundation was formed by the Association in 1999 as a separate entity so that it could offer donors tax deductibility for their donations. Each year the Foundation sponsors Scholarships for young students with leadership potential who are in their early years of tertiary study. The Scholarships have two significant features. Awardees receive :

1. a Scholarship of \$40,000 which is tailored to the awardees individual needs to include tuition fees, living allowance, text books and equipment.
2. an introduction to an eminent volunteer mentor from the local membership of the Association who provides a personal mentoring relationship for the duration of the awardee's course of study.

Although I humbly believe I am not an eminent person, I was pleased to be invited to be Rebecca's mentor. Thanks are due to Rosemary Burkitt and Sister Eliz Little who assisted on occasion. It has been a

pleasure to know Rebecca and be able to give her support when needed during the past two years. Rebecca has been a worthy recipient of the Award.

The University nominated her in recognition of her excellent academic record during her first two years of study and, as part of the selection criteria, her voluntary work as a nighttime Respite Carer for Family and Children's Services. From an early age she was inspired to become a teacher because of an outstanding teacher she once had. She has always been emphatic that she does not want to be just a good teacher but rather, a teacher of excellence.

As members of the Association we can be proud of the fact that we have helped Rebecca realize her potential and her ambitions. Congratulations to her on her Graduation, and best wishes for her future career. I hope NT members will consider making the Foundation a project to support in the future.

Wendy James OAM

**An Honorary Award
for Michael Martin OAM**

Michael Martin OAM is the NT Branch Hon Secretary and Conference Committee Treasurer. These are not the only volunteer works that he indulges in. A few weeks ago he was presented with the award of Honorary Companion to the Charles Darwin University for voluntary work he has carried out over a number of years for that august body.



A happy Michael and Lyn Martin

The Chancellor, Hon. Sally Thomas AM presented the Award and expressed deep appreciation for his contribution to CDU.

Congratulations Michael. The NT Branch of the Association also wants to thank you: for the work you have done for the Branch during the past two and a half years and for your continued professional role as Conference Committee Treasurer.

Congratulations

Congratulations must go to the six Territorians that received awards in the Queens Birthday Honours List. If you know any of them do not hesitate to say "well done: They are:

Miss Veronica Dobson AM, 23 Barclay Cres, Alice Springs
Mr George Kapetas AM, 22 Myilly Tce, Darwin
Mrs Vicky Bakunowicz OAM, 17 Buchanan Tce, Nakara
Colonel Jeffery Dunn OAM, CSM, 25 Drysdale Street, Parap
Mrs Lynne Hanton OAM, 36 Lovegrove Drive, Alice Springs
Major Peter Wright OAM, 5 Bloodwood Circuit, Karama

A Word from Shane Stone AC, QC National President The Order of Australia Association

This is a slightly edited version of a speech made by President Shane Stone AO, QC at the National Conference in February 2011

I want to remind readers that the award of the Order of Australia is adjudicated by 19 individuals from around Australia ably assisted by case officers from Government House (not Parliament House). Individual Australians make nominations that are scrutinised more thoroughly than your tax returns. Hence the number of Nominations that fail. There are no Prime Minister's, Premier's or Chief Minister's lists – this is Australia, not the United Kingdom. The process is awash with integrity and driven by Australians from all walks of life.

The headline banner claimed '**At last, a gong for a good guy**'. It was a very prominent article written by journalist Mike O'Connor in the Courier Mail on Monday 31 January 2011 following the publication of the Australia Day Order of Australia awards. Let me provide you with some selected excerpts:



"...Peter Costello, who managed to avoid getting a real job by sitting in Federal Parliament for almost 20 years, has been awarded the nation's highest honour, the Companion of the Order of Australia. The other recipient of the Companion of the Order of Australia was Queensland's very own Penelope Wensley. Never heard of her? She lives in a great, big white house at the top of Brisbane's Fernberg Road at Bardon where her job description is Governor. Those people shovelling mud down on the Milton flood plain could be forgiven for pausing for a moment in their labours, looking up at the big white house on the hill and wondering why the Big Gongs go to well connected people who make a career out of living off people like them. Not that all those who receive awards are undeserving. Occasionally, thanks presumably to some administrative cock-up, people who are actually worthy of admiration and recognition receive them".

The journalist went onto to identify a recipient he approved of. For my part, based on what he wrote about the gentlemen concerned, one Bruce Simpson, I agree. The journalist however, determined to have a final dig, concluded with the observation that when Mr. Simpson, now 87, passes on "... a part of this country will die with him, that part populated by proud, hard, self sufficient men who'd rather die than line up for a gong".

So just why did Costello and Wensley earn their Nation's gratitude.

Peter Costello: *For eminent service to the Parliament of Australia, particularly through the development of landmark economic policy reforms in the areas of taxation, foreign investment, superannuation and corporate regulation, and through representative roles with global financial organizations.*

Penny Wensley: *For eminent contribution to the people of Queensland, and to Australia's international relations through senior diplomatic representational roles and as a key contributor to initiatives of the United Nations.*

The award of Companion complimented her award of Officer of the Order of Australia in 2001 which she received:

For service to the development of Australia's international relations, particularly through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Oh no! It's not true. It's all about 'Big Gongs going to well connected people who make a career out of living off people like them (that is the flood victims)'. Apart from being plain wrong, offensive and demeaning of our National award what this type of commentary and journalism does is mock the Order of Australia established by Australians for Australians when we left the Imperial system.

It didn't take long for the bloggers to get on board reinforcing the journalist's sentiment and lamely accepting that it's all a rort. Penny Wensley could be forgiven for being upset but we won't know because her position prevents her from responding to cowardly, ill informed commentary. So the journalist's his tirade will pass unanswered. Penny might also be a little ruffled given the role she played in the aftermath of the floods but then again Mr. O'Connor probably missed that too.

I suspect Peter Costello couldn't care; in politics you learn to be resilient. In a quiet moment however he might wonder why he left a lucrative career as a barrister at the Victorian Bar to serve his Nation. I know why – he wanted to make Australia a better place and I saw that first hand. We had our moments but I never doubted his commitment, determination and application all day every day over those 20 years.

Make no mistake if we as an organization and as members of this Association do not fight back, speak up and become activists for the awards given to us by the Nation then be prepared for more of the same.

Your awards will be mocked, discounted and devalued. As it is, media generally remains confused about the Order of Australia; how many of us have sought to brief journalists and editors before publication only to still end up with a dog's breakfast in print. The public share in that confusion so we have a responsibility to respond and act.

Shane L. Stone
National President Order of Australia Association

