

May was an event-filled month with two morning-teas and the inaugural recipients' lunch for those receiving awards on Australia Day.

Mr Simon Newcomb OAM entertained 26 members and guests at morning-tea on Tuesday 17 May at the United Service Club and on Friday 20 May my wife, Valerie, and I were warmly welcomed by members and guests at the Toowoomba Regional Group's morning-tea. The Toowoomba function featured a welcome to two new members, about to receive their award the following week, and a thoughtful and entertaining talk by Rod Stirling AM.

Your committee's decision to change the way the Association engages with and welcomes new members into the Order was vindicated with 97 people attending a recipients' lunch held at the Botanical Cafe in the grounds of Mount Coot-tha Botanic Gardens on Wednesday 25 May. Attendance was made up of 14 recipients and their guests together with members and their guests. While the Botanical provided an excellent venue on this occasion, the dining room was at capacity and your committee is investigating other venues for the Queen's Birthday recipient's lunch in September to which I hope we attract more awardees and their guests. The move to a cost effective lunch format at a venue providing



Welcome
from Queensland
Branch Chairman
Tony Webber AM

*To foster love of and
pride in Australian
citizenship
and to uphold the
high principles
and prestige of the
Order of Australia*

easy parking and access was welcomed by members and it is hoped will be attractive to more members to give support to new awardees on the next occasion.

Hon Secretary Geoff Cowles OAM and I had the honour to represent OAA as official guests at the recent

investitures held over four days in the period 23 – 30 May. We both regarded it as a great privilege to join with family and friends to witness new members invested in the Order and to join with them in the celebrations afterwards.

Geoff and I together with Past Chairman Mick Davis AM returned to Government House on Sunday 5 June to represent the Association at the Queensland Week open day. Set up in a corner of the investiture room we engaged with a steady stream of visitors explaining the Australian Honours system and encouraging them to nominate persons for an award. Mick delivered his well received PowerPoint presentation on the Australian Honours system on four occasions throughout the day.

Looking forward, I will be attending the lunch planned for members of the Bundaberg Regional Group on 16 July 2011 at Mount Perry and will be the speaker at a Sunshine Coast Regional Group lunch to be held at Tranquil Park, Maleny, on Thursday 28 July 2011. These occasions will allow us to welcome both recently invested new

members to the Order and those named on the Queen's Birthday to their respective regional groups. The 2010 Sunshine Coast Regional Group Convener, Malcolm McDonald OAM, is unable to continue in this capacity and this presents an opportunity for a new member to serve the Association as its Sunshine Coast Regional Convener. □



Queensland Branch Past Chairman Mick Davis AM explains the Australian Honours system to visitors at Government House Open Day



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JULY
2011

ISSUE 2, 2011

ABN 40008612664

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Message from the Hon Shane Stone AC QC, National President of the Association

The headline banner claimed 'At last, a gong for a good guy'. It was a very prominent article written by a 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. However, before I do 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. The award originates from other individual Australians making nominations that are scrutinised more than your tax return hence the number of nominations that fail.

There is no Prime Ministers, Premiers or Chief Ministers list – this is Australia, not the UK. The process is awash with integrity and driven by Australians from all walks of life.

To the 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 on to identify a recipient

he approved of. For my part, based on what he wrote about the gentlemen concerned, 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 organisations.

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 complemented her award of Officer of the Order of Australia in 2001 - For service to the development of Australia's international relations, particularly through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Oh no, not true it's all about "Big Gongs go 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 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 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 organisation 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 remain 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. □

Queen's Birthday 2011 Awards

Forty-three Queenslanders received awards in the Order of Australia on the Queen's Birthday 2011. The Association extends congratulations to these outstanding members of our community each of whom has made a significant contribution to our nation.

Celebrating in style with Australia Day award recipients at the Botanical



Presenting our special guests at the Botanical: Back row (standing) – Geoff Cowles OAM, (Hon Secretary); Spencer Routh OAM; Frank Sullivan OAM; Lew Cooper OAM; Jim Rebgetz OAM; Errol Brumpton OAM; Richard Pietsch OAM; Bill Curnow AM; John Harden AM, (Vice

Chairman and MC); Tony Webber AM, (Chairman) Front row (seated) Margaret Lucas OAM; Margaret Thorsborne AO; Sr Mary Lawson AM; Zoe Rathus AM; Fay Jorgensen OAM; Margaret Proellocks OAM. [Absent from photo - Kerry Herron AM]

The luncheon held on 25 May 2011 at the Botanical Café in the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens in Brisbane to celebrate with recipients of awards in the 2011 Australia Day honours attracted 97 participants and proved a great success.

Fourteen of the 64 recipients who received an award in the Order of Australia in this year's Australia Day honours attended with their families and friends. It was also pleasing that 21 of our members were there to celebrate with these 14 outstanding Australians who were inspirational when delivering their two-minute statements about why they received their award and what it meant to them personally.

John Harden AM performed a sterling job as Master of Ceremonies and ensured that the event ran smoothly throughout. We were pleased that Sister Mary Lawson AM, one of our new recipients, delivered Grace to give thanks for the fine food prepared for us. A number of toasts were also proposed throughout the proceedings. Tony Webber, our

Report from Geoff Cowles OAM Hon Secretary

Chairman, delivered the toasts to the Order of Australia and the Association; Paul McNally OAM from Toowoomba proposed the Loyal Toast and Dina Browne AO gave the toast to our special guests – the recipients. We were treated to a wonderful speech of response from Zoe Rathus AM, who spoke on behalf of the 14 recipients present offering some great personal insights and a thank you to the Association for organising the event.

However, the real highlight of the luncheon was to hear the short two-minute accounts from all 14 recipients. Geoff Cowles OAM, our Secretary, felt privileged to be given the honour to introduce each recipient to the gathering and invite them to speak to us all. "The backgrounds of our recipient guests were many and varied; however, each had a wonderful story to share with us. It was indeed a pleasure and

a privilege to be celebrating the great achievements of our 14 special guests in such pleasant surroundings."

The luncheon was a departure from the evening receptions at the Parliamentary Annex the Association had arranged for recipients and their families and friends in past years. Many members present, who have been regular attendees at past evening receptions, thought this lunch format was a positive step in the right direction. Many thought it great that they could drive to the event in the daytime without car parking difficulties. Flushed with this positive feedback your committee will be having another similar luncheon in late September to celebrate with our 2011 Queen's Birthday recipients. We hope many more recipients and many more members will attend this next event to celebrate with our newest members of the Order of Australia. You can contact Geoff Cowles OAM on 3351 4991 or geoff.cowles@aanet.com.au if you want more details about the next luncheon. We hope to see many of you there.

□

Secondary Schools Citizenship Awards

We are delighted that long-time supporter, the Honeycombes Property Group, has committed to providing sponsorship for the Student Citizenship Awards for the next 3 years. Mr Peter Honeycombe says his company is proud to be involved and to sponsor the Awards again.

“The Awards play an important part in recognising the huge input students have into their communities. This recognition encourages wider participation in citizenship activities and provides students with strong role models.” The sponsorship enables us to continue to provide the certificates

*Up-date from
Dina Browne AO*

and medallions and to keep the costs of the function at a reasonable level for students, their guests and our members. We are also able to offer small travel subsidies for students coming from far afield, who might otherwise not be able to attend the presentation. Thank you Honeycombes Property Group!

The awards process is well underway with all state, Catholic and independent schools receiving our information and nomination forms in the past few weeks. Thank you to those keen members who have undertaken to contact local secondary schools and ensure that

they are aware of the Awards. The deadline for nominations is Friday 29 July and the awards presentation will be on 16 September 2011 in the Old Legislative Council Chamber at the Queensland Parliament House, to which you are invited.

Further information can be obtained from the awards convener Professor Klaus Bremhorst AM (Tel: 0417 742 146; Email k.bremhorst@uq.edu.au), from Dina Browne AO (Tel: 32360128; Email db@worthseeingmedia.net) or the Honorary Secretary of the Queensland Branch - Geoff Cowles OAM (Email geoff.cowles@aanet.com.au).

□

Out of the flood – Report on Brisbane morning-tea by Tony Webber AM, Chairman

Simon Newcomb OAM, who received his award on Australia Day 2007 with the citation “For service to the sport of rowing in Queensland through administrative and coaching roles”, entertained 26 members and guests at morning-tea at the United Service Club on Tuesday 17 May 2011.

Simon dealt briefly with his own distinguished rowing career, which included representing Australia at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, to concentrate on his dream to making the sport of rowing available to all children regardless of the school they attend or what socio-economic area they live in.

When he retired in 2003 he set out to establish a second ‘grass

roots’ youth rowing programme to provide the opportunity for all young children to row.

Initially he received fierce opposition from state and local government but in his own words ‘NO’ meant a fight!

Tenacity and persistence prevailed and in October 2010 the first stage of the first new public rowing club to be built on the banks of the Brisbane River in nearly a century was opened.

Luckily the building had been designed to withstand flooding, something not expected to be tested within a year of opening by the 2011 Brisbane floods. While sufficient warning allowed most boats to be taken to high ground, the loss of infrastructure and equipment amounting to

\$400,000 including the pontoon was heartbreaking.

Simon’s account of the flood and in particular the aftermath and the strong support for cleaning up the site with volunteers coming from all sectors of the community was inspiring, as was the unsolicited donations of building materials and equipment. In concluding, Simon reminded those present that tax deductible donations through the Australian Sports Foundation will assist the youth rowing programme.

Members wishing to learn more about the program or to arrange a visit to the club can contact Simon at beautynewc@ozemail.com.au or phone 37013444. □

left: The Rowing Shed almost under flood waters and, below: Volunteers cleaning the top of the shed.



News from the Regional Groups

Gold Coast Regional Group

Report: Bill Collins AO, Convener

The Gold Coast Region held a lunch at the Southport Golf Club on 28 June 2011. Forty-two members and guests attended to hear the guest speaker Professor Errol Maguire AM RFD, a local association member who is an eminent senior consultant at the Gold Coast Hospital and Professor of Surgery at Griffith University. He spoke on the life of a surgeon and his military experiences.

As in previous years, it is planned to hold a garden party late in October for which arrangements are yet to be made. There will be a mail-out to regional group members in due course.

Darling Downs Regional Group

Report: Paul McNally OAM, Convener

Forty members of the Association and guests attended a morning-tea in Toowoomba on 20 May. Queensland Branch Chairman Tony Webber AM and his wife Valerie attended and Tony brought members up-to-date with Association activities. He encouraged them to consider attending the 2012 Annual Conference to be held in Darwin in April next year.

Those present warmly welcomed and congratulated two outstanding Toowoomba citizens, Fay Jorgensen OAM and Margaret Proellocks OAM, who received their awards on Australia Day 2011.

Rod Stirling AM, a member of the Darling Downs Regional Group, addressed those present. Rod spoke of his experiences during visits to the United States to study innovative farming techniques. Rod received his award on Australia Day 2001 "for service to



Fay Jorgensen OAM, Tony Webber AM and Margaret Proellocks OAM

agriculture in the Darling Downs district, particularly through the introduction of progressive farming technology and innovative irrigation techniques, and to the community."

The next event for the Darling Downs Regional Group will be held in October and invitations will be sent in early September.

Central Queensland Regional Group

Report: Raymond Young OAM, Convener

The Association's Central Queensland Regional Group is busy receiving nominations from school students from Capricornia secondary schools for its "improving our community awards."

Ray Young OAM, the group's convener, is very enthusiastic about the initiative. "This local award provides an opportunity for members of the Capricornia community and local members of the Order of Australia Association to engage with the region's future leaders as they demonstrate their public speaking and research capabilities in this competition."

The award will be presented to participating students selected from their school community from grades 8, 9 or 10 on a subject of their choosing which illustrates an initiative to improve our community. A panel of adjudicators who are Central Queensland members of the Order of Australia Association will choose the winning presentation. The judging will focus on both the content and style of the presentation. The award presents each student with a real challenge in today's world of great technological marvels in that only palm cards can be used for their presentation. The use of PowerPoint for example is not permitted. Clearly then the ability to demonstrate good public speaking skills will be evident in the eventual winner.

Bundaberg members - 12 March lunch



The Queensland Branch Committee supports the initiative, which also has the backing of the National Committee. The Queensland Branch Committee considers this local award complements its state-wide Senior Student Citizenship Awards now in their 13th year.

The Capricornia "improving our community" award programme will reach its exciting climax at a special presentation at the annual luncheon to be held at the Rockhampton Leagues Club, Cambridge Street, Rockhampton on Monday 5 September 2011. Emeritus Professor Tony Webber AM, Queensland Branch Chairman, will be guest speaker.

Nominations from interested secondary school students for this award close on Fri. 5 August 2011.

Bundaberg Regional Group

Report: Kevin Gould OAM, Convener

The group's successful social held on 12 March was attended by 53 guests including 27 members of the Order of Australia. Local member Dr Henry Ung OAM was guest speaker and told of many interesting experiences he has had during 42 years practising medicine in Gayndah. Being the only doctor to service a huge area for so long and with his many contributions to the community, Dr Ung's award in the Order on the Queen's Birthday 2007 "for service to the community of Gayndah as a medical practitioner" was well merited. The Bundaberg Group's next social will be at Mount Perry on 16 July.

Sunshine Coast Regional Group

A lunch for members of the Sunshine Coast Regional Group will be held at Tranquil Park, Maleny, on Thursday 28 July 2011. Members and guests from other regions may attend. Download a booking form from the Queensland section of our website - www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au

It's well worth visiting the Queensland branch segment of our website at www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au from time to time. It contains lots of useful information for members.

We will aim to post details of forthcoming Queensland branch functions. Also forms for you to download to book for these functions are available.

If you become aware that a function is coming up and it is not listed on the website and you do not appear to have received forward details we suggest you email Geoff Cowles OAM, the Secretary, at geoff.cowles@aanet.com.au or phone Geoff on (07) 3351 4991 and details will be provided to you.

2012 National Conference

The Order of Australia Association 2012 national conference will be held in Darwin on 12 and 13 April 2012. Details are still being finalised but it is expected that the conference will be held in the Darwin Convention Centre and the preferred hotel is likely to be the Vibe/Medina Waterfront Hotel Darwin. The Northern Territory branch committee has proposed both a Lord Mayor's reception and a Parliament House reception. The conference program will include an oration; a multifaith observance and wreath laying at Christ Church Cathedral; the Association's AGM; a members' forum; the Annual Dinner; and tourism options. Details will be published on the Association's website and in The Order as they become available.

Would your business like to sponsor a page for the next Bulletin?

You will note that Cox Rayner Architects has kindly sponsored the front page of this edition of the Bulletin. If you are also interested in sponsoring a page in the next edition (October 2011), please contact our secretary Geoff Cowles OAM on (07) 3351 4991 or geoff.cowles@aanet.com.au

Dates to remember

16 July 2011 Bundaberg Regional Group lunch
28 July 2011 Sunshine Coast Regional Group lunch
5 September 2011 Central Queensland annual lunch and Capricornia "improving our community" award presentations
16 September 2011 Secondary Schools Citizenship awards presentations
September 2011 (date to be advised) Queen's Birthday recipients' lunch
October 2011 (date to be advised) Darling Downs Regional Group event
29 October 2011 Gold Coast Regional Group garden party
November 2011 (date to be advised) Annual General Meeting and annual dinner
12 and 13 April 2012 National Conference, Darwin

Nominating for an award in the Order of Australia

Members of the Association are encouraged to nominate outstanding Australians for awards in the Order of Australia. If you know a person you consider might be a worthy recipient of an award, you can obtain a nomination form online at the Honours website www.itsanhonour.gov.au or you can leave your name and postal address on the Honours free call, 24 hour answering service - phone: 1800 552 275. You can also write to The Secretary, Order of Australia, Government House, Canberra ACT 2600.



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Mr Raymond Young OAM, Member

Mrs Dina Browne AO, Co-opted Member

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