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Of course, our Association cannot continue to thrive unless we ensure that worthy Victorians become Order of Australia recipients. Statistics show that the number of nominations for Order of Australia honours is growing every year, and it is my great hope that Victorians will be well represented among the nominees. Our communities are enriched every day through the efforts of conscientious citizens, but they may never receive the recognition they deserve unless we take the time to nominate them. You can read more about the statistical side of The Order of Australia on page 7.

Finally, I express my gratitude to all past and present Committee Members, who have done so much to keep our Association running smoothly. Thank you as well to all the volunteers who have made our many events and activities possible. And to all our members, many thanks for your strong support.

Message from the Outgoing Chairman

John Wertheimer

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John Wertheimer

Outgoing Chairman, The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch
AUSTRALIA DAY 2006... And Beyond

By Brig. Geoff Christopherson AM with Mrs. Marjorie Morgan OAM

As in 2005, The Order of Australia Association (Victoria Branch) celebrated Australia Day 2006 with a Flag Lowering Ceremony on the Victoria Barracks Parade Ground followed by a reception in the Victoria Barracks Officers’ Mess. Those who attended (more than 160 members) will remember, the weather was typically Melbourne: very hot at the beginning of the function and then, just as the Flag Lowering was about to start, rain clouds built up. Fortunately, the rain held off long enough for the parade to take place, for members to adjourn to the comfort and the hospitality of the Mess, and for the band to start playing under cover.

The Parade and Flag Lowering Ceremony was performed by the band of 2/10 Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, under their Bandmaster Staff Sergeant Alan Kirkman, and by Air Cadets of 417 (City of Bayside) Squadron under the command of Pilot Officer (AAFC) Trevor Owens. Warrant Officer Class 1 Paul Zajac, RSM Ceremonial, Victoria Barracks Melbourne, conducted the rehearsal and ran the very impressive ceremony.

The Victoria Branch has recently received approval to have the Victoria Barracks Officers’ Mess for the Australia Day ceremony in 2007. Members who were present at the 2005 and 2006 Australia Day functions at the Barracks will remember how much the historic buildings added to the sense of occasion on those days. The Association is very pleased that once again the Barracks are available for our ceremony at the close of Australia Day 2007.

New Members Welcomed

This year’s New Members Reception honouring Victorians who received Order of Australia awards in 2006 was held on Wednesday, 23 August at The Melbourne Town Hall.

Col John Wertheimer AM, Chairman of the Victoria Branch of The Order of Australia Association, and Councillor John So, The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, made speeches of welcome and extended their congratulations to new award-winners in the lovely Yarra Room.

Lord Mayor John So respectfully acknowledged that the reception was being held on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation before congratulating new Order of Australia recipients for their outstanding contribution.

At the conclusion of the speeches, Mr. Max Chester OAM, Secretary of the Association, read out the names of new recipients as they came forward in alphabetical order to be personally congratulated by the Lord Mayor. More than 80 new awardees were in attendance.

Col Wertheimer thanked the Lord Mayor and the Melbourne City Council for hosting the event, especially in light of the Lord Mayor’s busy schedule. Col Wertheimer reminded those present that earlier in the day the Lord Mayor had presented Dame Edna Everage with the Keys to the City of Melbourne for her fiftieth anniversary of world class entertainment.

Also in attendance were members of the Victoria Branch and invited family and friends. In total, about 180 people were on hand to celebrate the many achievements of Victoria’s latest Order of Australia recipients. This excellent turnout provided many chances for Association members to renew old acquaintances and to make new friends.

Photographs of the event are available for viewing and download at the Victoria Branch website: www.oaavic.wertheimer.com.au
The Annual General Meeting of The Order of Australia Association (Victoria Branch) was held at The Naval and Military Club in Melbourne on Friday, 27 October 2006.

The outgoing Chairman, Colonel John Wertheimer AM, presented his report, and Treasurer Mr Geoff Neilson AM presented the financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2006. This was followed by the election of a new Committee for the upcoming year. The Victoria Branch is now in the capable hands of the following Office-Bearers:

**Chairman** - Mr Geoff Neilson AM  
**Vice-Chairman** - Mr Don Hyde AM  
**Hon. Secretary** - Mr Max Chester OAM  
**Hon. Treasurer** - Mr Eugene Falk AM OBE  
**Committee** - Brig. Geoff Christopherson AM  
Mr Kevin Howard OAM  
Mrs Marjorie Morgan OAM  
Mr John Rodda OAM  
Mr Richard Rozen OAM; and  
Mr Rowan Story AM.  
**Ex officio** - Colonel John Wertheimer AM  
(Immediate Past Chairman)

Mr Neilson paid tribute to the outstanding leadership provided by Colonel Wertheimer during his three years as State Chairman. Colonel Wertheimer devoted enormous time and energy to the Branch’s activities during his chairmanship, with the notable assistance of Anna Koskinas and other members of his staff. A highlight of his term was the highly successful 2005 National Conference in Melbourne, an event that will long be remembered by everyone who attended. Victorian members of The Order are greatly indebted to Colonel Wertheimer for his generous and dedicated support of our Association.

**Morning Tea with the National Chairman**

The second Celebrity Morning Tea for 2006 was held shortly after the Annual General Meeting at The Naval and Military Club. On this occasion the National Chairman of The Order of Australia Association, Dr Neil Conn AO KStJ was the guest speaker and his presentation was drawn largely from his role as the Chancellor Designate of St John Ambulance Australia. Dr Conn was awarded an AO in 1996 for his service as the Under Treasurer of the Northern Territory and has held a string of high profile positions over the last twenty years in the government, private and academic sectors.

Dr Conn opened his speech by describing the “privilege and joy” of being involved with the largely voluntary ambulance service, a feeling that was highlighted by this year’s motor racing event at Mount Panorama, Bathurst. The event was strongly supported by St John who provided a broad range of services for the weekend event. Four main stations were manned for a combined period of 120 straight hours and small units on bicycles also patrolled the grounds. These services (provided entirely by volunteers) reduced hospital cases by as many as forty incidents over the weekend by being first on the scene, providing accurate and timely diagnoses and remedying smaller issues on site. In total seven hundred and seventy people sought assistance from St John staff over the weekend and only seven cases required transport to hospital.

For Dr Conn one incident from the event summarised the huge importance of the service St John provides. In this particular case two volunteers were alerted to a man having a seizure. A bicycle team were at the site in moments, quickly assessed the situation and placed the patient in the coma position to aid recovery and prevent choking. The man then stopped breathing and the St John team successfully revived him twice before an ambulance arrived. The man turned out to be a holidaying St John Volunteer and he has made a full recovery.

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Dr Conn AO KStJ and the new Victorian Chairman, Mr Geoff Neilson AM at the Morning Tea Function
Regional Events and Activities

The **Western Suburbs Region Group** has now been formally established after two years of preliminary work. The group’s inaugural meeting was held at the Williamstown RSL Club on Sunday, 1 October 2006. The main purpose of the meeting was to select the members of the group’s committee. First, Mr Royce Pepin AM MBE GCSJ was elected Chairman and assured the meeting of his desire to grow the group. Six committee members were then unanimously elected: Mrs Judy Hindle OAM, Mr Rex Swann OAM, Mrs Noala Flynn AM, Ms Mary Salter AM, Mrs Joan Craggs OAM, and Mr John Nicol OAM. Before the meeting’s close the new Chairman expressed the thanks of all present for the time and effort put in to the establishment of the group by Mr Lance Woodhouse OAM.

The **North Eastern & Goulburn Valley Group** hosted a luncheon at the Yarrawonga and Border Golf Club in August at which the Hon Tim Fischer AC delivered a wide-ranging address on Australia’s heritage and history, with special emphasis on the nation’s tourism and railway industries. Mr Fischer later commented to Chairman John Rodda OAM that ‘it was a great lunch and good to see that the Association is alive and well’. The NE&GVG is eagerly awaiting entries for its 2006 School Project Awards. At least three schools are expected to take part, with the winner to be named at the group’s Annual Meeting on 26 November 2006.

The **Mornington Peninsula Region Group** presented their 2006 School Project Awards on Friday 4 August at the Mornington Country Golf Club. The Awards Programme, now in its seventh year, was established to encourage secondary schools in the Frankston City and Mornington Peninsula area to undertake projects which exemplify pride in Australian citizenship by improving the quality of life in local communities. This year’s first-place winner was Mount Erin Secondary College, Frankston, which created a Therapeutic Martial Arts Program (T-MAP) utilising Eastern ideals and philosophies to promote the values of self-discipline, personal pride, and non-violent conflict resolution. The school received a cash prize of $750 along with an inscribed plaque and a certificate. Runner-up honours went to Woodleigh School, which received $250 for their Sustainability Centre, while Toorak College was commended for their Parade of Poverty that raised awareness and funds for The Oaktree Foundation. The awards were presented at the Group’s Annual General Meeting and Luncheon on Friday, 4 August 2006 at the Mornington Country Golf Club. Guest Speaker at the event was Channel 9 newsreader and media personality, Peter Hitchener, who spoke of the difficulties he experienced in reporting on the Beaconsfield mine disaster. Also in attendance were the Group’s patron, Dame Beryl Beaurepaire AC DBE and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE.

The Patron of the Mornington Peninsula Region Group, Dame Beryl Beaurepaire AC DBE, presented The Order of Australia Medal Board to the Mayor of the Mornington Peninsula Shire, Cr Brian Stahl OAM at the Regional Group’s Annual Dinner.

The Board features examples of Order of Australia medals accompanied by an explanation of the Australian honours system. It will be prominently displayed in a public place to be decided by the Shire Council.

“The presentation was the culmination of many years of striving by many people”, said the Chairman of the Regional Group, Mr Harry Macdonald OAM.

“Fostering love of and pride in Australian Citizenship, & upholding the high principles and prestige of The Order of Australia Association”
The over 90 members and guests who attended the Annual Dinner were entertained with choral music performed by ‘Sound Waves’ (conducted by Margaret Brown) and were treated to an address by the former Governor-General of Australia, the Right Reverend Dr Peter Hollingworth AC OBE.

Members of the Barwon Region Group have been treated to some outstanding performances this winter. First, members enjoyed an outing to Neville Gaynor’s Theatre in Leopold to view ‘Mrs Henderson Presents’ featuring Judi Dench. A production called ‘Life is Beautiful’, an orchestral event produced in Berlin to celebrate the year 2000, was also presented. More music was on offer as 80 Association members and guests took in the Geelong Advertiser Music Competition on 29 July 2006. This prestigious competition was held in the Costa Hall at the Geelong Waterfront Campus of Deakin University. The outstanding young competitors amazed the concert-goers with their skill, with violinist Laura McCartney taking out the local competition and fellow violinist Kylie Liang winning the national competition.

The annual luncheon and Annual General Meeting of the Central Highlands Region Group was held on Sunday 2 April at the Charles Napier Hotel of the Sovereign Hill complex. A record number of 58 members and guests attended the function for which the theme of the year was ‘Young Citizens’. Attending and speaking of the Association’s organizational objectives and plans was Regional Support Officer John Rodda OAM and Mrs Mary Rodda. The guest speaker was Stephen Moneghetti ASM who captured the attention of all with anecdotes of his reign as Mayor of the Commonwealth Games Village.

According to a report supplied by Chairman Keith Rooney OAM, sixty-one members of the Eastern Suburbs Region Group enjoyed a unique experience on 8 July as guests of The National Boys’ Choir of Australia at their headquarters in Ringwood. The afternoon was arranged by Mr Harold Bird OAM, who was the Administrative Director of the Choir for 27 years, and his wife Yvonne, who was deeply involved in the Choir and acted as Treasurer and Financial Manager for 18 years. Harold began the meeting with a brief introduction and history of the Choir, followed by a fascinating talk by Yvonne about her involvement at rehearsals, concerts, television, workshops and tours. The couple then gave a combined talk – illustrated with large colour posters – on the topic ‘The Award-Winning Qantas Ad – I Still Call Australia Home – And How it was Done’. Says Mr Bird, ‘The talk had barely finished when the doors burst open and the recently returned Tour Choir of 40 members came in procession, singing, and took their places beside the piano.’ In beautiful three-part harmony they performed ‘Ave Maria’ by Camille Saint-Saëns; ‘Cerf-Volant’ (Kite Flying), a French song by Chrisophe Barratier and Bruno Coulais; and four songs from Fiddler on the Roof. Because of their proximity to the choir, the audience had a concert they will never forget. ‘It truly was an emotional experience,’ says Mr Bird. To top things off, members were invited into the main rehearsal room to observe 103 choristers hard at work practicing for the mid-year Concert. After an afternoon tea in the reception area every member went home ‘with a song in the heart’. The Group wishes to convey their warmest thanks to the Choir Staff: Peter Casey (Artistic Director), Philip Carmody (Co-Music Director), Robyn Cochrane (Accompanist), Dermot Tuttty (Teacher & Tutor) and Jan Eldred (Secretary).

The Eastern Suburbs Group has also resolved to sponsor three children through The Smith Family organisation for the next twelve months. This sponsorship will help the children, who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, to receive a quality education. The Group hopes their sponsorship may continue in years to come.

If you have any news relating to your region, its activities or any of its members please send it to our branch office! Details are available on the cover.
“It takes courage to recognise that our society is not perfect and that we need to work together to improve.”

Early Life

Victoria’s new Governor, Professor David de Kretser, has something in common with a growing number of Australians: he wasn’t born in this country. For the first nine years of his life, he lived with his family in Sri Lanka. He arrived in Australia with his parents and elder brother in 1949, and still remembers the kindness of a family friend – “an Irish lady who had been a friend of my uncle”, he recalls – who took the family in after their arrival.

“Tremendous acts of kindness like that change the way you think about a country and settling in,” said Professor de Kretser in a recent media interview. Not surprisingly, a concern for the needs of migrants promises to be a major theme of his term as Governor.

Medicine Man

The de Kretser family settled in Melbourne, and young David was educated at Camberwell Grammar School. He went on to study medicine at the University of Melbourne, receiving his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degrees in 1962. He planned to become a surgeon, but was diverted by an interest in research. He received his Doctorate of Medicine from Monash University in 1969.

Professor de Kretser quickly established himself as a leading researcher and educator in the field of male reproductive biology. During a career spanning more than 40 years he held many prestigious and important posts, serving, for example, as the foundation director of the Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR) and Associate Dean of Monash University’s Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to medical science in Australia, the Professor was named an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2000.

Man of the People

When Professor de Kretser was invited to speak to Premier Steve Bracks last year, he had no idea it was because he had been selected as Victoria’s next governor.

“I thought I was going to talk to the Premier about science and technology”, he said in a recent interview. “To get offered the governorship, it takes the wind out of your sails a bit. I think he described to somebody else I looked shocked, which I was.”

In accepting the post, Professor de Kretser has had to leave behind most of his work as a medical doctor and researcher. While the step was reportedly a difficult one for him to take, the Professor has already found that the role of governor provides him with a new forum to discuss the health issues he has studied for so long. In June of this year, he surprised hundreds of RSL members by opening their annual state conference with a speech stressing the importance of men’s health.

“I never thought we’d get such a powerful message,” the state president, Maj-Gen David McLachlan, said afterwards.

Professor de Kretser is also keen to promote volunteerism and community spirit. In his inauguration address, he emphasised the need for “communication, compassion and courage” in any successful society. Victorians, he said, should strive “to communicate with those who do not have English as their first language” and to “extend their compassion [to] each other and those disadvantaged in our society”.

“It takes courage,” he said, “to recognise that our society is not perfect and that we need to work together to improve.”

In his work as Governor, Professor de Kretser is joined by his wife of 43 years, Jan. He also enjoys the support of four sons, Steven, Mark, Ross and Hugh, and three grandchildren. When not busy with official duties, the de Kretser family hope to spend time at their weekend getaway in South Gippsland.

The Order of Australia Association, Victoria Branch, is delighted that such a distinguished “migrant, medical practitioner, scientist, educator, husband, father and grandfather” has agreed to be our Patron.

Government House Open Day

Friday 26th of January, 2007

Professor David de Kretser and Mrs. Jan de Kretser invite all citizens of Victoria and visitors to the State to an open day at Government House in Melbourne on Australia Day.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact Deborah Roberts on 9655-4211 or at deborah.roberts@govhouse.vic.gov.au
A Growing System

The numbers show that the Australian Honours System has grown rapidly in recent years. Since 1998, the number of nominations received for Order of Australia and other awards has increased by 76 per cent and the number of awards granted has increased by 59 per cent. Nominations continue to grow at a rate of around 12 per cent a year.

Within the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General is a body called the Honours Secretariat, the role of which is to research all received nominations before handing them over to the final decision-makers. In the case of The Order of Australia, this is the Council for The Order of Australia. The Council then makes final recommendations for awards to the Governor-General.

In 2005, the Secretariat received approximately 2500 submissions for Order of Australia awards. The Council for the Order of Australia considered 1943 nominations that had been previously processed by the Secretariat and granted a total of 1123 awards. In other words, approximately 58 per cent of the nominations considered in 2005 were successful.

In two recent reports prepared by The Office of The Official Secretary to the Governor-General of Australia, a statistical snapshot of the Australian Honours System has emerged.

Statistics published by the Secretariat of The Order of Australia reveal the number of nominations considered and awarded by sex and by field for the year 2005 and for all years from 1975 to 2005 (inclusive).

The numbers show that more men than women are considered for awards compared with 565 (29%) women. Of these, 774 men (almost 69 per cent of all recipients) and 349 women (31 per cent) actually received awards.

Secretariat statistics also show the number of nominees considered for and granted awards by professional category since 1975. Award recipients are divided into 30 categories according to the field of activity in which they have been most active. The largest number of recipients fall under the category of ‘Community’ – 8351 awards have been granted in this category since 1975, which represents more than 40 per cent of all Order of Australia recipients. The next largest category, accounting for less than 9 per cent of all recipients (1713 recipients since 1975), is ‘Sport and Leisure’. The category with the lowest number of recipients to date is ‘Information Technology’, with only 6 recipients since 1975.

In most professional categories, male recipients outnumber female recipients by a wide margin. In only two categories do female recipients outnumber male recipients: ‘Library Services’ (66 per cent of recipients in this category are women) and ‘[Services to the] Disabled’ (52 per cent women). An equal number of awards have been given to men and women under the category of ‘Information Technology’ (three awards per sex). Women constitute between 40 and 1.5 per cent of recipients of awards under every other category except for ‘Surveying and Mapping’, under which a woman has yet to receive (or even be nominated for) an award.

While the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General does not keep statistics on the number of Order of Australia nominees and award recipients per state, an analysis of the honours list for 2005 shows that Victorians have received approximately 19 per cent of all Order of Australia awards, while residents of New South Wales have received approximately 37 per cent of all awards. This means that the proportion of awards going to New South Wales more closely matches that state’s share of the Australian population than does the proportion of awards going to Victoria.

Who wins

Statistics published by the Secretariat of The Order of Australia reveal the number of nominations considered and awarded by sex and by field for the year 2005 and for all years from 1975 to 2005 (inclusive).

The numbers show that more men than women are considered for and receive Order of Australia awards, no doubt reflecting the different rates at which men and women are nominated. In 2005, 1378 (71%) men were considered for awards compared with 565 (29%) women. Of these, 774 men (almost 69 per cent of all recipients) and 349 women (31 per cent) actually received awards.

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The Victoria Branch of The Order of Australia Association is committed to increasing the number of Order of Australia nominations from Victoria. If you know of a Victorian whom you believe should be nominated for an Order of Australia award, the Victoria Branch can help supply nomination forms and other support.
As mentioned in Volume 48, the Victorian Branches of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MEOBE) and The Order of Australia Association (OAA) have a social affiliation. For many the MEOBE may already be a familiar organisation but for those who know little about our friends here is a concise history of The Order.

Australia’s origins as part of the British Empire mean that until 1975, the military and civil achievements of Australians were recognised by awards under the British (Imperial) system of honours. In 1975, the Imperial system was largely replaced by the Australian system, of which the Order of Australia is a part. Some Australian states continued to recommend their citizens receive Imperial awards until 1989, when Tasmania and Queensland awarded Imperial honours for the last time. On 5 October 1992 Prime Minister Paul Keating announced that the Federal and State governments had agreed that no more recommendations would be made for Imperial honours from within Australia. Australians continue to be eligible for honours which are within the Sovereign’s personal gift, such as the Order of the Garter and the Order of Merit.

The British Imperial honours system has a long history, as England was among the earliest European nations to establish meritorious orders. King Edward III established the Order of the Garter in 1348 and it remains Britain’s premier order. Three Australians have been admitted to the order, including Sir Ninian Stephen in 1994 (the Sovereign personally selects members of the Order so Australians remain eligible). Other early British orders include the Order of the Bath (founded in 1725) and the Order of St Michael and St George (1818), which were awarded to senior Australian military officers for the first time during the Boer War. This was in keeping with the practice – that persisted until the nineteenth century – of restricting appointments to British orders to members of the aristocracy and high-ranking military figures.

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MEOBE) was created by King George V in 1917 to reward service to the British Empire in the United Kingdom and abroad. By this time it was clear that the nature of war had changed, and the King wished to recognise the contributions of ordinary citizens (including, for the first time, women) who had been mobilised in a wide range of fields. This Order also greatly increased the number of awards available to Australians, as competition from the various British colonies for a limited number of honours had previously restricted supply. In the beginning, the Order increased the number of Australians receiving Imperial honours from around seven per year between 1901 and 1917 to around fifty per year after 1917. This number grew even more as the years passed, with around 650 MEOBE awards made to Australians per year by the late 1970s. In total, over 16,900 Australians have received MEOBE honours.

In addition to awards made under meritorious orders such as the MEOBE, all military honours awarded to Australians were considered part of the Imperial system until 1975. Thus, even such well-known Australian medals as the Second World War Australian Service Medal and the Vietnam Medal (established in 1968) are considered Imperial awards. As scholar Michael Maton has pointed out, ‘Most of those who march on Anzac Day each year will still be displaying a vast array of Imperial awards and it will only be … the younger members of today’s armed forces who will be wearing the current range of Australian awards.’

While Imperial honours such as the MEOBE are no longer being awarded directly to Australians, they naturally continue to be awarded in Britain. Recently, Prime Minister Tony Blair ordered the Commons Public Administration Committee to review Britain’s system of honours in light of some public criticism of the system. The committee recommended that the Order of the British Empire be replaced with an Order of British Excellence. The committee also praised the Australian Honours system, recommending that Britain adopt Australia’s selection system for honours. Whether or not these recommendations are eventually adopted, Michael Maton has rightly pointed out that both British and Australian honours ‘have a proud heritage and deserve to be treated with respect, for they acknowledge that the recipient has provided valuable service to his or her country’.

For further information please consult:

Press-

Online-

Commander’s Insignia of The Order of the British Empire

A Brief History of Imperial Honours

Imperial Honours

Did you know?

The most recent order of precedence in which Australian orders should be worn (published in 2002) specifies the following order for awards under these two systems:

Post-nominal Award

- AK/AD - Knight/Dame of the Order of Australia (No longer awarded as of 1986)
- GBE - Knight/Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire
- AC - Companion of the Order of Australia
- KBE/DBE - Knight/Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire
- AO - Officer of the Order of Australia
- CBE - Commander of the Order of the British Empire
- AM - Member of the Order of Australia
- OBE - Officer of the Order of the British Empire
- MBE - Member of the Order of the British Empire
- OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia
- BEM - British Empire Medal

A complete list of Australian Honours and Awards and the order in which they should be worn is available online at: www.itsanhonour.gov.au/honours/awards/wearing.cfm.

Professor Kim Rubenstein, Director of the Centre for International and Public Law at The Australian National University is currently writing a biography on the immediate past president of the Victorian Branch of the MEOBE and has written this article specifically for this newsletter.

Educator and Leader:

Joan Montgomery AM OBE is the Immediate Past President of The Victorian Association of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Although discussion of the Association’s future had begun earlier, it was during her Presidency that the decision was taken to wind up the Association in May 2007 and to enter into ‘social affiliation’ with the Victoria Branch of the Order of Australia Association. Such an initiative was new to Joan for it was during her presidency of the Association of Heads of Independent Girls’ Schools of Australia (AHIGSA), from 1979–81, that negotiations began to merge with the Headmasters’ Conference of Independent Schools of Australia (HMCISA). The resulting Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) was formed on 26 August 1985.

Joan’s capacity for leadership was evident in her twenties. As a young teacher at Frensham in Mittagong, NSW, she was influenced by the school’s notable founder Winnifred West who created an atmosphere giving every encouragement to her keen young staff. Another mentor, Constance Wood, Headmistress of Tintern CEGGS, where Joan taught from 1955–57, predicted Joan would return to the place of Joan’s own schooling, PLC, as Principal.

Joan’s stint at Tintern was between two periods teaching in London, 1952–54 and 1958–59. She returned to Australia at the end of 1959 at the age of 34 to take up the position of Headmistress at Clyde School at Woodend, a post she held from 1960–68. In 1969, Constance Wood’s forecast was realized when Joan became Principal of PLC, a position she held until she turned 60 in 1985.

Joan’s leadership as Principal of these two girls’ schools over 25 years is too far reaching to condense into a short profile. Her many admirers, both staff and students of the school, speak of her attributes as a leader and role model. Her fellow teachers praise her ability to attract great teachers. Like Joan, many of these teachers had travelled widely and had gathered a range of life experiences that enriched their teaching. For her part, Joan allowed them space to develop their own initiatives and gave them the support they needed to pursue them. A number of these teachers later became Principals themselves.

Religion played an important part during her time as Principal at PLC. Joan’s name and that of PLC were often in the press during the late 1970s and 1980s as the future control of the school was determined after the formation of the Uniting Church on 22 June 1977. A property commission had been established prior to Union and it had determined that PLC and Scotch College in Victoria would remain the property of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. This determination led to several years of litigation and an ultimate settlement that PLC was on and from 30 April 1980 incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and ‘existing for educational purposes in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria’. Despite great protests from the school community and the wider educational community around Australia, Joan’s contract, which allowed both parties to extend her contract beyond retirement age of 60 to 65, was not renewed by the Council of the school, leading to her retirement at the end of her 60th year in 1985.

In addition to her remarkable impact on women’s education in Victoria, Joan has continued throughout her life to play a significant part in the community. Joan has been on many school and tertiary councils and boards. Joan was on the Council of The University of Melbourne and its various committees, together with that of Ormond College and Medley Hall. Joan has also been a Board or Committee member of the Alfred Hospital, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, the Baker Institute, and the Lyceum Club to name just a few of her many activities. In 2004 Joan was added to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. Since retiring Joan has lived mainly at Shoreham, recently returning fully to Melbourne.

The Current Committee

Major General Jim Barry AM MBE ED RFD was elected President of The Victorian Association of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire at the AGM in May 2006. Jim is an experienced sports administrator who has officiated at three Commonwealth Games and ten Olympic Games. He was awarded an MBE in 1978 and an AM in 1998 for services to sport, especially gymnastics.
Jim Asimakopoulos OAM has a simple message for Australia: “People with disabilities are people with abilities.”

Jim has lived with Cerebral Palsy all his life, but his disability has not prevented him from living a full life and giving back to his community.

“Cerebral Palsy affects the way my muscles move,” says Jim, “but I am strong and healthy.”

“I can think, feel and move around on my own. I have a job, I am married to my wife Connie and have three step children.”

Jim also has an active career as the Manager of the Abilities and Disability Awareness Program, which he pioneered in 1988. The aim of the program is to promote awareness of the many things that people with disabilities can do.

In the 18 years the program has been operating, Jim has visited over 2000 schools and delivered over 4300 talks.

Jim serves as a role model for students by demonstrating how people can overcome challenges and develop their abilities to the full.

He has even made a film called ‘Jim’s Movie’ that shows him driving his Batri-car, visiting schools, and playing footy, cricket and golf.

“I am a sports fanatic,” Jim says.

Everyone who attends one of Jim’s presentations receives a copy of his book, called ‘Jim has overcome his disability’.

His goal is to deliver 5000 presentations to schools and other organisations. At his current rate of 100 talks a year, he should achieve this goal in another seven years.

In recognition of his achievements as an advocate and role model, Jim received a Medal of the Order of Australia on the Queen’s Birthday this year.

“I want to take this opportunity to thank all the schools and community groups I have been involved with since 1988,” he said. “I feel humbled and honoured by this award.”

Back in 1989, Rifka Knox OAM realised that her knitting skills could help her do something for the abused, battered and homeless people of Melbourne.

‘I wanted to help them’, she recalls, ‘but how? I looked down in my lap and there was my knitting. I thought, that will do.’

With only two other volunteers to help her, Rifka established Knitters for Melbourne’s Needy Inc. (KFMN), a non-profit organisation that provides hand-knitted garments for disadvantaged Melburnians. From the beginning, the garments were distributed for free by welfare organisations, who guaranteed that the garments would not be sold.

‘I didn’t want the articles sold or raffled, as these things often are,’ says Rifka. ‘I wanted them given, fresh and beautiful, to people who really needed them.’

Thanks to Rifka’s leadership and dedication, KFMN grew steadily. Today, more than 800 volunteers support the organisation Australia-wide, most of them knitters. In fact, Rifka reports that KFMN has all the knitters it can handle for the time being! An incredible 129,000 garments have been given away, representing more than $10 million of donated time and materials.

All garments are made to a very high standard. In particular, garments must be warm, with long sleeves. V-necks are out because they are too cold. Gloves, baby clothes, rugs, cot covers and toys are also made by some volunteers. Knitters can choose their own colours and yarn types, and Rifka keeps a database of each knitter’s preference.

‘Some of the volunteers don’t like red wool, some only like pastels, some only knit babies’ things and others only do scarves,’ says Rifka. ‘Each volunteer has their special likes and dislikes, and somehow we get all the knitting done, packed and sent out to the organisations.’

Because KFMN supplies its volunteers with yarn, knitting needles, patterns and buttons, donations are always welcome.

For more information about Knitters for Melbourne’s Needy, visit their website: http://home.vicnet.net.au/~kfmn/
Richard Hawkins’s new book *The Old Tin Trunk – A Sailor Looks Back* weaves an amazing tale of adventure on the high seas, taking the reader over icy northern waters, down to Africa and across the Mediterranean, into combat in World War II and onto Australia’s calmer waterways once the war is won. Even more amazing is that Richard lived it all – *The Old Tin Trunk* is his life story.

Richard Hawkins OAM loved boats from an early age and saw active service during World War II. Though torpedoed, bombed, shelled and mined, he made it through and was appointed second-in-command of a destroyer in the British Pacific Fleet in 1945.

When his period of service ended, Richard embarked on many more journeys and adventures, including a trans-continental move from Great Britain to Australia. In their new home, Richard and his wife set about exploring the beautiful waterways of Victoria. Richard’s efforts to document and protect these natural treasures earned him a Centenary Medal in 2001. In 2003, he received a Medal of the Order of Australia ‘for service to the community of the Mornington Peninsula and to the boating fraternity, particularly through the publication of books to assist in navigating local waters’.

Through it all, Richard has kept a tin trunk full of diaries, photographs, and memories. In his book these are carefully unpacked to build a story full of intriguing coincidences, narrow escapes and lucky breaks. *The Old Tin Trunk* is sure to appeal to anyone who shares Richard’s love of boats, sailing and the sea, conservation and the environment, and most of all, adventure.

Elaine Walters OAM wants to build a drug-free Australia, and she has written a series of books presenting her case against what she regards as a dangerous and misunderstood substance: marijuana.

Her book, *The Cruel Hoax: Street Drugs in Australia*, was first published in 1996. In it, she describes the medical and social consequences of widespread marijuana use and advocates for stricter controls on drug use in Australia.

Walters builds her case mainly through a question-and-answer approach, providing detailed, well-researched answers to such questions as ‘What are the psychological effects of marijuana?’; ‘How prevalent is marijuana use among young people?’; and ‘Is there a drug problem in the Australian workforce?’ Her answers are the result of many years of study and of providing counselling services to drug-affected families.

The information Walters provides can be frightening at times, but Elaine remains optimistic about the power of education to counteract the spread of drugs in our society. An entire chapter of the book is dedicated to providing parents and teachers with strategies to protect children and adolescents from the harmful effects of drugs. This makes the book a good read for anyone who is responsible for the care of young people or who wants to better understand a serious issue facing the future leaders of our nation.

Elaine Walters was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2000 for her work as one of Australia’s leading authorities on street drugs. Her message of education and prevention in the fight against drugs continues to be an important one for our communities.

**Correction:**

The listing of Australians honoured on Australia Day and the Queen’s Birthday in the previous edition of the Victoria Branch Newsletter (Autumn/Winter 2006) was unfortunately short by one name. The Reverend Father Gerald Paul Ryan OAM was not listed.

Father Ryan was awarded his OAM on the Queen’s Birthday of 2006 for his service to the Catholic Church through pastoral roles in parishes in Victoria, and as an early contributor to the liturgical movement in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.
Order of Australia Victoria Branch

Housekeeping

Recruit an Award Member

Help to strengthen the ranks of our Association by inviting Award recipients who are not members to join and enjoy the events and fellowship of the Association. Application forms may be obtained from Anna Koskinas at The Order of Australia Association Victoria Branch:

Phone: (03) 9650 5286
Email: anna.koskinas@wertheimer.com.au

Lost Your Insignia?

Recipients who have lost any of their insignias should contact:

The Honours Secretariat
Government House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Cheques should be made payable to: The Collector of Public Monies. Alternatively, contact Linda Condon on 02) 6283 3617 to pay by credit card over the phone.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA INSIGNIA REPLACEMENT PRICE LIST

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Association Merchandise

To enquire and order from the Association’s merchandise range including ties and scarves please contact Richard Rozen OAM, National Merchandise Officer:

TIES: New style $35.00
Old style $30.00

SCARVES:
New style twill or Chiffon $27.50

WHITE SCARVES: $10.00

PENS: $10.00

Postage $2.00 on mail orders.

Richard Rozen OAM
Merchandise Officer
3/144 Were Street
Brighton, VIC 3186
Tel: (03) 9592 8068
Fax: (03) 9592 1767

Victorian Nomination

How to Nominate

Anybody in the community can nominate any Australian citizen for an award within The Order of Australia. To obtain a nomination form, phone the Australian Honours Secretariat’s 24 hour toll free line: 1800 552 275.

The Victoria Branch has prepared a guideline document in PDF format to assist with nominations. The document is available at www.oaavic.wertheimer.com.au or through the branch office. These materials are intended as a guide only.

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions:

What happens after a nomination is received?

The Honours Secretariat thoroughly researches details of the person’s service within the community. Nominations are then submitted to the Council for The Order of Australia for consideration.

What is the Council for The Order of Australia, and what is its role?

The Council for The Order of Australia is an independent advisory body which meets twice a year to consider all nominations and to make recommendations to the Governor General for awards within The Order of Australia (General Division). In considering nominations, the Council establishes, from the information provided by the nominator and referees, whether the service of the person put forward is over and above what would reasonably be expected from someone in a similar position.

What is the role of the Governor-General?

Under the constitution of The Order of Australia, the Governor-General is the Chancellor of The Order of Australia and is charged with its administration. All awards within The Order are authorised by the Governor-General acting on the advice of the Council for The Order of Australia.

When are the awards announced and how long does the process take from the time a nomination is submitted?

The names of successful nominees appear in the Honours Lists published twice a year - on Australia Day, 26 January and on the Queen’s Birthday in June. Recipients are invited to attend an investiture (awards ceremony) at Government House in the state in which they reside and the investitures usually take place in April/May and September/October each year. The time it takes to research and prepare a nomination, from when it is received to when it is presented to the Council, can vary from eighteen months to two years.