CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Well I hope you have survived the cold winter without too many ailments and we now look forward to a new Spring and warmer months.

One of the joys for me of being involved in our Association is that I get to work with many inspirational people from all walks of life. Each has a unique story and all have contributed significantly. I have recently been inducted as a Knight of St John of Jerusalem (KSJ) at a very colourful ceremony at Newman College at the University of Melbourne on June 17th.

There are many members of the Association that have been recognized with Honours from this Priory and our own Dame Barbara Akeley AM DJJSJ is in fact Prior of Victoria for the Order.

The Queen’s Birthday Honours have been and gone and it was great to see over 200 Victorian people recognised with honours. No doubt you know some of these worthy recipients and may have played a role in their nomination. The increase in the number of women to just over 30% was pleasing to see. However we have a long way to go. I would like to challenge each of you to nominate at least 1 woman in the next 6 months to show that we are fully behind this desire to increase female numbers in the Honours’ system.

The investiture of these new awardees will take place at Government House on the 18th and 20th of October. As Chair of the Victorian Branch I am privileged to be able to attend in an official capacity at these investitures. Our Governor Linda Dessau AC, is very supportive of our Association and really enjoys hearing the stories of each person receiving their award.

Our Inspiring Australians Oration for 2018 has been booked for February 23rd at 11am at Federation Square. Susan Alberti AC, will deliver this special Oration and bookings are now open at https://www.trybooking.com/PFTH.

Paul Wheelton AM KSJ

SOUTH CENTRAL BRANCH - BAYSIDE SCHOOLS

ANZAC DAY SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EVENT

The RSL Hampton Sub-branch hosted a special Anzac Day ceremony for the Bayside [Victoria] schools. There were nearly 400 students from several schools who took part in the commemorative event on 21 April 2017 at the RSL premises in Hampton. The initiator of this project Dr John Basarin OAM said: “It is believed that this ceremony enhanced the students’ understanding of the significance and meaning of Anzac Day, by participating at an event specifically designed for them”.

The Bayside based Rotary Clubs of Brighton, Brighton North, Hampton, Beaumaris and Sandringham supported and assisted with the event. The ceremony promoted the recognition of Anzac Day by young people in schools in Bayside. The President of the Hampton RSL Mr Peter Lanigan said: “The outcome for this Anzac Day project will benefit local schools, students and the community and will be held again in 2018”.

Lt. Col. Garry Spencer AM, laid a wreath, in the form of a book, on behalf of the Order of Australia Association, South Central Regional Group.

Keep up to date through our website www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au
ARCHIBALD PRIZE IS COMING TO GEELONG (VICTORIA) LATE 2017

Australia’s most popular art prize, and one of its most prestigious, Archibald Prize will be coming to Geelong in 2017. Since its inception, the Archibald Prize has been engaging art enthusiasts, often stirring up controversy and always challenging the way we see ourselves and our society. Over the years, the prize has been awarded to many of Australia’s most prominent artists.

The Geelong Gallery is the exclusive Victorian venue for the 2017 Archibald Prize

An invitation is extended to all Order of Australia Association members Australia wide to attend the OAA Barwon Regional Group annual luncheon at Davidson Restaurant and the 2017 Archibald Prize Exhibition tour at the Geelong Gallery lead by Gallery Director Jason Smith on Thursday November 30.

We know the 2017 Archibald Prize will appeal to Order of Australia Association members Australia wide. If you would like to receive an invitation to the OAA Barwon Regional Group annual luncheon and Archibald Prize Exhibition tour in Geelong on Thursday November 30, 2017 please advise Secretary Helene Bender OAM on helenebender@westnet.com.au or Mobile 0407 261 951. If you have already asked to be included on our invitation list for this event – thank you, no further communication is required.

GIPPSLAND REGIONAL BRANCH

The fifth annual Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet Address and Dinner will be held in Traralgon on Wednesday 18th October with Guest Speaker Professor Doug Hilton AO, CEO of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne.

Professor Hilton has a distinguished career in Molecular Biology dotted with several awards; from the Young Achiever of the Year in 1989 to receiving an AO in 2016. He received his Australian Award for his service to medical research, his advocacy of gender equality and his commitment to supporting young researchers.

His address: entitled “From Bench to Bedside”, will tell of his research into how genes can affect blood cells in a manner that could lead to new ways to diagnose and treat diseases such as leukaemia, arthritis and asthma.

We are proud of the fact that we have been able to have high calibre students from Gippsland Universities sponsored by Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.

For further information please contact Beth Delzoppo at: bdelzoppo@bigpond.com.au.
HELENE BENDER OAM, COMMITTEE MEMBER, ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION VICTORIA BRANCH

In senior school Helene Bender had the opportunity to volunteer at Orana Children’s Home in Burwood; the experience of helping to make a difference has stayed with her. Helene is a firm believer of giving back to the community if your time allows.

January 2006 Helene was awarded her Order of Australia medal (OAM) for “Service to the community of Geelong, particularly through business and commerce, regional development, local government and tourism organisations. Her volunteer work pre 2006 included Director and President of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Chair of Geelong Advertiser Business Excellence Awards, Board member of City of Greater Geelong Economic Board, Deputy Chair Committee for Geelong, Board member of the Travel Agents Co-op and Director of the American Society of Travel Agents.

They say you should always leave on a high. Helene did that in October 2007 after nine years as a Director of the Geelong Football Club. Saturday September 29, 2007 the Club created history in many ways with numerous awards and that much awaited Premiership. She was also the Founder and Inaugural Chair of Nine Lives-Geelong for ten years and in 2008 was awarded Life Membership of the Club.

In the last ten years Helene has held paid and unpaid positions on various Boards and Foundations including Chair of Barwon Health Foundation for six years, Director Tourism Victoria, Chair Geelong Cats Sports Foundation for five years, Geelong Grammar School Council member, Deakin University including seven years as Deputy Chancellor, Director Dental Health Services Victoria, Director Geelong Cemeteries Trust, Volunteer at St John of God Geelong Hospital including member of Consumer Advisory Group, Anam Cara House Geelong Ambassador and Secretary of the Order of Australia Association Barwon Regional Group for five years and elected to the State Branch November last year.

The Order of Australia Association like many community organisations faces the challenge of membership retention and ensuring new recipients take up membership. Helene acknowledges the hard working Regional Groups, the quality of events they organise and their informative articles in our e-Newsletter and The Order. Collectively they ensure the Victoria Branch is strong and a National asset.

VICTORIA BRANCH FUNDED OAA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

During the dinner at this year’s National Conference evening three OAA Foundation scholarships were presented. One of these scholarships was donated by Victoria Branch to Mr Jordan Eitler studying at Deakin, Geelong.

Each scholarship is valued at $45,000, paid over three years with each recipient also allocated an expert mentor. Access to such a mentor greatly enhances the value of the scholarship.

The Victoria Branch gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of its Chairman, Paul Vheelton AM, KStJ and the donation of $2500 from the North-East Victoria and Goulburn Valley Regional Group in assisting with the Branch’s contribution.

Jordan's proud parents, Darleen and Phil, were present during the ceremony.

The following is the citation read by Hugh Morgan, Chairman of the Foundation, when presenting Jordan to the Governor General.

Jordan Eitler is a Deakin University (Geelong Campus) student from Wodonga in Victoria. He is enrolled in the double Degrees of Bachelor of Criminology and Bachelor of Laws, where he has achieved excellent results.

He completed his secondary education at Catholic College Wodonga in 2013, achieving an ATAR score of 87.4. He then took a gap year traineeship in a certificate 3 course in Education Support. This led to a position as an assistant to the Department Manager. His main role was to support refugees and students with learning difficulties. As a member of the North Geelong Football Club Jordan enjoys the community involvement, time apart from studies and consolidating his leadership talents.

When Jordan was twelve his father incurred a life changing accident and Jordan needed to take a major responsibility to assist his mother with a large family, including assisting with the family finances. There was significant stress in the family during the time of pursuing compensation for his father’s injury and it was this experience which kindled Jordan’s interest in law. Jordan hopes to eventually start his own law firm where he can create an environment for lawyers who have similar community values to himself.
SOUTH WEST GROUPS’ VISIT TO WARRNAMBOOL’S NEW $55M CANCER CENTRE

The highlight of the mid-year meeting of the South West regional group was a visit to Warrnambool’s new Cancer Centre – a remarkable community achievement for a rural city of 32,000 residents.

Forty-three members and guests attended a luncheon which was held in a function room of the newly renovated RSL. Special guests were Jordan Eitler, who was sponsored by the Victoria Branch for a 2017 OAA FOUNDATION Scholarship; Vicki Jellie, the founder of “Peter’s Project” and Liam Jukes, the Director of the Cancer Centre.

Vickie was proclaimed, on Australia Day, “Australian of The Year” in “The Local Hero” category in recognition of her wonderful achievement in establishing “Peter’s Project”. The members of the project team created the momentum at State and Federal Government level and in the regional community to achieve the construction and equipping of a state of the art $55m cancer treatment centre.

The Peter’s Project team also had to locally raise $5m of this total. Liam Jukes, with a staff of 20 directs the Centre for Epworth Hospital Services. A feature of the Centre is that there are no gap payments for patients.

The Rotary Clubs of Warrnambool, with assistance from other regional clubs, had earlier constructed “Rotary House”, a 12 unit facility to provide accommodation for country patients receiving daily treatment at the regional hospital. This facility is now also serving the needs of patients at the Cancer Centre.

The motivation of Vickie to establish Peter’s Project, was the loss of her husband Peter to cancer. Peter and Vicki had a school age family and Peter’s prolonged absences to receive treatment in Geelong and Melbourne, away from his beloved family, was heart rending to him and his family. This new Centre now eliminates such absence for regional patients.

Jordan won the admiration and love of the group with his account of why he is studying his double degree at Deakin University in Geelong.

The members, after their meal, were transported by bus for the inspection of the Centre and returned to the RSL for their coffee, tea and slices. There was universal acclaim for the excellence of the function.