



Chairman's Report

I am pleased to cover off quite a few topics in my Report.

The first one is that we have managed to recruit rather well for Victoria State Branch with one members term expiring and another two members stepping down for health/family matters. Our three new members are of exceptional quality and I am delighted that already in just the first few meetings they are showing leadership abilities and initiatives that will enhance not only State Branch but the Regional Groups. The new members are Cathy Roth OAM, Christine Unsworth AM, and co-opted member, now full member Neil Soullier OAM.

We will never be caught out again when it comes to succession planning as already in place are people who at the next AGM can step up as Chairman, Deputy Chair and further down the track, roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Groups Coordinator and Communications Project Leader, will all have people ready to take over those roles.

It was wonderful to have our National Chairman Peter McDermott AM CFC do a roadshow of quite a few areas in Victoria during November and without exception, all enjoyed he and Heather's company. At times some of the discussions were robust but very much open, frank and with great solutions on how we can move forward as an Association and in particular how the Regional Groups can increase their standing within the Association.

In relation to the topic of merchandise, it has been a great initiative of the Victoria Branch to make sure that we have increased income from what works for many organisations similar to the Association.

Victoria has certainly seen excellent returns with this initiative of an increased range of merchandise, better marketing, and promotion of the range, and also the unbelievable ability of one of our members to buy it at such reasonable rates. We already have turned around our sales and I am sure other Regional Groups and State and Territory Branches can attest to making some good money for their local area out of merchandise. A fairly general statement but it shows where it's headed, there has been more profit made from merchandise in the last 12 months than there has been in the last decade of the Order of Australia Association.

On another pleasing note, it's important to know that the Melbourne Conference ran at a profit and half of that profit has been distributed to National. Our aim was to make it affordable for our members to attend what turned out to be a 7 day conference calendar. One negative that I have highlighted in our local newsletters is that we simply had too much on the agenda where some people really wanted to do multiple events that were on at the same time and obviously that wasn't possible.

One of the key moving forward initiatives of the Victoria State Branch is the strategic review that we have implemented that will first look at State Branch, its workings, its activities, and

its forward planning and then that will filter down to the Regional Groups. One of our State Branch members does this for a living and already just in our initial meeting we have saved many thousands of dollars by donation of her services, her mediation skills and her follow through. This is something to be noted that I was questioned about – is anyone paid for services that we bring on board re strategic reviews, merchandising, conference organising etc and the simple answer is no. When you are relying on volunteers you generally have a strike rate of 8/10 but when we can incorporate professionals of the highest standard into our Association members we receive their network and their skill set free of charge which is quite amazing.

I am also pleased to note that membership is up in all areas except one for the State of Victoria for the 2014 year and even with the sadness of some members passing away or in a simple financial sense unable to pay annual subscriptions if they haven't become a Life Member, we are still moving in the right direction instead of going backwards.

The Governor of Victoria and I have many discussions and it was pleasing to note that it was the biggest number of recipients ever at Government House in Victoria for the 2014 year.

There were over 170 recipients with quite a few apologies due to unavailability or ill health but as the Governor himself said, "this is the biggest group of Australian Honours recipients from the State of Victoria for a long time and perhaps ever". With that in mind, we are trying to encourage quality nominations from all walks of life and help people with how to nominate and how to get the referees. I still think this is a big part of what the Association needs to do as many people including some of our senior politicians believe it's an "elitist" group of individuals and as we all know it's far from that.

On another pleasing note, support and sponsorship is in place for 2015 and in some cases for the next 2 years, taking in 2016 with a business plan of increased funds under management and most importantly recognition for those who sponsor us in cash or in kind.

I am looking forward to a rather exciting year for the Order of Australia Association in Victoria and leading the team through to November when my term expires as State Chairman and already on our calendar we have some exciting events and some excellent guest speakers in mind who will be entertaining, informative, educational and above all, people that most of our members would not have had the chance to meet.

I thank our National President, our National Chairman, our National Treasurer and all other Executive members for their valued time, initiatives and support over the last 12 months and I wish everyone continued luck, health and happiness for 2015 and for a successful conference in Perth in March.

David G. Mann OAM
Chairman – Victoria State Branch

**For more information about our Association
check our website www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au**

AUSTRALIA DAY State Committee Members Contribute as Australia Ambassadors

Australia is a wonderful country, a country of great opportunities, including the opportunity to contribute to our community and help make a difference.

As we know, the Order of Australia system recognizes the outstanding contribution of citizens in the diverse fields of the arts, business, entertainment, government, science, sport, and the community. Whilst an Order of Australia award recognizes the contribution already made – the very large majority of the recipients continue to strive to make a difference as part of their dedication and commitment to their particular field or to the community generally.

Australia Day presents a great opportunity to reflect on what Australia and being an Australian means to us. Everyone is encouraged to consider what they may be able to do for their community to help make a difference.

In Victoria there are over 140 Australia Day Ambassadors who travel to, and attend more than 140 communities across Victoria each year to spread the message of national pride at Australia Day activities. Many of the Australia Day functions include the moving Citizenship Ceremonies and the inspirational local Australia Day Citizenship Awards.

It may come as no surprise to learn that the members of the Committee of the Order of

Australia Association, Victoria Branch, have all been appointed as Australia Day Ambassadors and attend Australia Day activities to enthusiastically “talk up” Australia and explain why each of us are proud Australians.

Victoria Branch Chairman, David Mann OAM, has been involved with the Victorian Australia Day Council for years (including doing an outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies at many of the Australia Day Ambassadors Receptions). Australia Day 2014 David decided to attend the impressive Flag Raising Ceremony at the Shrine of Remembrance. Deputy Chairman (Country) Duncan Stalker OAM spoke at Heywood. The other Victoria Branch Committee members attended and contributed to various Australia Day events across Victoria.

The Shire of Gannawarra had two Victoria Branch Committee members as Guest Speakers at Australia Day ceremonies at Quambatook (Bill Horman AM APM) and at Lake Charm (Neil Soullier OAM).

For Australia Day (Life) Ambassador Bill Horman, Australia Day is his favourite day of the year. “The experience of being welcomed into communities is wonderful. Time and time again he has received invitations to return to the communities to participate in various other events and a number of life-long friendships and great contacts have resulted. And it is not uncommon because of his lengthy Police service for current or retired police members to attend to say “hello” and his periods as State President of Neighbourhood Watch often brings some of our Neighbourhood Watchers to events as well.

It has also given him and his wife the opportunity to spend a couple of days in communities all around Victoria – and several years ago he was the guest speaker at an Australia Day breakfast event in Barham NSW and then travelled back to Kerang (Victoria) for a later event. An extremely busy Australia Day for them was when they attended and spoke at Australia Day events at Nhill, Rainbow, Dimboola and Jeparit.

A wonderful Australia Day for Bill was to be invited to be the Australia Day Ambassador at Campbelltown in Tasmania (where he had spent a number of years as the Tasmania Police Commissioner), and following his Australia Day Address was then invited by the then Mayor to accompany him to another Australia Day event at Poatina where he spoke as well. “That was a very special and rewarding Australia Day for me” remarks Bill.

“Having worked in jobs where I spent time in every State and Territory in Australia, as well as having the wonderful opportunity to work and study in number of overseas countries, made me really appreciate Australia, and to well-understand what has contributed to me being a very proud Australian which I am more than happy to share with others anytime, particularly on Australia Day”.

All members on the Victoria Branch Committee have the attitude and philosophy “what can I do to help make a difference” – which reminds me of those inspirational words in J.F. Kennedy’s inaugural address: “Ask not what your country...”

REPORT FROM SOUTH WEST GROUP

The South-west Victoria Group was pleased to welcome our National Chairman, Air Commodore Peter McDermott AM RFD, and his wife Heather, to our end of year and Annual General Meeting in Hamilton on Friday, 28 November 2014.

The day commenced with morning tea and then a guided tour of the Hamilton Art Gallery with the Gallery Director as our guide. The Hamilton Gallery is renowned throughout Australia as one of its finest regional galleries and has been very fortunate to receive a number of substantial bequests from Western District pastoralists over many years, and the predecessor of The Shire of Southern Grampians responded to these wonderful endowments with the construction of a very fine Gallery. It was a delight to have Dr Geoff Handbury AO, a member of our group and a generous benefactor to the gallery, present with us following a period of hospitalisation.

The luncheon which followed the gallery tour was attended by twenty five members and their guests. Peter Habersberger AM RFD was returned as President of the Group, with Duncan Stalker OAM, Secretary, and Andrew Suggett OAM, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer. We were delighted to welcome Bill Falkenberg OAM, a new member from this year’s Queen’s Birthday honours, with his wife, Heather, to our Group. We were also very pleased to welcome Dr. Dawn Peel OAM and Helen Paatsch OAM, two members who were first time attendees and who had traveled from Colac to attend.

Peter Mc.Dermott gave a most interesting address over a range of issues, which were of great interest, but which did not have all escape without challenge.

A matter strongly pressed at the meeting was the importance of each member ensuring that a wreath, in the name of the Order of Australia Association – South-west Group, is placed at their 2015 Anzac service in every city, town or district within our group. The secretary can provide some assistance for this.

Duncan Stalker OAM; Secretary.





WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND THANKS TO GREAT CONTRIBUTORS

The Victoria Branch Annual General Meeting was held at the William Angliss (Training Institute) Conference Room on 25 November 2014 and was extremely well attended. Forty-nine members signed-in – but the headcount indicated there were fifty-six in attendance. It was extremely pleasing to note that every Victorian Regional Group – from both the country and metropolitan regions – attended both the Annual General Meeting and the extremely pleasant lunch that followed.

Those attending the Annual General Meeting welcomed the Order of Australia Association National Chairman, Peter McDermott AM CSC and his wife, Heather, to the meeting and the outgoing National Chairman made a short address to the meeting.

An important agenda item at Annual General Meetings is the Election of Office-bearers – but on this occasion did not require an election as such. The Office holders were elected unopposed:

Chairman:	David Mann OAM	Honorary Treasurer:	Julian Stock AM
Deputy Chairman (Metropolitan):	Paul Wheelton OAM	Honorary Secretary:	Marion Lau OAM
Deputy Chairman (Country):	Duncan Stalker OAM		

There were three Committee positions to be filled and elected unopposed to the vacant positions were:

Mr. Neil Soullier OAM – who had been seconded to the Committee earlier and has already made an outstanding contribution in the area of OAA Merchandise working closely with fellow-Committee Member, Mr. Richard Rozen OAM (Merchandise Manager). Neil also made an outstanding contribution to the OAA 2014 National Conference held in Melbourne and everyone who was awarded with a plaque for his or her contribution to the Conference greatly appreciated the great plaques made by Neil.

Ms. Cathy Roth OAM – a consultant and very professional facilitator is another asset to the Committee and several months ago did an outstanding job in facilitating a Strategic Review Session for this Committee. Part 2 of the Review task will be undertaken by the Committee early in 2015, after which Regional Groups will become involved.

Ms. Christine Unsworth AM – who is extremely well-known throughout Victoria as “the face” of the incredibly successful Royal Children’s Hospital Good Friday Appeal. There is no doubt that Christine will be another very worthy contributor to the Committee.

THANKS TO CONTRIBUTION OF “RETIRED” COMMITTEE MEMBERS

For three different reasons, three great contributors to the Victoria Branch Committee did not seek re-election:

Mr. Wellington Lee AM OBE RFD JP – has been a Melbourne icon for decades. A former Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne, Wellington has been a proud and very positive contributor to the Order of Australia Association in general and the Victoria Branch Committee in particular. Wellington has also been a very action member of his local Regional Group. Wellington reached the maximum tenure under the rules as a member of this Committee and could not seek re-election – but, no doubt, will continued to be a great support and community contributor.

Mr. Brian Stahl OAM JP – former Mayor of Mornington and Chairman of the Victoria Branch Mornington Regional Group, has made an outstanding contribution to his local community and an outstanding member of the Victoria Branch Committee.

Very tragically Brian suffered the passing of his long-time wife, Bernice, prior to the Annual General Meeting. Understandably, Brian made the decision that he needed to make life-adjustments and felt his time could be most usefully spent contributing to his much loved Mornington Regional Group into which he has put so much time and effort. He will be sadly missed from the State Committee.

Mr. Richard Williams OAM – charity worker/fundraiser extraordinaire. Richard was awarded his OAM in 2012 for his incredible effort in funding raising for a number of charities including being a Director with the Life Education Board; was a founding member of the Pied Pipers Club and the list goes on and on. Last year Richard suffered a very serious health problem – cancer of the pancreas – and went through a 14hr operation to address the immediate issue. Richard has been an inspiration to many of us the way he has faced the challenge of his recovery – and then it was no surprise to learn, Richard immediately focussed on Cancer of the Pancreas Research and made the very understandable, and not surprising decision to forego his position on the Victoria Branch Committee to enable him to devote additional time to fundraising for pancreatic cancer research. His colleagues and friends all wish him well in his health challenges and his efforts to help make a difference in relation to fundraising for an extremely worthwhile cause.

Chairman of the Victoria Branch, Mr David Mann OAM paid glowing tributes and extended heartfelt thanks to the “retiring members”, Wellington, Brian, and Richard, for the outstanding contribution they made to the Order of Australia Association, to the Victoria Committee, as well as to their local communities. He extended best wishes to them for the future.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR ASSOCIATION
CHECK OUR WEBSITE www.theorderofaustralia.asn.au