

A STORY OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION - 1976 to 2009

This story is based on information taken from the Branch Minute Books since 1980, Branch Newsletters, Branch Chairmen's Annual Reports, the Record of Regional Functions from 1984 and National Committee/Executive/Annual Meeting Minutes. It shows the tremendous amount of committee members' time spent during the Bicentenary preparations (1986-1988) and the noticeably increased workload since 1993.

A detailed Chronological History taken from the same sources is available - with many attachments.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

On 18th May 1967, at the time of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Order of the British Empire, the Hon. Gough Whitlam MP asked in Question Time in the Federal Parliament whether the system of national honours and awards which Canada had just established during her Centennial Year had been noted or considered by the Australian Government. He and his parliamentary colleagues thought that it would be better to have a wholly Australian Order rather than the "archaically named" Imperial Honours which "cause embarrassment to our diplomats and servicemen in South East Asia and bewilderment in the countries where they serve".

The matter did not arise again until he became Prime Minister. He then consulted with the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr Pierre Trudeau, who made the services of Mr Karl Lachlan, the Secretary of the Order of Canada, available during 1973-1974.

In December 1974, when Mr Whitlam was received at Buckingham Palace, he outlined the proposed system to Queen Elizabeth II and gained her approval. It was also agreed that the Imperial Honours would continue for the time being (terminated in 1983), as would the Royal Victorian Order.

The establishment of the Order of Australia was announced by the Governor General Sir John Kerr GCMG GCVO QC (AK 1976) on Australia Day 1975 and, in February, its Constitution and other legal aspects were proclaimed by the Queen in the Australian Government Gazette. Twice yearly, Companions, Officers and Members are appointed to the Order and Medals are awarded – on Australia Day and the Queen's Birthday. The first three categories were established in 1975, while the additional levels of Knight and Dame were added in 1977 (but later abolished by the Hawke government). The Medal of the Order of Australia was also established in 1977.

Later, it was decided that distinguished persons who are not Australian citizens could be recipients of Honours in the Order in the General Division. The Order of Australia is different from the Imperial Honours in an important aspect: the method of selecting recipients. There is a Council of the Order. Nominations may be made to the Council by any person or organisation. The Council makes its selection from such nominations and recommends these to the Governor-General who makes the awards, with the approval of the Queen.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION

The first recorded steps to setting up The Order of Australia Association were taken by Alderman Ken Cavanough AM of Blakehurst NSW. On 31st January 1976 he wrote to Mr David Smith AO, Official Secretary to the Governor General, suggesting the formation of an Association of recipients of Awards. He was advised that the formation of such an association was a matter for the awardees but would be looked upon favourably by the Governor General.

The first recorded meeting of persons recognised in the Order was organised by Mr Bob (Robert) Hicks AM MBE when a dinner was held in Melbourne on 14th February 1978. This was followed by another dinner in Melbourne in February 1979.

Alderman Cavanough's efforts were eventually successful when 70 people met in Sydney on 21st September 1979 and it was agreed a steering committee should be formed. This committee linked up with the Victorian group and it was agreed a circular invitation be sent to the twelve hundred (1,200) existing recipients. This led to the first national meeting which was held at the Australian National University on 26th January 1980, followed by the first National Dinner that evening. Sir Colin Syme AK (the most senior recipient in Australia) became the first National President, Mr R Gordon Jackson AC (AK in January 1983) the first National Chairman and Mr Ken Cavanough AM the first National Secretary. (The Branch was represented at the latter's 100th birthday in December 2005 and his funeral in September 2006.) The two draft constitutions submitted by Major General Paul Cullen AO (later AC and Hon. Life Member) and Mr Ken Cavanough were submitted to this meeting for consideration by all States.

The Objects for which the Association was established remain the same today; the following is taken from the Memorandum of Association:

- a. To promote loyalty to the Sovereign and to the institution of the Crown and to foster love of and pride in Australian citizenship.
- b. To uphold the high principles and prestige of the Order of Australia.
- c. To afford means for members of the Association to conduct commemorative or other functions from time to time.
- d. To encourage continuing meritorious appointments to and awards of the Order of Australia.
- e. To foster awareness in the Australian community of Australia's history, traditions and culture.
- f. To promote good citizenship by example, by encouragement and by awards to individuals, institutions and organisations.
- g. To encourage the development and maintenance of a constructive and positive sense of national unity amongst Australians.
- h. To do such other lawful things as would further these objects.

It was agreed at this meeting that the Association should be a national association, with branches in all States and Territories.

Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen AK GCMG GCVO QC agreed to become Patron of the Association, as has every Governor General since then. Through the Secretary of the Order he also gave permission for the use of the emblem of the Order by the Association.

At the Annual Dinner of the NSW Branch in 1999, His Excellency The Hon. Gordon Samuels AC CVO, Governor of NSW, summed up the role of the Association when he said: "I can imagine the members of the Association being, in a sense..... ambassadors for the kind of thinking which will help to establish the rational society for which we hope in Australia. The emphasis upon service is, of course, itself a step in that direction".

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of The Order of Australia Association is open to all recipients of an award in the Order of Australia, as well as Honorary recipients in the General Division. The number of recipients joining the Association varies greatly from year to year; in the early days the figure seems to have been some 85-90% of recipients but has now dropped as low as 48%.

The National Association is the registered company (NAGM January 1986 – Motion for Incorporation passed unanimously) and has an office in Old Parliament House, Canberra (thanks to the work of Commodore Peter James AM – NSW Branch Chairman 1994-1997 and National Chairman 2001 – who died suddenly in January 2002). All membership subscriptions, annual and life, are paid to The Association and a per capita grant is paid to each Branch as a Branch Administration Grant. The amount of the 'BAG' is decided by the National Committee of The Association and will vary as the needs of the smaller branches and territories are assessed.

This grant covers the cost of branch newsletters, general administration, purchase of computer equipment, the telephone number/post office box, the setting up of regional groups and, when needed, the running of branch functions, especially welcome functions for new recipients.

During the 1980s, the follow-up of recipients from NSW who did not join The Association was undertaken by the Branch Secretary **in NSW**. There was some disagreement with the National Committee about this arrangement; however, it continued until 2002 when the role of National Membership Secretary was instituted and that person is now responsible for all membership matters.

NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

At a meeting held in the Sydney Town Hall on 22nd July 1980, it was moved by Major-General Paul Cullen AO, seconded by Mr Wallace Whitelaw OAM, that **the NSW Branch Of The Order of Australia Association be formed**. The agreement was unanimous and the following Office-Bearers elected:

President	Major-General Paul Cullen AO
Vice-President	Alderman Andrew Briger AM
Hon Secretary	Alderman Ken Cavanough AM
Hon Treasurer	Lieut. Colonel Leslie Mechtler AM
Committee	Mr John Chapman OAM, Mrs Christina de Vere AM, Mrs Eileen Dyer AM, Cdr. LT Frew OAM, Mr R Gordon Jackson AC, Miss Elsie Needham AM Mrs Vimy Wilhelm AO

It was agreed His Excellency Sir Roden Cutler VC AK KCMG KCVO CBE, Governor of NSW, be asked to accept the office of Patron. The Governor accepted and this tradition holds to the present day.

The names of all Branch Committee Members from 1980 to 2009 are recorded in Appendix 4

FINANCE

At the National Committee Meeting (NCM) held in Melbourne on 28th August 1980, it was agreed “that the NSW recommendation that 50% of the capitation fee be paid to the Branches, with a minimum payment of \$500 and an advance of \$250”, be accepted. On 25th September 1980, the Branch Minutes note receipt of a payment of \$1,130 – i.e. \$5 per head for 223 members. A further payment of \$905 is received on 13th July 1981 – a total of \$2,035.

The Branch’s first bank account was opened at the Commonwealth Bank, Kogarah, in November 1979, with cheques totalling \$6,790. Part of this amount was monies received for the National Dinner in Canberra on 26th January 1980 since Messrs K Cavanaugh and R Jackson were accepting the responses. The signatories were Messrs A Briger and K Cavanaugh, Miss E Needham.

At the National Annual General Meeting on 30th January 1982, Life Membership was instituted at a cost of \$100 per person and it was decided the financial year should run from 1st January to 31st December.

From that time until the present day there has been continual discussion by all the Branches about the BAG, the Life Membership Trust Fund and the need for an equitable share of the Association’s income. The early Minutes note some quite acrimonious correspondence between the Branches and the National Executive Committee on the amount of the disbursements and the need for the Branches to have an adequate share of the resources so that the Objects of the Association can be carried out in each State. At the present time the per capita grant is reviewed annually, the BAG received in two parts and the Association’s financial year runs from 1st October to 30th September.

As far as the NSW Branch is concerned, an administration account has existed since 1979 and used for various purposes, including the first National Dinner. Also held in it were the monies set aside by the Branch for Community Projects. At the time of the Bicentennial Celebrations two other accounts were opened for special purposes and subsequently closed, with a surplus of \$18,000 being transferred to the care of the National Treasurer who then wrote cheques for the Branch. However, at the National Committee Meeting in January 1993, after consideration of the arguments put forward by Peter James and John Moon OAM (later AM), it was decided to transfer this amount back to the Branch. The NAGM held in Sydney 2000 resulted in a surplus of \$10,000 for The Association. It was agreed \$5000 of this amount should be transferred to NSW as the State had undertaken the entire planning/organisation of the meeting, including pre and post tours, with special thanks to Elaine O’Brien OAM who had borne the brunt of this work. On 6th February 2001 a special meeting, held at the Chairman’s (M Doughty AM) home, looked at the possibility of setting up a separate account for community projects monies. Discussion on this matter continued until, at its meeting on 18th June 2002, the committee discussed a previously circulated paper (M Doughty) suggesting that an amount of \$12,000 be placed in a separate account – possibly with a credit union.

Finally, at a special meeting on 17th June 2003, the necessary paperwork to open an account with the Capital Credit Union was completed. The surplus from Branch functions is placed in this account for community projects. The administration expenses are covered by the BAG.

Cheque accounts and term deposits are now held both at the Commonwealth Bank (Administration) and at the Capital Credit Union (Community Projects).

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

From the beginning, the NSW Branch has been most fortunate in the people who have agreed to act as committee members. At the ad hoc meeting held on 21st September 1979 at the Aquatic Club, Potts Point, the following people agreed to act as a Steering Committee:

Alderman Andrew Briger AM	Alderman Ken Cavanough AM
Major General Paul Cullen AO	Mrs Christina de Vere AM
Mr R Gordon Jackson AC	Miss Elsie Needham AM

They remained in office until the meeting held on 22nd July 1980 when the NSW Branch was officially formed.

It was agreed that the draft constitutions drawn up previously by P Cullen and K Cavanough be used, as they were for the setting up of the National Association.

Fortunately for the Branch there was no time limit on the office-bearers' positions in these early days. There were some very strong leaders among the committee members who established a very sound basis for NSW, providing great stability and foresight, some remaining on the committee for many years. They were not afraid to state the Branch position to the National Committee so had an enormous input into the workings of the National Association. It is always **difficult** to name names but (in alphabetical order) Andrew Briger, Angela Carrick, Ken Cavanough, John Cambridge, John Chapman, Paul Cullen, Christina de Vere, Frederick Dobbin, Eileen Dyer, Gordon Jackson, John Lincoln, Alex Rigby and Rothesay Swan made great contributions to the work of the Branch and gave generously of their personal funds for such items as the Branch flags, the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II used at Branch functions, the banner erected in Mary-le-Bow Church in London, the Bicentennial celebrations and many community projects. There are some wonderful remarks recorded in the Branch Minutes and noted in the Chronological History as these members stepped down from the Branch Committee.

After discussion with all Branches, a sub-committee chaired by Sir Zelman Cowen was established and a new Memorandum and Articles of Association drawn up. This was passed at the National Annual General Meeting in January 1993. From 1994, this limits the term, at both a National and State level, of office-bearers and committee members. It has ensured the stimulus of new ideas but has had no adverse effect on the loyalty of past committee members. Appendix 1.

There have been many dedicated members in the ensuing years who have given generously of their wisdom, time and talents. They have continued to be available for advice and comment and to serve as co-opted members when needed.

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

At its meeting on 10th March 1982, the Committee agreed that a Branch Newsletter was needed **for continuing contact with all NSW members**. Newsletter No. 1 was produced in May 1982, under the editorship of Paul Cullen and John Chapman OAM. The latter continued to act as Hon. Secretary and Newsletter Editor until issue No. 21 was produced in October 1986. The incoming Secretary, John Lincoln AM, then undertook production of the Newsletter, followed by Keith Adams AM in February 1989. At the AGM in 1995, Giulio Vidoni OAM joined the Branch committee; with a background in publishing, he offered to assist with the production of a two colour issue. This was such a success that it has continued to be produced in two colours. In February 1999 Keith Adams stood down and Giulio Vidoni accepted responsibility for the editorship.

Following discussion on various Branch Rule changes during 2005, a Special Meeting was held on 19th July 2005; it was agreed that certain changes to the Rules be submitted to the AGM in November. Among these was a new clause 7.0a(ii) which read "Subject to Rule 7.0a (i) 'The Editor of the NSW Branch Newsletter shall be an Executive position, elected annually. The years of service shall be unrestricted, notwithstanding Rule 8.0f.'" This Motion was passed unanimously at the AGM on 30th November 2005.

The issues No. 1 to No. 72 were in black and white and produced five (5) times per year; Nos. 73 to the present day are in colour and have been reduced to four (4) issues per year.

All those connected with the production of the Branch Newsletter over the years have given most generously of time and talent, thus providing a continuous contact with all New South Wales members of the Association.

ARCHIVES

At the Branch meeting on 15th February 2000, a proposal by G Vidoni was tabled, suggesting the setting up of a photographic archive. At the meeting on 11th April, it was agreed. At its meeting on 15th August, the committee was advised that Helen Christian AM (with experience in this area) had agreed to act as the Photographic Archivist and would contact the State Library for advice as to the best way to store photographs. She would approach Ross Warr of Identity Studios re early photographs and would take the photographs found in the Branch filing cabinet. During 2001/2002, an amount of \$586.73 was allocated for the purchase of an Image Portfolio and sleeves. In July 2003, a further amount was allocated for the purchase of photographs from Identity Studios and another album. On 18th May 2004, Helen Christian advised that Ross Warr was ill and selling his business. He generously donated his store of photographs taken at Branch functions between 1982 and 2003 to the Branch. Flowers were sent as a gesture of appreciation. In July 2005, two more photograph albums were purchased. Preliminary discussions with Alan Tasker of the Mitchell Library have taken place but, for the present, Helen Christian is storing these albums in her home. She and her husband, John Christian AO, have given an enormous amount of time and thought to this project.

At the meeting on 12th December 2000, M Doughty advised that John Lincoln had handed a great deal of paper archival material to her for assessing and sorting.

At the meeting on 19th June 2001, it was agreed 'the Branch Minutes and Newsletters should be bound and, in future, the Newsletter should be sent to the State Library, the

Governor's Office, the National Library, University of Sydney Library and other institutions as required'. By August 2001, a set of Newsletters from 1982 to 1996 and Minutes from 1980 to 1995 had been bound at a cost of \$80 per book.

In 2009 M Doughty is holding (on her bookshelves) six (6) books of Minutes to December 2007, the bound book of early Newsletters and a special file for the coloured Newsletter; binding the latter would result in the loss of some words and photographs.

In 2001 the Branch committee agreed that the old four drawer steel filing cabinet should be disposed of and two large moulded/wheeled trolleys were purchased – cost \$45 each – and now hold the paper records. (Also stored in M Doughty's home.)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS CARD/ BADGE

At the Branch meeting on 19th June 2001, a proposal by Newsletter Editor G Vidoni suggesting a **business card** for committee members was tabled. This was agreed and cards were printed but eventually found not to be used and discarded.

At the Branch meeting on 18th June 2002, a proposal to design/purchase a **badge** which could be worn at investitures or when representing The Association was tabled. It was agreed quotations should be obtained. At its meeting on 27th November 2002, a sample badge was provided by Mrs Virginia Adlide OAM, the Southern Highlands Regional Group Convenor; it was agreed fourteen (14) badges should be purchased at a cost of \$10 per badge. A further six badges were purchased later.

BRANCH FUNCTIONS in date order of inception.

Welcome Receptions

These receptions are the first of many functions arranged by the Branch Committee over the ensuing years.

The first of these Welcome Receptions was held at the Town Hall, Sydney, on 24th **February 1981**, for all recipients from Australia Day and Queen's Birthday 1980; **all costs were met by the Branch.** These welcome functions were held annually each year from 1980 to 1990, usually on the evening before the Investiture ceremony at Government House. Dignitaries such as the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Chancellor of Sydney University, the National Association President and Chairman, the Premier were honoured guests. However, from 1991 to the present time there have been two welcome receptions each year as the recipient numbers are now so large it would be impossible to manage with one reception. The format and location has changed from the Town Hall to various CBD hotels and now to Parliament House. Initially an evening reception, then a dinner, it is now a luncheon which takes place between the morning and afternoon sessions on the middle day of the six Investitures.

Annual Dinners– from 1981

The first Branch Annual Dinner was held on Friday, 17th July 1981 – an event which has taken place every year since then. **However, in 2010 the dinner is to be replaced by an Annual Luncheon.** This decision has been taken in response to comments from members about the aging community, the cost of the function and the difficulty of traveling at night.

Date	Venue	Guest/s of Honour
1981 17 th July	Wentworth Hotel	Governor Sir James Rowland KBE DFC AFC and Lady Rowland
1982 13 th July	Wentworth Hotel	Governor General Sir Zelman Cowen AK GCMG GCVO and Lady Cowen
1983 15 th July	Regent Hotel	Governor General Sir Ninian Sephen AK GCMG GCVO KBE and Lady Stephen
1984 20 th July	Sheraton-Wentworth Hotel	Chancellor of Sydney University SirHermann Black and Lady Black
1985 19 th July	Sheraton-Wentworth Hotel	Governor General Sir Ninian and Lady Stephen
1986 4 th September	Menzies Hotel	Governor General Sir Ninian and Lady Stephen
1987 10 th September	Menzies Hotel	Governor Sir James and Lady Rowland
1988 8 th September	Menzies Hotel	Hon. Gough Whitlam AC and Mrs Margaret Whitlam AO
1989 7 th September	Menzies Hotel	Governor Sir David Martin AO KCMG and Lady Martin
1990 13 th September	Menzies Hotel	Hon. Sir Asher Joel
1991 29 th May	Parliament House	Governor Peter Sinclair AC and Mrs Sinclair
1992 17 th June	Parliament House	Governor Peter Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair
1993 23 rd June	Parliament House	Hon. Justice Murray Gleeson and Mrs Gleeson
1994 20 th October	Park Grand Hotel	Dame Joan Sutherland and Maestro Richard Bonyng
1995 30 th June	Parliament House	Governor Peter Sinclair AC and Mrs Sinclair
1995 24 th November	Parliament House	Hon. RJ Carr MP – Australia My Vision
1996 28 th June	Parliament House	Governor Gordon Samuels AC CVO and Mrs Samuels
1997 18 th July	Parliament House	National President Sir Phillip Bennett AC KBE DSO and Lady Bennett
1998 31 st July	Parliament House	Chairman Order of Australia Peter Sinclair and Mrs Sinclair
1999 30 th July	Parliament House	Governor Gordon Samuels and Mrs Samuels
2000 28 th July	Parliament House	Mr John Devitt AM Australian Olympic Committee and Mrs Devitt
2001 3 rd August	Parliament House	Governor Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO and Sir Nicholas Shehadie
2002 5 th July	Parliament House	Chancellor University of NSW Dr John Yu AC
2003 1 st August	Parliament House	Governor Professor Marie Bashir and Sir Nicholas Shehadie
2004 2 nd July	Parliament House	Air Marshall Angus Houston AO
2005 17 th June	Parliament House	National Chairman Dr Neil Conn AO and Mrs Conn AM
2006 14 th July`	Parliament House	National Chairman Dr Neil Conn and Mrs Conn
2007 24 th February (in conjunction with NAGM)	Four Seasons Hotel	Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery AC and Mrs Jeffery

2008	27 th June	Four Seasons Hotel	Governor Professor Marie Bashir
2009	21 st August	Four Seasons Hotel	Sir Laurence Street AC and Professor David Flint AM

Over the years these dinners have been very well supported, with many honoured guests, and excellent guest speakers whose words have been reported in the Branch Newsletters. The dinner programme for most of these functions is held in the Branch Archives.

Annual Ecumenical Service – from 1984

On Sunday 22nd July 1984, the inaugural ecumenical church service was held at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney – as part of the Cathedral's 10.30am Morning Service.

1985	21 st July	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1986	7 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1987	13 th September	St Mary's Cathedral	10.30am
1988	31 st January -NAGM	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
- Bicentennial Celebration/Dedication of the banner of the Order – placed in the Nave in the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales			
1988	11 th September	St Stephen's Uniting Church	10.30am
1989	10 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1990	9 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1991	8 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1992	13 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1993	24 th January –NAGM	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1993	12 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1994	25 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1995	1 st October	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1996	29 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1997	28 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1998	27 th September	St Andrew's Cathedral	10.30am
1999	26 th September	St Stephen's Uniting Church	2.30pm
2000	17th January -NAGM	Sydney University	10.00am
2000	15 th October	St Mary's Cathedral	2.30pm
2001	23 rd September	St Andrew's Cathedral	2.30pm – refreshments
2002	22 nd September	The Garrison Church	2.00pm - refreshments
2003	28 th September	St Patrick's, Church Hill	1.30pm - refreshments
2004	26 th September	St Peter's, North Sydney	2.30pm - refreshments
2005	25 th September	St James', Sydney	3.00pm - refreshments
2006	24 th September	St Vincent's College	2.00pm – refreshments
2007	25 th February-NAGM	St Mary's Cathedral	12.30pm - lunch
2007	23 rd September	Scots Presbyterian Church	2.00pm - refreshments
2008	28 th September	Christ Church St Lawrence	10.30am -refreshments
2009	6 th September	Great Synagogue, Sydney	10.30am -refreshments
2010	19 th September	St Vincent's College	2.30pm - refreshments

The Order of Service for these Services is held in the Branch Archives.

In the early years, the ecumenical service was held as part of each church's morning service. In 1999, the Branch Committee agreed it would be more inclusive of all faiths if the service could be one for the Association only. The minister at St Stephen's Church in Macquarie Street was agreeable. Then, in 2001, the Branch Committee agreed not only

should the Service be for members of the Association and their families but that refreshments should be served. This would allow for friendship and camaraderie among members and their guests. Thanks to Sister St Jude Doyle RSC OAM (and her wonderful helpers), this is now an established tradition.

Mr William (Bill) Campbell OAM was appointed Branch Piper in early nineties and has provided his services at dinners, ecumenical services and other functions.

Investitures

On 14th June 1984, a letter was sent to Government House requesting attendance at the Investiture Ceremony in September that year. This request was refused.

On 20th January 1989, State Chairman Rear Admiral Rothesay Swan AO CBE presented an Address of Welcome to the new Governor of NSW, His Excellency Rear Admiral Sir David Martin AO KCMG. Branch Newsletter No. 34 of May 1989 reports that the Chairman attended one of the two Investitures in April. Newsletter No. 36 reports his attendance at the September Investitures and from that date onwards the Association has been invited to all Investiture ceremonies at Government House. These now number six sessions in both May and September. Since Chairman Mary Doughty's term of office, the Chairman has been accompanied by a committee member on each occasion. If the Chairman is unavailable, two committee members attend.

Australia Day Function – from 1999

At the Branch meeting on 21st April 1998, Bruce Robertson OAM (Convenor of the Community Projects Sub-committee) suggested holding an Australia Day Breakfast to celebrate Australia Day. Previous communications with the Australia Day Committee suggesting a joint function had been ignored and personal requests refused. The meeting agreed that such a function be held in 1999.

At the meeting on 16th June, he confirmed that he had booked the Masonic Centre in Goulburn Street, Sydney for a breakfast on 26th January – commencing at 8.30am. Some 200 members/guests attended the first Breakfast. Commencing with the Reverend Fred Mackay AC, the calibre of speakers at this function has been of a very high standard. Initially, it was agreed there should be some musical entertainment during the breakfast so the Viva Voce String Quartet from the Australian Institute of Music (one of them a scholarship recipient) performed. However, it was later decided that this was a time for meeting and greeting among members and their guests and an unfair atmosphere for the performers so it was abandoned.

The Breakfast continued in this time slot, in various locations, until 2007; in 2008, it was decided to move to a 10.00am commencement and to the Four Seasons Hotel.

Community Projects Function – from 2003

As the number of suggested projects increased and the money available for the programme decreased, the committee realized that it would not be able to continue these scholarships unless a special function was held each year so that an 'investment hedge' could be set up. At its Branch meeting on 18th June 2002 it was agreed such a sub-committee be set up. On 26th June 2002 the inaugural meeting of the Community Projects Funds Sub-committee was held at 1 Rockwell Crescent, Potts Point; it was chaired by Commander Ken Swain AM, with Branch Committee members Mesdames J Doyle, E O'Brien, C Wardell OAM

and Mr K Reeve AM present. Following some telephone discussion with other Branch Committee members, K Swain was asked to approach The Hon. Henry Tsang MLC, Parliamentary Secretary, re hosting a luncheon at Parliament House on 25th March 2003. At the Branch Committee meeting on 20th August, these arrangements were confirmed. The sub-committee members did an excellent job in obtaining sponsors for raffle and lucky door prizes. The surplus from the day was \$8,227.98 – a wonderful beginning. Henry Tsang, now OAM, hosted the luncheon again in 2004, Mr John Price MP in 2005 and Henry Tsang in 2006. In 2007, Chairman Wolfgang Grimm AM obtained the sponsorship of the Intercontinental Hotel for a Morning Tea. In 2008, 2009 and 2010, funds from one special branch function have also been added to the Community Projects Account.

Other Functions

Following the **inaugural National Meeting held in the ACT**, this meeting was held in the ACT from 1981 to 1984. It was then decided to hold **The National Annual General Meeting** in the States on a rotational basis, the first being in Melbourne in 1985. It has been held in NSW in the following years:

1988 (Bicentennial Year) – 1993 – 2000 (Olympics/Paralympics) - 2007

Over the years, there have been morning teas and a variety of other functions. Since 2008, member morning teas have been held in suburban areas and late afternoon member receptions in the CBD

REGIONAL GROUPS

In the early years of The Association, the holding of regional functions depended very much on the enthusiasm of individual members who were prepared to undertake the responsibility of organising such events. The Branch Committee was always most supportive and was represented at all such functions which usually bore the name of the district in which they were held. When the new Memorandum and Articles of Association was passed in 1993 and implemented in 1994, By-law 3 came into operation and governed the way in which regional groups should be set up and funded. After full discussion with all State Branches during 2003, an amended By-law 3 came into operation in October 2003. Appendix 2.

The NSW Branch then used the term ‘Regional Co-ordinator’ for the Branch Committee member responsible for **all** contact with the regional convenors. It followed this with a set of guidelines for holding functions in the name of The Order of Australia Association NSW Branch. Appendix 3

The first regional function in NSW was held in Tamworth (now New England North West) on 21st September 1984 during the Presidency (Chairmanship since NAGM 1993) of Andrew Briger AM. The Branch was represented by the Secretary John Chapman. Convenor Stan Cole AM arranged a Mayoral reception, followed by a dinner which was very well attended. A book on the history of Tamworth was presented to the Branch but it cannot be found. At the luncheon on 14th October 2006, Mrs Cole handed the Life Member tie of her late husband to Convenor Mike Moroney AM so that it could be handed on to each convenor in turn.

Although such functions were held at irregular intervals in the following years, it was Chairman Graham Swain AM in 1997 who stressed the need for setting up regional groups across the State. He was concerned that the cost of visiting Sydney for Branch functions

had become prohibitive and many members were not well enough to undertake the travel involved. As a result of his enthusiasm, encouragement and regular attendance at such functions during his time as Chairman, there are now thirteen (13) active and well organized groups in NSW, with the possibility of three others in 2010; another is meeting annually but not under the Association's guidelines. Graham has now taken over the Convenor's role for the Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury/Nepean group from its founding convenor Betty Hargreaves OAM.

Between 1984 and 2009, some 169 functions have been held in regional areas in New South Wales – lunches, dinners, morning/afternoon teas, receptions, church services. At the present time, there are at least sixteen occasions each year for members to meet and enjoy the company of fellow recipients and their families. Several of these groups have also donated surplus monies to the Branch's Community Projects programme and others to charities in their local community.

In 2002, Regional Co-ordinator Keith Phipps OAM suggested a Regional Banner be presented to each well established group to celebrate the work of these groups in encouraging social contact within their areas. The Branch Committee was pleased to accept the cost incurred and the following areas now hold such banners:

Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury/ Nepean - Central Coast - Central West – Dubbo – Hastings – Hunter – Illawarra - Manning - New England North West – Riverina – Shoalhaven - Southern Highlands - Southern Tablelands

The Branch is deeply indebted to those Regional Convenors (Appendix 5) and their loyal supporters who have undertaken to arrange these social gatherings. They maintain contact with both members and non-members, something the Branch cannot do. Long-term friendships have been made and many recipients have joined the Association as a result of these contacts.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS – in order of inception

Through its Community Projects programme the NSW Branch Committee has undertaken the giving of scholarships, bursaries, youth community service awards and medallions to many young people in NSW. These are:

Essay Competition

The Branch Community (Special) Projects Programme began in June 1983 when the suggestion of an Essay Competition for students in Y9 was put to the Branch Committee and then to the National Association (which later decided on the statue of Queen Elizabeth II now standing in the New Parliament House in Canberra). At its meeting on 11th October 1984, the Branch Committee decided, in principle, on an Essay Competition as a Branch Project. In February 1985 a budget of \$1500 was set which included a monetary prize for five (5) winners and a notice dealing with the competition was circulated to state and non-governmental schools. **The Honour Australia** sub-committee chairman Rear Adm. AJ Robertson AO worked with Mr Fred Dobbin AM as chief organizer and Dr Ted Booth AM as co-ordinator. The competition ran from 1985 to 1990, with the awards being presented by the State Governor – the last presentation being on 22nd January 1991.

At its meeting on 19th February 1991, in the absence of then chairman Lady Angela Carrick AO, but with her full consent and after considered discussion, a paper was tabled which suggested that the Essay Competition be discontinued and some other project be considered. This was agreed.

The names of the recipients are not listed in the Association records but some of the essays are held in the Minute Books/paper archives.

Grand Flagpole – Darling Harbour

With the approval of the National Association and in partnership with Westpac Bank and the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, it was planned to erect a flagpole as part of the Bicentennial Celebrations. Initially planned for First Fleet Park, then for Dawes Point, it was finally agreed it should be placed in Darling Harbour. It was erected on 2nd November 1987, with the first flag raising on 24th December 1987. The money was raised from the general membership, with a donation of \$90,000 from Westpac Bank and the work of driving the piles and the ongoing maintenance being provided by the Darling Harbour Authority. The balances of the Grand Flagpole account (\$5,880.92) and the Bicentennial account (\$15,307.58) were allowed to remain with the NSW Branch as it had undertaken responsibility for the Flagpole Project and the bulk of the money raised came from NSW members (see **Finance** Page 4). As mentioned previously, this money constitutes the basis of the Branch's Community Projects account.

Youth Community Service Awards (known until January 2001 as the Youth Community Awards)

This project took the place of the Essay Competition which had become a real burden for a small number of committee/co-opted members. Early in 1992 committee member John Lincoln expressed his concern that secondary school students in NSW were unaware of the high principles and prestige of the Order of Australia. He tabled a paper suggesting the Association give recognition to Y11/12 students with an excellent record of community service – not an academic award. The project was accepted by the Branch Committee and supported by the Department of Education, the Catholic Education Commission, with the Independent Schools also taking part. Each year, since 1993, some 20 young people are presented with a medallion and certificate of commendation by the State Governor at a ceremony at Government House each year. In 2004, a Certificate of Recognition has been introduced but it is posted to the recipient at his/her school. The names of all recipients from 1993 to 2009 are on the Branch's web page and held in the archives.

The members of the judging panel give their time voluntarily; accommodation was arranged at Macquarie University until 2007 when committee member Jude Doyle agreed to sit on the selection panel and made accommodation available at St Vincent's College, Potts Point. The Branch greatly appreciates the time and thought given to this project by the selection panel of Rear Admiral David Leach AC CBE, Emeritus Professor John Collins AM, Professor Di Yerbury AO and now Sister St Jude Doyle OAM.

On 26.6.1992, an amount of \$5000 for artwork/design/medallions is noted in the Minutes, these are to be used for both the Young Community Service Awards and the Young Endeavour Training Course. Unfortunately, none of the original costs are accurately minuted in the Branch Minutes but the costs for 2009 were approximately \$1200.

Young Endeavour Youth Scheme (previously known as Young Endeavour Sail Training Scheme)

In May/June 1992, Immediate Past Chairman Rothesay Swan AO suggested the NSW Branch of The Association contribute \$5000 towards the cost of one trainee on one “leg” of the Young Endeavour Sail Training Vessel’s Around the World trip and a Medallion for the best sailor on each “leg”. (A donation of \$10,000 from the National Association helped to cover the full cost.) Celia Smith, aged 22, from Sydney’s Northern Beaches was the trainee chosen and was met by Rear Admiral Swan in Cadiz at the Grand Regatta where the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ voyage of discover was being celebrated.

After further Branch Committee discussion in April 1994, Rothesay Swan suggested the NSW Branch fund the cost of a ten day voyage on the training ship; the selection of the trainee was left with the Young Endeavour office but the money was to be given to an economically disadvantaged young person. A total amount of \$3600 was given in 1994, \$2150 in 1997, \$2200 in 1998. In 2000 it was reduced to \$1000. In 2003, 2004, 2005 this amount was used to sponsor two young NSW trainees to undertake a sailing experience in the United Kingdom. In 2006, it was decided to return to the sponsorship of a young NSW person for the Young Endeavour training course for \$1000. Reduced to \$500 in 2008, it remains at this amount to date.

Unfortunately, the Branch does not have a full list of recipients of the scholarship, although the present sub-committee convenor Keith Reeve has a list since 2006.

Young Endeavour Training Course Medallions

Again, the brain child of Rear Admiral Rothesay Swan, these medallions have been presented each year since 1993 to the outstanding trainee on each course. This means that not every medallion is presented to a NSW young person but the Branch has accepted this. The initial cost of the medallions is tied in with the Youth Community Service Awards medallions. However, the Minutes do record the donation of \$500 by Rothesay Swan – probably for the motif on the reverse side of the medallion.

Prime Minister John Howard made one of the presentations in 2001 (see Branch Newsletter).

The Branch has a complete list of recipients only since 2006.

Australian Institute of Music

Early in 1997 Associate Professor Warren Thomson OAM approached the Branch with a request that it hold a function at which the students of the AIM would perform. The proceeds of such a function were to be shared equally by the Association and the College. The first concert was held on 17th May 1997, the second on 15th March 1998 and for several years after that. For the most part, the attendance varied between 50-70 people which was satisfactory to the College but entailed a great deal of work for committee members. The last recital was held as part of the AGM/morning tea on 30.11.2004.

In 1998 Chairman Graham Swain discussed with Professor John Painter AM, College Director, the possibility of a monetary scholarship for students in need. The first grant was awarded in 1999 and the last in 2006. The Association has a list of recipients. At the Budget Meeting in 2007, the Branch Committee decided not to continue this scholarship.

2000 Paralympics

In 1999 chairman Graham Swain asked the Branch Committee to consider the gift of a wheelchair for the Paralympics; after general discussion, it was agreed an amount of \$3000 be given to the Wheelchair Sports Association. The cheque was presented to John Maclean (later OAM) on 4th December 1999 at a function at the Five Dock RSL Club by Chairman Graham Swain, with other committee members present.

National Music Camp

Early in 2000, Keith Reeve approached the Branch with a request for financial assistance for young performers attending the Nation Music Camp each January – the camp being held under the umbrella of the Australian Youth Orchestra.

At its meeting on 11th April 2000, the Branch Committee accepted the recommendation of the community projects sub-committee that support be given to two students to attend the camp in Canberra in 2001 – an amount of \$1200. This was finally shared between three students, and sometimes four students, until the Branch Committee decided to terminate the assistance during 2008.

The Branch has a list of recipients from 2001 to 2008

22nd Asia-Pacific Jamboree

In October 2000, Community Projects sub-committee convenor Bruce Robertson OAM asked the Branch committee to consider sponsoring two country scouts to attend this jamboree which was held at Cataract Scout Park in NSW in January 2001. Two young scouts shared a gift of \$2000. Bruce Robertson attended the final day of the Jamboree and was presented with a framed Certificate of Merit which now hangs in the National Office in Canberra.

Ensemble

Late in 2003, chairman Mary Doughty spoke to Sandra Bates AM, Director of the Ensemble Theatre, suggesting an approach to the NSW Branch for a scholarship for a student actor. In 2004/2005 chairman Douglas Parker spoke further to Mrs Bates when she suggested a more helpful scholarship would be for a student director who does only one production and is usually not on a Youth Allowance. After further discussion the community projects sub-committee recommended a scholarship of \$2000 for 2006. The Branch committee unanimously agreed; however, the money was shared by three students. A grant of \$1000 was made in 2007 and 2008; it was then decided not to continue with this project.

Girl Guides

In 2004, Community Projects sub-committee convenor Jude Doyle asked the committee to consider gifting an amount of \$500 for a Girl Guides gathering in NSW. This was agreed. A letter of appreciation was later tabled.

Drama prize

Again in 2004, it was agreed the Branch should sponsor a drama prize in the McDonald Challenge (City of Sydney Eisteddfod) for \$350. Unfortunately, it was learned later that the greater part of the gift was used to cover administration expenses and not as a prize. In 2005, it was agreed this project should not be continued and the eisteddfod administration so advised.

Far West Children's Health Scheme - Respite Programme

Again in 2004, on the recommendation of the sub-committee, the Branch agreed to give financial assistance in the sum of \$1000 to a needy family to allow a child to participate in the above Association's respite programme. In 2005, it was agreed this project should not be continued as the organisation is a public charity and so can appeal for donations across the whole community.

TAFE

On 15th May 2007 Community Projects sub-committee chairman Keith Reeve tabled a proposal suggested by committee member Colleen Wardell for a scholarship allocated through TAFE. The Committee agreed that two merit-based awards of \$500 each be made to students under 30 – one to a Certificate student and one to a Diploma student - in the area of Conservation and Land Management. Both should be based on the first year results of a two year course. Committee member Ronald Sharpe OAM presented the initial scholarship to a student from the Belmont Campus of the Hunter Institute on 20th June 2008. This project was discontinued in 2009.

Vision Australia

At the Branch meeting on 13th November 2007, the sub-committee proposed funding for a part-bursary of \$1000 to the Vision Australia Education Bursary Programme. Colleen Wardell advised that such scholarships make a significant contribution to tertiary students in overcoming the limitations of their blindness and to progress with Adaptive Technology i.e. software and hardware that enables those who are blind or have low vision to access reading material through audio, Braille, electronic information or large print. She attended the initial presentation on 23rd May 2008. Assistance with the project was discontinued.

At the present time, the matter of community projects is being reviewed by a sub-committee under convenor John Jobling OAM.

NATIONAL PROJECTS in which the NSW Branch has participated:

Bicentennial Gift to the Nation

During 1987 a donation of \$5000 was made to the manufacture/erection of a bronze statue of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This was unveiled by the Queen on 9th May 1988, the day she opened the new Parliament House in Canberra. Donations from members all over Australia totalled \$86,680.

Australia My Vision

Initiated in February 1995, during the NSW Branch chairmanship of Peter James AM, this was a cultural competition for Primary, Secondary, Open students in Art, Song, Writing, with Graham Swain AM as State Coordinator. This project required an extraordinary amount of time and effort on the part of Graham and his committee – with thanks to Ruby Riach OAM and Mrs Ann James who found space for all the entries during the selection period. The NSW recipients received their awards from Premier Bob Carr at a special dinner at Parliament House on 24th November 1996 and so progressed to the finals in Canberra in January 1997. The overall winner was a young painter from South Australia.

Attempts to run this competition in the following year failed. Because of the cost and the work and time needed of those Branch Committee members who formed the sub-committee, it was decided that it was impractical for an organisation such as The Order of Australia Association, without a fulltime secretariat and office, to handle the work.

Honour Boards

At its meeting in July 1995 the National Committee endorsed an Honour Board project, with the aim of encouraging Local Councils, Schools, Clubs and the like to list the names of those who had been the recipient of an award in the Order. In September 1995 the Honours Secretariat gave permission for the Order of Australia emblem to be used and arrangements were made for the manufacture of such boards.

In April 1996, a draft brochure was circulated to all Branches (P James/G Vidoni) and accepted. Branches were then encouraged to contact appropriate organisations and encourage them to erect such an honour board. In February 1996, the NSW Department of Education was advised and the Catholic Education Office in June.

The accepted brochure was produced by BEE Printmail of Artarmon:

5000 \$1925 + 22% sales tax.

In 2003, at the request of the National office and after consultation with other Branches, the brochure was reprinted by BEE Printmail. Costs were covered by NOAA and stocks are now held by it.

At its meeting on 20th March 2007, the NSW Branch Committee agreed unanimously that any future promotion should be left to the National body. In general there seems to be a lack of interest across the Australian community.

Media/Book Awards

These projects in the 1980s and early 1990s were the responsibility of the National Committee, with support, publicity and comment from the NSW Branch. Again, it was found that the amount of work involved was outside the scope of a voluntary organisation.

Northern Doors – St Andrew’s Cathedral

On 7th September 1986 the Dedication of the Northern Doors at St Andrew’s Cathedral took place, honouring the Order of Australia, and on 31st January 1988 the Dedication of the Banner of the Order of Australia took place. The Branch was involved in arranging both these ceremonies.

Dedication – Mary-le-Bow Church, London

In September 1990, the Dedication of the Association Banner took place in this historic Church. It will hang permanently in this church of Bow Bells where Australia’s first Governor, Captain Arthur Phillip, was baptised. Present were the Australian High Commissioner, Mr Douglas McClelland AC, Dame Leonie Kramer AC, National Treasurer Mr Rex Thiele AM, Past NSW Chairman Mr Alex Rigby AM, as well as members from Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

The Branch made a contribution to the reception held in London.

Dorothy Mackellar poetry competition

Held under the auspices of the Australia Day Council, this competition was not an Association responsibility but was given much support by way of publicity in the Branch Newsletter.

Conclusion

The extracts from the bound Minute Books which make up the Chronological History (with its appendices) give a very clear picture of the work of the New South Wales Branch since 1980 and of the enormous contribution from all Branch Committee members, co-opted members and others who have come forward when the National Annual General Meetings have been held in Sydney. A special word of thanks goes to our wonderful regional convenors who do so much in their local community to further the ideals of The Association and provide the opportunity for friendship and camaraderie to all recipients of an award in the Order, whether they are members of the Association or not. As to be expected, there have been differences of opinion from time to time with the National Association but, in general, a desire to work for the Objects of the Association. There appear to be 'winds of change' blowing as the world economic crisis affects everyone; this may necessitate some changes in the administration of The Association and its State Branches but not in its aims and ideals.

MARY V DOUGHTY AM

I wish to thank Past and Present Committee Members Helen Christian, Jude Doyle, Bill Galvin, John Lincoln, Ruby Riach, Graham Swain, Colleen Wardell and Branch member David Pope OAM for contributing to /proof reading the Chronological History and to Helen and John Christian, Jude Doyle, David Pope and Graham Swain for proof reading the Story of the Branch.