

ACT OAA

JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

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COMING EVENTS

There are no ACT OAA events planned to be conducted in the next few months due to COVID-19 and consideration of the health and safety of our members.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Fellow ACT Branch Members,

I trust this newsletter finds you safe, well and managing as comfortably as possible through the COVID-19 crisis.



In these difficult times, it's wonderful to begin by congratulating all recipients of honours and awards in the 2020 Queen's Birthday honours list. There were 35 recipients in the ACT. In the General Division, almost half were women, better than the national average and better than we have ever seen here in Canberra. This is a great result, and I urge you all to keep nominating the fantastic women who do so much for our community.

Sadly, the situation regarding Branch events is not such good news. As I foreshadowed in March, the Branch Committee reviewed our plans at its meeting on 20 May. With the Board-imposed national suspension on events still in place at that point, the Committee decided it could do little other than continue to monitor the situation.

On 30 May, with the number of active COVID-19 cases declining, and governments starting to ease restrictions, the National Membership Director, Helene Bender OAM, advised that the Executive Committee of the Board had decided to lift the blanket suspension and delegate the decision to resume face-to-face activities to Branch and Regional Group committees. In making such decisions, committees were directed to be mindful of the latest government health information, Branch/Regional Group demographics and local COVID-19 infection statistics.

Our Branch Committee has now considered Helene's letter in some detail. While there has been only one confirmed case of COVID-19 in the ACT since 28 April, and ACT Government restrictions are easing accordingly, the Committee gave great weight to Federal Government advice in the context of our Branch demographic. Nearly 75% of our Branch members are 65 years old or older. The Federal Government categorises people 70+ or 65+ with a chronic medical condition as "older Australians". It advises that older Australians are at greater risk from COVID-19 and *should not leave home unless absolutely necessary*. The Committee has decided that while this advice remains extant it would be very unwise to resume face-to-face events.

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In practical terms, this means no events in July or August. We have postponed the annual ADF Oration, which was due to be held in mid-July, but hope to reschedule it later in the year. The annual Multi-Faith Observance, which is usually held in August, is cancelled for 2020.

It is more difficult to see beyond August at this point. We hope to hold a reception for both Australia Day and Queen's Birthday new recipients in September or October: we await advice on Government House investiture plans, but regardless, we are unlikely to hold a reception while the current Federal Government advice to older Australians is in place. We are pressing ahead with seeking nominations for our annual Student Citizenship Awards, but have reserved judgement on the form of the presentations – it may be that we need to do them at schools and colleges again, as we did last year. There will be no morning teas until later in the year, if they are possible at all.

I wish I had better news for you, but I believe strongly that for the health and well-being of our members it's best we err on the side of caution. The Committee will, of course, continue to follow the COVID-19 situation and government advice, and adjust our plans when it is appropriate to do so. In the meantime, thank you for your patience. As ever, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Warm regards,

Michael Crane DSC & Bar, AM
Branch Chairman

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VACANCY FOR NATIONAL SECRETARY

As you can see from the Director's report, the position of National Secretary on the OAA National Board Executive was not filled at the recent National Board Meeting. If you are interested in being considered for this position please contact Branch Chairman Michael Crane DSC & Bar, AM at Chairact@theorderofaustralia.asn.au or 0467 719 020 for more information.

WELCOME TO NEW OAA MEMBERS FROM THE 2020 AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

AIRCDRE Kenneth ROBINSON AM CSC – For exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force in international engagement, personnel management and administration, and combat support development and sustainment.

AIRCDRE Gerald van LEEUWEN AM CSM - For exceptional service to the Australian Defence Force in aerospace capability development, major capital acquisition, and air combat sustainment.

Mr Edmund WHEELER OAM – For service to the community through road safety initiatives.

2020 ACT BRANCH STUDENT AWARDS

Despite the disruptions to schools caused by COVID-19, plans are well under way for our student awards program to commence in Term 3, 2020. A letter and information brochure will be sent to all schools from the Association at the commencement of Term (20th July) encouraging school staff to consider nominating deserving students who demonstrate outstanding community service and other acts of good citizenship. Nominations close on the last day of Term 3 (25th September).

Branch members may know of young people who are exceptional community members and worthy of this recognition. Nominating a student is easy. Please contact me if you would like an information brochure.

Bill Maiden PSM OAM

Student Awards Coordinator

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Bill Maiden PSM OAM with Daramalan students Aidan Gunning and Sarah Davis at 2019 College presentation.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Having been a member of the ACT Committee for a year and starting to know a little about the Association, it was with some pleasure I accepted the nomination of the Branch Committee to become a Director on the National Board. Unfortunately, the response to COVID-19 prevented me from meeting any other Board members before the May Board meeting, but I was able to attend by videoconference.

The highlights were:

- Emerging concern that the impact of the virus and the costs of the cancelled Darwin conference would impact negatively on the next financial statements.
- The Audit and Risk Committee is developing a Risk Management Policy and advice for the Board on a plan for getting back to normal when COVID-19 restrictions ease.
- A survey on *The Order* magazine will be sent out in the August edition.
- Phil Morrall AM, CSC was thanked for his ongoing work as Editor of *The Order* and for his service as National Secretary.
- The Board's preference is to hold the 2021 National Conference in Darwin, but it is too early to make decisions: the Board will review and advise in October at the latest.
- The draft new Constitution was discussed in some detail. There were many questions still to be resolved. It was hoped that the By-laws could be drafted by July, although this was considered ambitious. At this stage it was aimed to have Board approval in October.
- The following members were elected to the Executive Committee (EC):
 - Helene Bender OAM, National Membership Director;
 - Muriel Barasso OAM, National Treasurer;
 - John Archer OAM, Deputy Chairman.There were no nominations for National Secretary and the EC will share responsibilities in the interim.

The consideration of the new Draft Constitution for the Association continues, and as the Director nominated by the ACT Committee, I am happy to receive any comments or questions any of our members may have about it.

Dr Alan Morrison AM JP
direct@theorderofaustralia.asn.au
Director

VALE

We regret to advise the recent passing of the following ACT Branch members and pay our respects for their contribution to the Association and the Australian community.

Clinical Associate Professor Stephen BRADSHAW AM – Australia Day 2017 – For significant service to medicine as a vascular surgeon, to health practitioner regulation, and to medical education.

Mr Reginald GOLDFINCH OAM – Queen's Birthday 2014 – For service to engineering, particularly through major water supply projects.

Ms Jean McPHAIL OAM - Australia Day 1989 – For service to the disabled and sport for the disabled.

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MEET OUR MEMBERS

Mrs CAROLYN FORSTER OAM



Carolyn Forster has a long association with Canberra institutions and has been a member of the Canberra Committee of the Children's Medical Research Institute since 1973, serving three times as President of the Canberra Committee and twice as Treasurer. She was appointed to the Board in 1996 and was elected Vice-President in 2000. She serves on the Institute's Finance and Investment Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, and is also Chair of the Institute's Fundraising and Marketing Committee.

Mrs Forster chaired the ACT Heritage Festival for 11 years and the Board of Phillip College and was a former President of the Women's International Club ACT. She served as President of the Friends of the National Museum of Australia for 10 years. Mrs Forster is currently President of the World Federation of Friends of Museums, a Council Member and Canberra Chair of The Australiana Fund and as such organises the garden tours of Government House. She is Chair of The Church of St. Andrew's Conservation and Restoration Foundation.

She won the 2020 World Federation of Friends of Museums Congress for Australia, arranging a full program for delegates with two days in Sydney and four in Canberra, and then had to disassemble this due to the onset of COVID-19.

Mrs Forster received an ACT Women's Award in 1996, a Centenary Medal in 2001, and was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2006 *for service to the community of Canberra through children's medical research, historical, cultural and educational organisations.*

Mr SAM WONG AM



For more than 37 years Samson Wong AM has been an unwavering champion for migrants and refugees new to the ACT. He has tirelessly promoted and celebrated the vital role of multiculturalism in Australia. Born in Hong Kong and arriving in Australia in the early 1970s to train as a pharmacist, Sam spent his working life balancing his professional commitments with community work. He retired as principal pharmacist for the Australian Government.

A long-time supporter of Canberra's Multicultural Festival, he also spent three terms as chair for Canberra's Migrant Resource Centre, and has been honorary advisor to the Australia-China Youth Cooperation. Sam has extended a helping hand across all cultures, providing practical support to help people feel more connected to the community. In 1999 he was appointed a Member in the Order of Australia *for service to the community and to multiculturalism in the*

ACT region, and received an Australian Bluestar award from the ACT's Muslim community in 2011 for his intercultural work. In 2012, as Canberra Multicultural Community Forum chairman, he was named a People of Australia Ambassador.

Sam has been an active member of the ACT Branch committee and assisted in facilitating the annual multi-faith service. He was a nominee finalist for the 2020 ACT Senior Australian of the Year.
