



OAA VIC Branch Chair's Report for January 1 to December 31, 2020

There have been many words and phrases that will reflect 2020. The restrictions and lockdowns provided new opportunities for the VIC Branch and members that previously may have been considered, however, never implemented.

The Branch and our Region Groups took the opportunity to increase the lines of communication with members, and TEAMS, ZOOM and Teleconference became the new way of meeting. Branch and Regional Groups also increased the number of newsletters distributed during the year to ensure they stayed connected with members.

2020 started with an invitation to join the Australia Day Parade along Swanston Street to the Kings Domain Gardens.

Due to many Regional Groups hosting their own events, distance of travel to Melbourne, length of the parade walk for some, and the media coverage about a proposed Invasion Day protest with thousands of protesters expected to close down the CBD the number of members participating in the parade was low.

262 Order of Australia Honours recipients from Victoria were announced on Australia Day.

February 26 was the fourth Inspiring Australians Oration at the Melbourne Town Hall; the Oration was delivered by Kevin Sheedy AO. MC David Mann AM introduced Hannah Gandy one of the current Order of Australia Association Foundation scholarship recipients. Hannah's mentor The Hon. Julia Gillard AC, 27th Prime Minister of Australia also attended the Oration.

A few days after our Tuesday March 17, 2020 Annual General Meeting, Victoria went into shutdown with only essential services remaining open as part of an unprecedented nationwide effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Branch and Regional Groups were no longer able to meet face-to-face or host events.

196 Order of Australia Honours recipients from Victoria were announced on the Queen's Birthday public holiday.

A virtual National Gallery Victoria Masterpiece lecture, exhibition and lunch wasn't an option in July, nor was the 2020 new honours recipients reception at the Alex Theatre.

Our annual lunch in November normally at William Angliss Restaurant was virtual and well received. We thank the Rotary Club of Melbourne for hosting this lunch. David Mann AM was the MC and introduced the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Juniata Kelly-Mundine the 2018 Order of Australia Association Foundation recipient and guest speaker 2017 Victorian of the Year Dr Robbie Gillies OAM. Following the success of the virtual lunch in November, the VIC Branch has scheduled two new virtual events in 2021; first on Wednesday February 24 @ 5.30pm and the second on Thursday September 23 @ 5.30pm.

2020 Australia Day and Queens Birthday Investitures were delayed during the year; complying with all the regulations Investitures started in November and will finish mid-February 2021. We thank the Governor and her staff for the work they have undertaken during challenging times to recognise Order of Australia Honours recipients.

Vic Branch also says welcome and thank you to the 2020 recipients who have joined the Association.

At the December 2020 virtual VIC Branch committee meeting we had the opportunity to thank Tony Smith OAM for his service over ten years as the co-opted VIC Branch Membership Secretary, retiring on December 31. Fred Harrington OAM nominated for the position last year and fills the vacancies until the 2021 AGM.

On behalf of the VIC Branch I thank all the committee members for their input during the year.

I acknowledge the work of:-

Our Events Coordinator Peter Jones and his staff for their work during the year and their planning for 2021



THE
ORDER OF AUSTRALIA
ASSOCIATION
VICTORIA BRANCH

The Merchandise sub-committee chaired by Professor June Kane AM introduced new products during the year and our Branch Treasurer Alan Brook OAM assisted with stock inventory and control while Regional Groups Coordinator Barb Brook OAM organised the despatch of orders Australia wide.

As noted last year, the tenure of Branch Secretary Fred Harrington OAM finishes at the March 16, 2021 AGM, we thank Fred for his diligence over the years.

Committee member for two years Pam Robinson OAM will not be renominating for 2021.

Members would be aware the new Constitution was approved December 17, 2020, a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws are on the website.

During the consultation process with Branches and members it was agreed the time was right to update the Association purpose statement.

As noted in the Constitution it is now: - **To celebrate and promote outstanding Australia citizenship**

We take time to pause and reflect on the privilege of knowing members or their partners who have passed away since our last Annual General Meeting. We also value the contribution of members who have resigned due to health issues.

In closing, thank you to members who renewed during 2020 and also to our members who joined Branch and Regional Group virtual events, look forward to your ongoing support in 2021.

Dr Helene Bender OAM
Chair VIC Branch
Current as at January 20, 2021