



AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION

Newsletter 16

June 2011

Supporting those who risk their life to
save life, property or the environment.

Patrons
**Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, Governor General of the Commonwealth of
Australia and His Excellency Mr Michael Bryce AM AE**

Vice-Patron
Keith Payne VC OAM

Guardian of the Brave
Mr Geoff Handbury AO

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National Vice President – WA

Vic Boreham CBC

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PLEASE NOTE:

All postal mail to our National Office c/o PO Box 8113, ORANGE, NSW 2800

All of your Executive can be accessed by email on the addresses above.

Our Website address is

www.forbravery.org

Items for the newsletter to

newsletter@forbravery.org

The newsletter is available on the website (password not required). The above phone numbers have been omitted.

TREASURER'S/MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT FOR 2010. – Peta Wilson

National Account Audit.

Our opening balance as at 1st January 2010 was \$158,780.00. The closing balance as at 31 December 2010 was \$222,758.40.00. I would like it noted that \$180,000.00 of this total amount has been expressively and very generously donated to the Australian Bravery Foundation to be transferred from the Association to the Foundation once it is properly established.

Our total income for this period was \$71,576.92 and our total expenditure was \$8,598.52.

The Audited Annual Statements for the National Account (reflected above), NSW, VIC/TAS and QLD, which shows the breakdowns are available for anyone who would like to review them.

I would like to extend a very warm thank you to Mr Geoff Handbury AO. Most of you know of the very generous ongoing donation that he is contributing to the Australian Bravery Foundation. I would also like to thank the following people who have also kindly donated funds to the ABA in 2010 (in no particular order):-

• Mrs Sandra Hewitt-Lacon	• Mr James Long BM
• Mr William Sorohan	• Mr & Mrs Keith Payne VC OAM
• Mrs Margaret Jardine	• Mr Victor Boreham CBC
• Mr Geoff Handbury AO	• Dr Geoffrey Boyce
• Various anonymous donations received	
• As well as the hard working National Executive, Vice Presidents and helpers who have generously donated their time and raised thousands through their fundraising activities	

I have previously mentioned to you that Grosfeld Financial services are our official Auditors and have for the last two years prepared the ABA Audit. I would like to express on behalf of the ABA our gratitude for their professionalism, ethics and their continued offer of a 50% discount in their fees in support of our cause. This generous discount has saved our Association considerably. If you know of anyone in the Terrigal, Pymble or Thirlmere NSW areas who require financial services please mention Grosfeld Financial services, Angeline can be contacted on 02 4681 8240.

Membership

At the last AGM I reported that at the time we had 207 members, at this years AGM we had our 225th member. The official membership register indicates that we have currently 43 lapsed memberships. If your membership has lapsed, or you are not sure, please do not hesitate to contact Roy Ferguson, our new National Treasurer/Membership Secretary.

Conclusion

This is my last report as Treasurer/Membership Secretary. I have found that I no longer have the time necessary to apply to the ABA that it deserves. My heartfelt Thank You to the membership and the National Executive for the unique opportunity to contribute to this amazing organisation. It is the members that make this a truly outstanding group of people and it has been a pleasure to work with you and an honour to have been of service, however minutely.

I would like to thank Roy (and Kerrie) Ferguson for agreeing to take on the National Treasurer/Membership Secretary as well as the Secretary positions with the ABA! It is a large undertaking and I know you will find Roy is up to the challenge. A very warm welcome to the NX Roy, I wish you all the best!

Well that's all from me. Best wishes, Peta Wilson

SANT REPORT – Bill Lowther SC

On the 12th April Gillian and I were invited to Government House – Adelaide, for this year's presentation and investiture of 6 recipients for brave acts.

The Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR presented the five Bravery Medals (BM) and one Certificate of Merit. Four of the Bravery Medals were awarded for rescues at sea, and the Certificate of Merit was awarded for the rescue of 2 children from a smoke filled house. All participants were given a letter of congratulations from the Australian Bravery Assoc., and invited to become members of our association.

While we were at Government House Mr Bill Denny AM, Director Veterans' SA introduced himself. He also sits on the panel that decide the merit of each individual, and the type of recognition each recipient will receive. Because many people in South Australia go unrecognised he has asked me to comment, and make suggestions as to the best way to recognise any acts of bravery.

This ANZAC day we attended our local RSL Dawn Service, and thought that next year we would like to lay a wreath on behalf of The Australian Bravery Association, maybe members could comment on this, do you think it's a good idea? We are just trying to get the association known as widely as possible.

I have also contacted our local Mayor. She would be pleased to consider putting on a Civic Reception for members and friends of our association as we do in other states. Because of distance and lack of available long weekends, we were wondering if people would attend if a suitable weekend could be arranged.

Regards to all

Bill

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MERCHANDISE

Don't forget we have a large range of merchandise for purchase and further advertise the ABA.

All Orders to: Treasurer, Roy Ferguson, ABA, c/o PO Box 8113, ORANGE, NSW 2800

▪ Tie Bars/lapel pins/cuff links and brooch \$10	▪ Book donation kits \$8
▪ Men's embroidered shirts and ties \$50	▪ Ladies embroidered shirts \$50
▪ Embroidered baseball style caps \$20 + \$5 postage for all mail orders	▪ Name Badges \$20

Words of Wisdom

Be thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more.

If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never ever have enough. Author unknown

AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY FOUNDATION REPORT – John Robinson BM

Dear All

Establishment of the Australian Bravery Foundation was formally ratified by you at our last ABA AGM. The following were elected to the Board of Directors:-

Sue Alt, Royce Thompson, Pamela Davidson, Bill Hindson, Phil Spence and myself.. James Long is ex-officio as the ABA National President.

Office bearers elected and appointed on 1/6/11 are myself as Chairman, Phil Spence as Deputy Chairman and Sue Alt as Secretary / Treasurer.

Company documents

We have much to do starting now with lodging of the company documents and when we get our ABN we will then apply for Gift Duty Status. We also have to attend to a range of establishment matters and also need to re-visit the AB Foundation Business Plan. This document will need to be robust if we are to be focussed and credible. The AB Foundation will report its activities against this Plan.

Criteria for assistance

An early task for the Directors will be to set some criteria around who we want to help, how we want to do that and what options we have and also steps we will go through – perhaps a check list of actions. This will take a bit of work and we will need to review other material that has been put together in the past including Adam Wilson's documents.

Phil Spence will lead this activity supported by Royce Thompson, Pam Davidson and Bill Hindson. ABA members will also be consulted in this activity and I invite anyone with suggestions to contact Phil or any member of his team.

External membership of the Board

Once we get the deck tidied up we need to get together and go through a range of issues including possible Board members external to the ABF.

Communications

The AB Foundation will look at using electronic means to minimise travel expenses for meetings. We are fortunate that three of the Directors live in the Canberra region so that also helps.

Suggestions

ABA members are encouraged to email me or any of the team members on any suggestions for things that the Foundation should address.

Thank you

I thank members of the ABA for their willingness to allow the establishment of the Foundation. This capacity is an aim that extends back to the formation of the ABA with John and Hedonna Thurgar and the leadership team at that time, to the National Executive team in the five years that I was National President and to the present team under James Long. I also thank Adam Wilson and those around him for the work that they put in.

I thank the new Directors of the Foundation for their willingness to be involved. With the support of the ABA and other organisations we will make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged brave Australians and their families.

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WA REPORT – Vic Boreham CBC

Annual Report presented at the 2011 AGM



My report to the Members this year is to be very brief. This is not out of choice, but because the year 2010 has been very quiet for the Western Australian branch of the Australian Bravery Association.

Accompanied by my wife Lyn, I have attended each of the investiture ceremonies at Government House, and had the privilege and pleasure of meeting with 99 per cent of the recipients of Bravery Decorations. I have ensured that each recipient of a Bravery Decoration has received introductory information concerning The Australian Bravery Association, how to apply for Membership, and our current our aims.

As I do not see the completed application forms, I do not know how many Bravery Decoration recipients have taken up my invitation to join the Association. I can only hope that a reasonable number think of us as a worthwhile organization to join. I think most National Vice Presidents are in a similar position.

We have had no social functions this year. I have experienced a couple of injury and health issues which have slowed me down a bit. I did send an email to each of the Western Australian Members asking for opinions about date, time and locality for a proposed function. However, I received only one reply that was supporting the idea of a function, but no suggestion as to where and when. It is very disappointing to see such a lack of interest and input from the members. Occasions such as these provide great opportunities to greet new members, meet again with longer serving members, and just have a pleasant day. I will try to organize a luncheon when the weather in Perth cools down a little.

I am still involved in dialogue with the City of Cockburn, regarding the establishment of a Bravery Garden where we can observe an annual Commemorative Service. It is a very slow process which has seen me write very recently to the Mayor requesting an appointment, in order to gain an insight into what progress (if any) has been made on this project. I will keep everyone informed of any progress made.

I wish everyone a safe, happy and rewarding 2011.

NEWS FLASH



Since this report was filed Vic is proud to announce that the City of Cockburn Council has agreed to the establishment of a Bravery Garden. This will be the first Bravery Garden established outside of Canberra.

VIC /TAS REPORT – Coralee Lever

I have had a very busy year. Around 5 women were interviewed and filmed for a mini documentary series on “Inspirational Murray Darling Women” in our district. This can be viewed on “Murray Darlings” on Utube. I also travelled to Melbourne for Bravery awards at Government House and invited author Mark Whittaker along so he could collect more information for his book.

60 minutes program invited me to an interview that was aired on Chanel 9. I had the chance to talk about Port Arthur as well as the ABA. Following the 60 Minutes program I was asked to be a guest speaker at a Palliative Care luncheon.



The annual Great Weekend in Mildura was a resounding success and several members enjoyed the experience of their first Mildura ABA reunion. So much so that some have already booked their accommodation for next year!

Our tours with our lovely Allison Stone from “Discover Mildura”, were fantastic as usual and the River Cruise, just brilliant. Allison was presented this year with a Certificate of Appreciation from James as well as a framed photograph of a Murray River scene, courtesy of Bill & Gillian Lowther on behalf of the ABA!

The dinner at the Old Fire Station, was so good as usual, and the B.B.Q. next day was very relaxing, enjoying one another’s company. Once again all wines were donated for the dinner and prizes. I would really like to thank all of our A.B.A family for making the long journey to Mildura, and to all those who made themselves available in the Kitchen on Sunday, as many hands make light work, Thanks to Roy & Darrell for cooking the B.B.Q, I must say Jim Preston would have been proud of you. Sorry you couldn’t be with us Jim!
We also missed Keith & Flo Payne. Congratulations, Flo on receiving your O.A.M. We are all very proud of you.
All of my regulars, I hope to see you next year so mark that spot for the Long Weekend in June 2012.

I would like to thank all those who sent me lovely heart warming letters of apologies and I truly hope one day you will be able to join in our wonderful weekend of friendship & fellowship. I am truly blessed being part of this wonderful family.



On behalf of the A.B.A I congratulate Brenda & Alan, putting together our newsletter to keep all of our members informed while Alan has been unwell and recovering from surgeries! Two very dedicated members.

Best wishes -
Coralee

Some of the gang on the Bus tour – Mildura weekend. (Photo courtesy Bill Lowther)

2010 Honorary Psychologist Report

It has been a great honour once again to continue the work with members and friends throughout the organisation in 2010.



The briefing on PTSD, its impact on recipients and family, was well received at the 2010 Conference. Over that weekend there were a number of families who identified as having psychological difficulties and needing professional support.

In all cases this was managed by offering professional support in the form of referring on or direct engagement by email, telephone etc. It is not always possible for recipients and families to access local services for various reasons, and for this reason it is important to have professional support available for people. I have continued to provide advice when requested and to attend those functions in Brisbane to support Sally Gregory.

It continues to be my interest to support the establishment of the Foundation with a view to getting appropriate services to those recipients and family deemed to be in need of our support. Once this develops I believe we can make a very big difference in peoples lives.

I had a wonderful experience recently in my role and will tell you of this now. A very troubled man contacted me by email and I was able to discuss his issues with him in this manner back and forth for some days. After assessing his needs I was able to put him in touch with various members of our association who could offer friendship (thanks Coralee Lever) and practical advise in terms of how to go about getting recognition for his acts of bravery over many years (thanks Jim Runham).

It was a team effort that managed to facilitate his journey to Canberra this year (thanks James Long), and I'm sure it will make a difference to his life. In fact his fiancé contacted me to say that within 24 hours of our first conversations he was a different man.

I leave that with you just to reinforce just how important our Association is.

Pamela Davidson BM

Honorary Psychologist to The ABA., 12 Parkhurst Ave Herston Qld 4006

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Honorary Professional Support Team

A special thanks to our professional support team for their services to the members of the ABA.

Honorary Chaplain The Venerable Air Commodore Dr Royce Thompson Ph: 0416 265 600 Email: royce.thompson@forbravery.org	Honorary Psychologist Pam Davidson Ph: Mobile: 0422 238 641 Email: pamela.davidson@forbravery.org
Honorary Web Master John Straskye Email: webmaster@forbravery.org	Honorary Historian Anthony Staunton Email: Anthony.Staunton@dva.gov.au
Honorary Advisor National Executive Support Peter Billings	

Notes from your editors – Brenda & Alan Cochrane OAM

To all accounts the 2011 Annual gathering in Canberra was enjoyed by all and Chairman, James has reported that The Crown Plaza and the Commonwealth Club has the endorsement of the members present at the AGM and therefore we shall seek negotiations with both venues for the ABA weekend of 2012. He also advises the dates for the annual Australian Bravery Association for 2012 decided at the AGM are:



Friday 10th February, Saturday 11th February and Sunday 12th February 2012.

We were sorry to miss the event and catch up with the many friends we have made over the years in the association.

I was busy preparing for spinal surgery, which resulted in two more spine operations and I can guarantee where I would have rather been! I would personally like to thank the many people who emailed and phoned offering best wishes and words of encouragement. Special thanks to Bill & Alicia Sorohan who were there for us. I spent almost 2 weeks in a Brisbane hospital but was assured that Brenda was taken care of by the Sorohan family when she was not “on hospital duty”. And isn't this a wonderful reflection of what our members can do for one another during times of stress and need as well as enjoying the good times?

To add to the chaos, we were starting to grow web feet as record breaking rains caused Bundaberg's Burnett river to flood and waters inundated many homes and businesses. Once again we were personally not affected and appreciated the many calls checking on our welfare.

Congratulations also to Florence Payne on receiving her well deserved Order of Australia Medal!

Many of you would have seen the RPA Program on television earlier this year featuring Bill & Catherine Hindson's daughter Renee. In response, Bill and Catherine supplied update on Renee as well as statistical information on brain tumours. I'm sure you join with us in wishing the family all the best wishes and blessings as they deal with this experience.

Our best wishes. Alan & Brenda

Our apologies for the lateness of this edition due to circumstances beyond our control.

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QLD REPORT – Sally Gregory CBC

Old Bravery Dinner 2011. The venue has been booked and the dates set for this year's Queensland Bravery Weekend here on the Gold Coast. August 20th is the bravery dinner and a fun filled programme is being set to give you more fun in the sun over the weekend. Once again Currumbin RSL will be hosting the bravery dinner along with the Men's and Women's only peer support workshops. This date coincides with the Broadbeach Jazz Festival weekend so there's plenty of fun to be had on the weekends.

Now is a good time to put that date in your diary and get your frequent flier points organized too. Early birds can book their accommodation at the Estuary Motor Inn on 07 5534 5566. It books out early so I suggest you make your reservation ASAP. I will post more info on our web site and ABA Face book page, as it comes to hand. It's always good for a quick visit as it has interesting links and updates too.

Greetings from the Sunny Gold Coast.

As I write this report, Queensland is still in recovery from the ravages of flood and cyclone which beset our locals in January, causing significant turmoil in this state, with a mix of tragedy, hope and great news. With tragedy comes the stories of victims with hope in the unknown and

the gruesome hunt for bodies of four people still not accounted for. And the great news relates to the many who are safe or who were rescued. There are also many defining images of the disaster's brave professional rescuers and citizens alike putting the lives of others before their own safety. More on the disastrous floods later, but first I will relate an interesting tale from last year's investiture at Government House, Brisbane.

Cricketing great Matthew Hayden attended the investiture along side some Qld bravery award recipients. He was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in the General Division. Later that night Matthew was on the news commenting on his admiration for the bravery award recipients he met on the day. His response has encouraged me to write to him, and offer an opportunity to support the ABA and become more involved.

Matthew replied – “None of what I have ever achieved even comes close to the levels of bravery, sheer determination and the generosity of a selfless spirit demonstrated by all the members of the Australian Bravery Association. As I said to David Coker and Bradley Edwards at the awards ceremony, I am completely in awe of what each of you has achieved. The fact that an association has been created to support such heroes is testimony to the reality of the effect such acts of bravery would have on them and their families. I would love to be able to support the Association and would be delighted to provide a signed bat for use in your Qld bravery dinner raffle, so could I make the promise that I will personalise a message on a bat for the winner when I return from the T20 championship league”.

Linton Jones and John Thurgar battled it out in the bidding at the last Qld dinner. Linton was victorious, reaching a bid of \$810 so we thank Linton and John for their enthusiasm and generosity too.

Our guest speaker for the evening was one of our staunchest Queensland members – Mark Norris. Mark gave a presentation on his book *Cop Undercover* which tells the story of him being taken hostage by drug dealers when his cover was blown whilst working undercover. I found this story to be quite frightening, so much so that I could not read the entire book, and had to hand it back. The experiences of our members are so extraordinary that one finds it hard to comprehend the danger that some of us have faced.



This week, I have had the honour of representing the ABA at the bravery investitures. There I met our newest bravery award recipients – Natalie Dove BM, David Pinchin CBC, Patrick Robertson CBC, Alex Robben CBC and Jason Sorohan CBC. Jason is the son of our much loved members Alicia and Bill. We have all marvelled at Alicia's extraordinary story of courage and compassion in rescuing her friend from the jaws of a giant crocodile, but many of us did not know that it was in fact Jason who saved Alicia's life by terminating the crocodile with a

skilfully placed bullet to the brain. So I'm sure you would all like to join me in congratulating the Sorohans on this much deserved honour. We congratulate Jason and all our new recipients

& their families, on receiving their hard earned bravery awards, and invite them to celebrate with us at the Qld dinner on August 20th.

And speaking of brave young men, it has been my pleasure once again to Chair the Geoff Boyce Brave Youth of the Year award, and to have the honour of introducing Andrew Sampsonidis CBC to you all. He joins our favourite sons GB award winners for 2008 - James Foley BM and 2009 - Daniel Johnston BM. These fine young fellows are now connected through a unique bond of experience and brotherhood, and it is my hope that they will keep their friendship going throughout the years that follow.

Queensland residents can keep an eye out for a show, "Life of Qld" hosted by Trevor Hendy on Channel 10, screening June 11 which will feature some of our ABA members. The focus is on bravery and rescue. Mark it on the calendar and get ready to see us squirming on the tube.

Unfortunately this report does not end on a happy note. Across the state we saw homes, farms and businesses slowly flooded. Then we saw the two metre wall of flood water, with less than 10 minutes warning for many, and no warning for others, crash through the city leaving death and devastation. But then the 'big Wet' got bigger and the devastation got worse – Bundaberg and the Lockyer Valley were next. With such tragedy come stories of both extraordinary acts of heroism and victims and tragedy.

There are stories of professional rescuers and citizens alike putting the lives of others before their own safety. But I would like to make special mention of the amazing Runham family who with their fleet of 3 small runabouts performed a staggering 57 rescues to flooded residents in the Ipswich area. Now known as Grantham's Noah and his ark, Mr Raymond Van Dijk's rescued dozens of stranded townspeople from rooftops, trees and homes. As he said, "The adrenaline just kicked in and away we went. It's just the natural thing that happens when someone's life is in danger." And few would forget Jordan Rice, a 13 year old boy, has become a hero because of his selfless act of courage and love for his little brother that ultimately cost him his life. Trapped in a car in rising flood waters, when rescuers arrived Jordan yelled, "Take my brother first". Sadly, Jordan and his mother perished.

There are too many acts of heroism to repeat here, as space could not do their deeds justice. I can recommend that review the many Queensland flood heroes tell their story at: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/special-reports/queenslands-flood-heroes-tell-their-story/story-fn7kabp3-1225987728596>

Even with the valiant and best efforts of many, the Queensland Floods have taken lives and livelihoods of many, with the death toll having risen to 23 with four people still missing. Either way, the floods and the devastation of cyclone Yasi have been a series of traumatic events. As a result, I anticipate a significant increase the number bravery awards issued, and a significant increase in the number of recipients who require assistance. You can now see why I keen to improve the support we provide.

I have been in, under and around water all my life, and understand the dangers posed by such volumes, currents and power associated with both the floods in Queensland and rough seas of Christmas Island. I can assure you, those who went near these torrents well and truly put themselves at risk. For the victims and survivors, it can only have been traumatic. Many of the stories bring tears to my eyes. Our thoughts and best wishes are with all involved. The devastating floods & terror of cyclone Yasi have served to remind us of the need to pull together in wake of this and any traumatic event. I am very pleased that Australia has a system

to recognise the brave efforts of those put the lives of other before their own, and pleased to provide support to those who do in my state. We have much work do to do in the following years, so your ongoing support is appreciated. To finish, I would like to repeat the words of Anna Bligh who recently said:

“We are Queenslanders. We are the people they breed tough north of the border. We’re the ones that they knock down, and we get up again.”

We’re the ones that ‘rise every time we fall’, particularly if we pull together!

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Message from Catherine and Bill Hindson

Thank you for your kind thoughts regarding Renee.

We are pleased to report that Renee has handled the treatment to date with her usual determination and humour.

By way of history, the brain tumour was found by accident in August last year when she had a fall while skiing. She experienced a headache and neck pain for a few days and had an x-ray to see if she had a fracture. That is how the tumour the size of a golf ball was discovered.

The operation at RPA in Sydney was performed on 12 October and a week later, Renee was diagnosed with a Grade 3 Astrocytoma, a malignant tumour which will return at some time in the future. She underwent radiation therapy every day for six weeks before Christmas and started six months chemotherapy in January. She will have MRI's every three months this year to monitor whether the tumour has returned. She was advised a just a week ago that the chemotherapy will be extended for another six months.

She has a great sense of humour (as could be seen on RPA) and is making the best of her situation. She was not allowed to drive for six months and has not been able to return to work. Her hair is now growing back (the radiation made it fall out) and her friends have difficulty at times identifying her as she has a number of different coloured wigs. The day she was given the diagnosis, she wrote in Facebook of her fears and set herself a long term goal to teach her children (Wil aged 5 and Cait 4) to drive.

Interesting statistics put out by the Brain Tumour Alliance Australia:

- . There are around 1,400 new cases of primary (malignant) brain tumours in Australia each year, including 100 in children.
- . It is the highest cause of death from cancer for children aged 0-14 years. An average of 33 deaths per year.
- . It is the highest cause of death from cancer in people aged 0–39 (average of 120 deaths per year in 2003 – 2007).
- . No change in five-year relative survival between 1982-1986 and 1988-2004 (19%).
- . It has the largest lifetime financial costs faced by households of any cancer type, at \$149,000 per person, and highest lifetime economic cost of any cancer type, at \$1.89 million per person.
- . Brain tumour funding is low in relation to the burden of the disease.
- . Causes are unknown and it is not preventable by any known lifestyle changes.

At this time, there is no cure for brain cancer. More information on brain tumours is available from www.btaa.org.au. Again, we extend our sincere thanks to you all for your prayers and thoughts, and for making contact with us. Catherine and Bill