



AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 33 March 2020

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

The official newsletter of the Australian Bravery Association.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Andrew Kendall



Dear ABA members and friends,

The highlight of the year so far has been the National Conference in Canberra from 7 to 9 February.

Thanks to all the members and friends who shared a wonderful weekend. Special thanks to Mr Andrew Barr MLA, the ACT Chief Minister, for his welcome during the Official Reception; General Angus Campbell AO DSC, Chief of the Defence Force, for his inspiring and pertinent speech at the Black-Tie Dinner; and His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley for joining us at the Service of Remembrance at Government House.

I would also like to extend our thanks to Mr Ross MacDiarmid, Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Australian Mint, and his staff for hosting our Black-Tie Dinner and for Ross's visionary offer to establish a formal link between the Royal Australian Mint and the Australian Bravery Association.

The 2021 National Conference will be in Canberra from 12-14 February. I hope that many of you can join us for the conference.

On 8 February 2020 the AGM was held at the Hellenic Club in Woden and the National Executive elected to serve you this year. Their names and contact details are on the back page of this newsletter.

The year ahead is an exciting one for the Association. We have a number of events planned, including Reunions in Victoria and Queensland. All State and Territory Presidents will also represent the ABA at awards investitures around the country. This provides a means to support the honours and awards system and reach out to potential members.

I hope all members and their families have a good year and the members of the National Executive look forward to supporting and spending time with you throughout the year.

Coming events

ABA Campout Weekend 30-31 May 2020

- Fun filled time for kids & adults alike
- Bonfire, games and music

Cancelled until further notice.

ABA Victoria Reunion (Mildura) 5-7 June 2020

- Welcome reception
- Murray River Cruise
- Reunion Dinner
- Mildura Markets
- Casserole Lunch

ABA Queensland Reunion (Gold Coast)

16-17 October 2020

Invitation and RSVP will be sent out closer to the date.

ABA National Conference 12-14 February 2021

An exciting program of events is currently being organised.

Editors' Note:

This newsletter is authorised and published by the Australian Bravery Association, PO Box 88 Rosanna Victoria 3084. E&OE.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The Deputy National President of the Australian Bravery Association (ABA), Mike Pearson, declared the Annual General Meeting open at 9.15am on Saturday 8th February 2020. Mike Pearson then welcomed all present, a minute's silence was held to remember those who have lost their lives saving someone and to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice during the bushfire season.

Things to look forward to in 2020:

- Plans are in place for the ABA website to be updated and for greater use to be made of social media. Goch Kot BM has kindly volunteered to be the Information Technology Coordinator, an ex-officio appointment agreed by the National Executive, for 2020.
- Efforts will continue to establish suitable spaces in QLD, NSW & WA for new Bravery Gardens.
- A small group formed from National Executive members and chaired by Andrew Kendall will have responsibility to review the ABA's strategic direction to further enhance our national presence and influence, while supporting our existing and future members.

Acknowledgement & Thanks:

- Keith Payne VC stepped down from the role of Vice Patron during 2019. Andrew Kendall, on behalf of all members, acknowledged Keith's engagement with the ABA over many years and wished him well for the future.
- Andrew Kendall thanked the National Executive for their support and positive engagement during 2019.

Andrew Kendall, informed members that a notice had been circulated to members on 10th January 2020 informing them of a proposed amendment to the ABA Constitution.

The aim of the amendment was to, on advice from Government House (Canberra), rename our 'National Vice-Presidents' to state and territory Presidents (e.g. NSW President or ACT President) due to the confusion it sometimes causes with the National Vice-President's getting confused with the Deputy National President. This change also increases the number of positions from six to eight in order to allow us to have a representative in each state and territory.

ABA STRATEGIC DIRECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE

One of the key outcomes of our 2020 AGM was the decision to form a Strategic Direction Review Committee (SDRC) to develop an ABA Strategic Plan.

The SDRC held its inaugural meeting in February and is scheduled to meet again prior to the April 2020 National Executive (NX) meeting.

Simply put, a strategic plan is the formalized road map that describes how an organisation executes its chosen strategy. The ABA plan will document an ABA Vision, what it intends to achieve over the next few years and how it proposes to get there.

A strategic plan is an executive tool that helps an organization do a better job, because a plan focuses the energy, resources, and time of everyone in the organization in the same direction. The introduction of the ABA Strategic Plan

is not a criticism of historical effort; rather, it will build on historical ABA achievements and focus our energy on realizing the NX endorsed plan for the future.

The SDRC work to date has included the drafting of an ABA Vision and development of four key strategic themes that are focusing ongoing deliberations.

Further discussion continues on objectives, priorities, initiatives and how the ABA can monitor progress and measure success.

The SDRC consists of:

- Andrew Kendall – National President
- Michael Pearson BM APM – Deputy National President
- Michael McMahon BM – National Secretary
- Peter White - ACT President & Public Officer
- John Thurgar SC OAM RFD – Immediate Past National President & Founder of the ABA

The SDRC will report progress to the April 2020 NX meeting.

ABA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - FAMILY FRIENDLY AND FANCY FREE

We were lucky enough this year to have an abundance of youthful enthusiasm in the uptake of our ABA families to attend the ABA National Conference in Canberra.

The fact that many of those kids this year were in fact Bravery honour recipients made it all the more special. From our Brave Youth of the Year Awardee 2019 William Kelly, to newly awarded youth members, this cohort of under 18's gives us so much faith that the next generation of not only the ABA but our society in general is being passed to compassionate, committed and brave individuals.



Cayla Sweeney, William Kelly, Kaylea Caulfield BM, Jade-Elle Brown

While those awesome kids on my table at the annual dinner gave me much to laugh about, they clearly were not leaving me any dessert (obviously in the interest of my health). How thoughtful of them. As the Australian Bravery Association grows, it is integral to our continuance to ensure that our medal recipients of all ages are engaged and supported in the true sense of the association charter.

Whether as adults, we can support families and children in mentoring or just plain listening or whether getting brave kids together just allows them to express their inner feelings and fears with like-minded and aged friends, the ABA gives them that platform to enable that support and community which may be required as a result of a brave act.

These wonderful children and young adults are proof that bravery does not just belong to adults and they need to be told that whilst every decision we make comes at a cost, the saviour of life, environment and property is a cost that is worth the effort.

Jamie Ferguson BM



Jamie Ferguson BM, Kaylea Caulfield BM, Ruby Brown, Jade-Elle Brown, Justine Brown, Molly Brown

ABA BRAVE YOUTH OF THE YEAR 2019

William Kelly, Parkerville WA

Congratulations to William Kelly who was awarded the ABA Brave Youth of the Year Award 2019 at the ABA National Conference this year.



Sally Gregory and William with General Angus Campbell AO, DSC



Jade, William and Chrissy Kelly

William attended the National Conference with his mother Christine and sister Jade they had a wonderful time meeting other young members of the ABA. Thanks to Sally Gregory, Chair of the ABA Brave Youth Committee, and her fellow committee members for their dedication and work to select the recipients.

His Commendation for Brave conduct citation reads as follows:

Mr William John Kelly

On the afternoon of 16 January 2017, Mr William Kelly went to the assistance of two women who were being attacked by a man in Western Australia.

William, then aged 12 years, was playing on the trampoline in the backyard of his home, while his mother and a friend were sitting on the home's front deck. His mother became aware of an unknown man in the front yard. She called out to the man telling him to leave, but he continued to stay in the yard.

William's mother then went into the garage where the man charged at her and began assaulting her. Ms Kelly's friend ran to her and attempted to pull the offender off, but the offender grabbed both women and began to drag them down the gravel driveway. He grabbed a rock and struck the woman, before continuing to assault Ms Kelly.

Concerned for the safety of his mother and her friend, William quickly jumped on the man to try and stop the attack. He then grabbed a small branch and struck the offender on the head. Diverted from the assault, the offender began chasing William around a car while shouting threats.

Using a mobile phone, William called police and stayed on the line for over 30 minutes, providing details of the offender and the assault. With the offender distracted, William's mother and her friend managed to make it to the safety of the house and William joined them a short while later.

For his actions, Mr Kelly is commended for brave conduct.

AUSTRALIA WIDE BUSHFIRES

The 2019–20 Australian bushfire season, colloquially known as the black summer, began with several serious uncontrolled fires in June 2019. Hundreds of fires were burning, mainly in the southeast of the country. The major fires, which peaked during December–January, have since been extinguished.

As of 9 March 2020, the fires burnt an estimated 18.6 million hectares (46 million acres; 186,000 square kilometres; 72,000 square miles), destroyed over 5,900 buildings (including 2,779 homes) and killed at least 34 people.

The fires impacted all Australians directly or indirectly and many of our members were on the front line protecting their properties, volunteering and fighting the fires, thereby risking their life to save life, property and the environment.

Paul and Sharon Gatenby who live in the Currowan State Forrest only just avoided disaster. Sharon said it was only because of Paul’s vigilance we still have a home, honestly if he wasn’t Johnny on the spot we would have gone up in smoke.



Paul Gatenby BM with wife Sharon and son Mitchell

Mark, Cate, Sarah, Jessica and Emily Tregellas narrowly escaped the fires in Mallacoota, spending several nights on the beach, fortunately their home did not burn, but was a bit singed. The following story about their plight was published in the Herald Sun on 21 January 2020.

BLACK HUMOUR

Retired local policeman Mark “Trigger” Tregellas avoids heroism. He copped valour awards and a PTSD diagnosis after death-defying experiences in recent years, one involving a psychotic man trying to incinerate himself with petrol; the other rescuing a couple on a shipwrecked catamaran in a storm.

When the fire jumped from the bush onto their property, Tregellas and his wife Cate took their three daughters and frightened house guests to shelter on the foreshore. Next day he helped fight spot fires around town. It should have been easy but he found trouble again — an “empty” shed in which an old local identity, long dead, had stored ammunition, paint thinners and aerosol cans. When the bullets started exploding, “Trigger” bolted.



Mark and Cate Tregellas inspect their scorched property with daughters Jessica, Emily and Sarah. Picture: David Caird

Cate Tregellas later wrote a wry report headed “13 things no one tells you about bushfires”, which starts with “black snot” and points out that trying to rescue goldfish in plastic bags doesn’t end well. Her story went viral and has been read all over the world.

But underneath the jokes is a family coping with conflicting emotions. They are physically unhurt and their house is damaged but still standing, thanks to gutsy neighbours who hosed down two spot fires. But what about next time? It makes it hard to sleep.

Black humour doesn't diminish the disaster or the work needed to fix the damage, but it gets people through the day. It's the same after every fire, everywhere.

To see what harm a hot fire does in a few hellish minutes is always a shock, no matter how often you see it. But to see what survives can also surprise. If it is a miracle that most of Mallacoota is still standing, it's a privilege to see the people there tackle adversity.



Jessica Tregellas walks her dog. Picture: David Caird

MEETING YOUR MEMBERS

Claire Browning & Chris Holloway

At the National Conference this year we welcomed two new members and their family and friends to the ABA family. Claire Browning and Chris Holloway joined the ABA after being awarded a Group Bravery Citation, together with James Ferguson (also an ABA member) and Samuel Fouras, for their rescue of a family during floods in Logan, Queensland. Claire and Chris also were awarded a Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery and James Ferguson the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Commissioner's Medal for Valour. All three received a specially created City of Logan's Golden Banksia Award for the rescue.



Chris Holloway (left) and Claire Browning (right) with Their Excellencies General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) and Mrs Linda Hurley.

Claire has now moved to Hobart with her family and is member of the Tasmanian State Emergency Service. Chris, still Beenleigh Group Leader with Logan City State Emergency Service, attended the National Conference with his wife Justine, and Claire and Chris were pleased to have Suzanne Kennedy from the Logan City Council attend with them. Chris was honoured to be able to lay a wreath during the Service of Remembrance at Government House on 9 February.

Chris expressed these words to me after the National Conference:

"The entire weekend was so special. The ABA is just chock full of amazing people, even without their stories."

Thank you for giving me the special honour of laying the wreath for the Civilian Bravery Recipients."

Claire and Chris' Group Bravery Citation reads as follows:

Mrs Claire Louise BROWNING, Tas 7140
Mr James FERGUSON, Waterford Qld 4133
Mr Samuel Liam FOURAS, Luscombe Qld 4207
Mr Christopher Edward HOLLOWAY, Logan City Qld 4114

In the early hours of 31 March 2017, members of the Queensland State Emergency Service and one member of the public were involved in the rescue of a family stranded in floodwaters following Cyclone Debbie in Queensland.

State Emergency Services (SES) in Luscombe were requested to go to the assistance of three people stranded on the roof of their home following the destructive effects of Cyclone Debbie. Three SES volunteers prepared a boat and set off in the dark, in water that was strong flowing and rising rapidly.

Despite floating debris, the trio continued upstream, often being required to duck to avoid damaged powerlines. They came upon a small group of people, one of whom offered assistance and he was subsequently briefed as the group of four continued upstream.



James Ferguson, Claire Browning and Chris Holloway Picture: Mark Calleja

When the boat was approximately 150 metres from the stranded family on the rooftop, a group of locals assisted in manoeuvring the boat through the shallow water to a deeper part of the river. At this point another person replaced one of the people in the boat, and it continued upstream over submerged fence lines and trees. The family on the roof of the house were sighted and after a quick reconnaissance of the scene, the boat was manoeuvred alongside the house, near a balcony.

With the floodwater continuing to rage, the boat was secured and one of the SES members jumped over a railing and onto a balcony. He spoke with an older man who informed him that the other family members were on the roof. Flood water was rising higher as the SES volunteer climbed out over the balcony and then crawled on his hands and knees along an awning until he located a woman and two children.

The three were individually brought along the awning and another SES volunteer assisted them onto the balcony. The children were then fitted with life jackets and helped aboard the boat. The older man refused to leave without his dogs so it was agreed that the dogs would also be evacuated.

The boat then set off into the swift flowing water and encountered large trees and debris as it fought the currents. On reaching a safe site, other members of the public helped to secure the boat to a power pole and the family was then able to disembark.

Soon after the house was dislodged from its foundations by the water and was pushed down the river, coming into contact with other houses, trees and power poles.

For their actions, the recipients are recognised by the award of the Group Bravery Citation.

VICTORIA REUNION – MILDURA

The reunion is scheduled for the June Long weekend 5-7 June, we will keep you informed if the decision is made to cancel due to COVID-19. A fun and relaxed program of events is planned, which includes:

- a welcome dinner at the Mildura RSL;
- a four-hour lunch cruise on the mighty Murray River;
- a semi-formal Reunion Dinner; and
- an informal farewell lunch.

QUEENSLAND REUNION – GOLD COAST

The Reunion is due to take place on 16-17 October. The details are still being worked out, but I'm sure Sally will organise an exciting and fun itinerary for members and guests. Once again, we will keep you informed as the COVID-19 restrictions unfold.

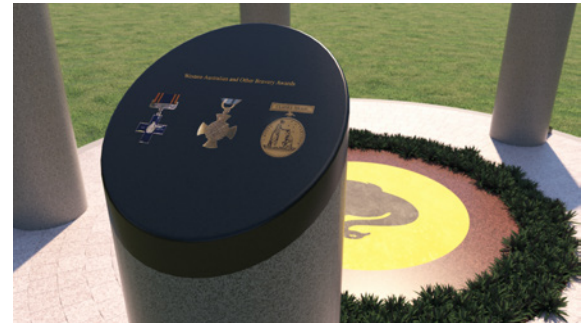
BRAVERY GARDENS

As part of the ABA's aim to promote the national and state honours and awards systems and the needs of our members, we have been working towards construction of Bravery gardens in a number of states. Hopefully, we can establish local places where people can gather to reflect on, or commemorate, brave acts or to grieve the loss of loved ones.

Western Australia

Shortly, Richard Wells, WA President will be meeting with the Governor of Western Australian, His Excellency The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, to discuss the possibility of establishing a Bravery garden there. Tim Britton CV, Vice-Patron and Victor Boreham, Immediate Past WA President, will be supporting Richard with the project.

Modelled on the proposed Queensland Bravery Garden, the Western Australian Bravery Garden design will recognise both national and state awards and provide a place of reflection for all Western Australians.



Images: WA Bravery Garden Design

New South Wales

In October 2019, Andrew Kendall our National President and James Preston, NSW President, met with the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, to discuss the possible establishment of a garden of remembrance at Government House, Sydney.

Queensland Bravery Garden

The plans for the Queensland Bravery Garden have progressed the furthest of the three proposed projects. So far, a physical design has been completed and support, including donations of medals, obtained from relevant bodies including Government House, the respective Emergency Services Commissioners and heads of the Royal Humane Society of Australia and Royal Life Saving Australia. However, after a few suggested sites nearly coming to fruition, we are still trying to negotiate a location with the Brisbane City Council.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR HONORARY PSYCHOLOGIST

Pam Davidson BM

As the impacts of Covid-19 are upon us I am aware that it is important to consider our own and other's mental health because of the imposed self-isolation or social distancing required to help control the speed and spread of this virus. In effect you have hit a pause button. How often have you thought in your busy life I just wish I could get time to stand still for a bit. I know I have. And do what? We're probably just wanting the hectic pace to slow down so we can catch up, take a breath, have some still time, whatever it is now is your opportunity.

Make the most of this special free time. Here are just a few suggestions of how you can spend it productively and unproductively. The latter is important too, take the pressure off yourself to need to be productive, these are unprecedented times so cut yourself some slack if you feel weird not working, or racing the kids/grandkids off to some worthwhile activity.

Start that course you've bought sitting on your desktop, make a start on that pile of books you're going to read someday, pick a cupboard to sort that you haven't had time to get to, bake, do some craft, paint, download free exercise APPS like "Nike Training", watch that series on Netflix or free to air TV, play games, do puzzles and get out the jig saw's, gardening and replanting your potted plants, research that trip or topic you want to find out more about.

Remember it's important to stay in touch. Share the above activities you are doing with others and swap ideas and achievements. Invite your neighbour to have a coffee or a drink (if it's after 5:00) with a good distance apart. I'll be meeting my neighbour today for coffee. She'll be on her deck and I'll be in her driveway. This way we can all stay in touch.

So take this opportunity to hit the pause button, and reflect, what's really important to you, what have you lost sight of, where are you heading and when you get your life back what do you want to do that will contribute to a meaningful and truly enriched life?

Take care.

12 MONTH HEALTH AND FITNESS PROGRAM FOR RETURNED VETERANS & PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS

NO White or Gold Card Required

The free Heart Health Program run on behalf of the DVA by Corporate Health Management (CHM) aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through exercise, nutrition and lifestyle management support. It is a 52-week program that will assist you to exercise and provides 12 months of health coaching on healthy lifestyle choices by highly qualified allied health professionals.

The program covers a range of topics including setting healthy goals, nutrition and diet advice, lowering alcohol consumption, developing better sleep patterns, stress management, diabetes, taking care of your body, managing your weight and maintaining a healthy heart.

For more information and to check your eligibility contact CHM at hearthealth@chm.com.au or 1300 246 262 or go to www.veteranshearhealth.com.au .



ABA ON FACEBOOK

The Australian Bravery Association has two Facebook pages members can access.



Australian Bravery Association: This is an open community page (open to the public) which provides information about the association, including upcoming events, and matters relating to Bravery awards and recipients and the Australians honours and awards system.

Australian Bravery Awardees: This page is the original Australian Bravery Association page. It is a closed group, a private and discreet discussion portal for rescuers and their families. If you need someone to chat to who has walked in your shoes, this place is for you.

MERCHANDISE

Don't forget we have a large range of merchandise for purchase and further advertise the ABA. Full colour photos and merchandise order forms are on our web site. <http://www.forbravery.org.au/merchandise/>

All Order forms to: **Brenda Cochrane, ABA National Treasurer, PO Box 127, Bundaberg QLD 4670 or**
Email: ABANationalTreasurer@gmail.com

Tie Bars/lapel pins/brooches	\$10	Cuff links	\$15	Association neck ties	\$25
Men's embroidered shirts	\$35	Ladies embroidered shirts	\$35	Name badges	\$20
Embroidered baseball style caps	\$20				

+ \$8 postage for the above mail orders

Mark Whittaker's book – **BRAVE** is \$20.00 + 10.00 postage



PHOTO GALLERY
NATIONAL CONFERENCE CANBERRA 2020







ABA PATRON: His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)
ABA VICE-PATRONS: Darrell Tree CV, Victor Boscoe CV, Allan Sparkes CV OAM, Tim Britten CV,
Richard Joyes CV and Doug Baird OAM

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