

Order of Australia  
Hunter Regional Group  
New South Wales Branch



A Brief History  
1985 – 2025

# A Brief History Order of Australia Hunter Regional Group New South Wales Branch 1985 - 2025

## Introduction

This brief history has been prepared in part from information provided by Mrs. Mary Doughty AM, a former NSW Branch Regional Groups Coordinator, in April 2010. We are grateful to her for the information on the establishment of The Order of Australia, the Association and the establishment of the NSW Branch.

Additional information is from records which Laurie Kelly AM maintained since he became the Hunter Regional Group Convener in November 2003 and from information that has been researched from copies of documents in his files received from the Hunter Regional Group over the years since he became a member of the NSW Branch in 1986. Where possible he endeavoured to contact previous office bearers and local conveners to obtain additional information.

Thanks are extended to Professor Geoffrey Kellerman AO for providing some additional information and dates for some functions that were not available from the records of Laurie Kelly.

This historical summary has therefore been prepared based on the best information available, as it was felt important to record as much local history as possible while some of the early office holders and conveners were still able to recall events. If any of our members have additional information which they can provide, to update or correct this brief history, then such information would be welcome.

## Establishment of the Order of Australia

In December 1974, when Mr. Gough Whitlam, the then Australian Prime Minister was received at Buckingham Palace, he outlined to the Queen his proposal to cease using the Imperial Honours System in Australia, and replace it with a separate, wholly Australian honours system. The proposed Australian system was based on a Canadian awards and honours system which was already established. Queen Elizabeth II granted this proposal.

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. In February, its constitution and other legal aspects were proclaimed by the Queen in the Australia Government Gazette.

Twice yearly (Australia Day and the Queen's/King's Birthday), Companions (AC), Officers (AO) and Members (AM) are appointed to the Order, and Medals are awarded. The first three categories were established in 1975, while additional levels of Knight and Dame were added in 1977 but later abolished by the Hawke government. The Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) was established in 1977.

Later it was decided that distinguished persons who are not Australian citizens could be recipients of Honours in the General Division (honorary). The Australia Honours system has two divisions, the General Division and the Military Division.

The levels of Knight (AK) and Dame (AD) were brought back by Prime Minister Tony Abbott in March 2014. The honour was known as a Knight or Dame in the Order of Australia and was the nation's highest award. It was automatically bestowed on the serving Governor-General. Up to four could be created each year by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. This decision was rescinded in November 2015.

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 King (previously the Queen).

The ribbon of the order is royal blue with a central band of scattered golden wattle blossoms. The Military Division is differentiated by the addition of a narrow gold band at each edge.

### The Establishment of The Order of Australia Association

The first recorded steps to set up the Order of Australia Association were taken by Alderman Ken Cavanough AM of Blakehurst NSW. On 31 January 1976, he wrote to Mr. David Smith, 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 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 14 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 21 September 1979 and it was agreed that a steering committee be formed. This committee linked with the Victorian Group and it was agreed that a circular

invitation be sent to the twelve hundred (1,200) existing award recipients. This led to the first national meeting which was held at the Australian National University on 26 January 1980, followed by the first National dinner that evening. Sir Colin Syme AK (the most senior award 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.

Two draft constitutions by Major General Paul Cullen AO, CBE, DSO and bar, ED (later AC and Honorary Life Member) and Mr. Ken Cavanough AM were submitted to this meeting for consideration by all states. It was agreed at this meeting that the Association should be a national association with branches in all States and Territories. The aim of the Association was agreed to be "To foster love and pride in Australia and to uphold the high principles and prestige of the Order of Australia".

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.

## Membership

Membership of the Order of Australia Association is open to all recipients of an award in the Order of Australia, in both General Division and Military Division. It is also open to honorary recipients in the General Division. The number of recipients joining the Association varies greatly from year to year. In the early years, the figures seem to have been 85-90% of award recipients but has since dropped to about 50%.

## New South Wales Branch

At a meeting held in the Sydney Town Hall on 22 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. Major General Paul Cullen AO was elected as the first President and Alderman Andrew Briger AM, as Vice President.

It was agreed that 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 continues to the present day.

## Regional Groups

Although many social functions were conducted by the NSW Branch these were usually held in Sydney. 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 responsibility of organising such events. The NSW Branch

Committee was always most supportive and was represented at all such functions which usually bore the name of the locality or district in which they were held.

When the new Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Order of Australia 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 funded. After full discussion with all State Branches during 2003, an amended By-law 3 came into operation in October 2003.

The NSW Branch then used the term “Regional Coordinator” for the Branch Committee member responsible for all contacts with Regional Conveners. A set of guidelines was produced for holding social functions in the name of the Order of Australia Association NSW Branch.

The first regional function in NSW was held in Tamworth on 21 September 1984. 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. In 2013, there were fifteen (15) active and well organised regional groups in NSW, one unofficial Group, and one more under discussion.

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 NSW Branch had these banners manufactured and presented, and they are now prominently displayed at regional functions and provide an appropriate backdrop to many photographs of new members.

### The Hunter Regional Group

The fore runner to the Hunter Regional Group was formed in 1985 and held its first function, a Dinner, on 15 March 1985. It is understood that this dinner was held at the Newcastle Tattersall’s Club in Bolton Street, Newcastle.

The committee organising the dinner included:

- Dr. John Westphalen AM, RFD, ED Chairman
- Dr. Peter Hendry AO
- Dr. Owen James AM
- Ms. Diane Williamson, Honorary Secretary

The formal Inaugural Dinner of the Order of Australia Hunter Regional Branch was held at the Tattersall's Club Newcastle on Friday 25 July 1986. The Guest of Honour was Mr. David Smith AO, CVO and Mrs. Smith. David Smith was the Official Secretary to the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Secretary of the Order of Australia.

Several Members attended the Newcastle Australia Day Council Dinners held in 1986, 1987 and on 23 January 1988 at the Newcastle City Hall.

A church service and morning tea were held on 1 May 1988 arranged by Dr. John Westphalen AM, RFD, ED. Another dinner was held at the Newcastle Club, Newcomen Street, Newcastle on 28 April 1989.

On Australia Day 1989 and 1990, members joined with the Newcastle Australia Day Council to attend a church service at Christchurch Cathedral.

An informal reception was held on Saturday 17 November 1990 at the Newcastle Club. The Principal Guest was Rear Admiral Swan AO, Chairman of the NSW Branch. John Westphalen AM, RFD, ED was the local Group Chairman. Miss Diane Williamson was the Honorary Secretary, a position she held for about 10 years. Dr. Owen James AM was the host at the Newcastle Club.

A cocktail party was organised by Miss Diane Williamson for 27 April 1991 at the Newcastle Club.

From 1988 until about 1995, these cocktail parties were held each year at the Newcastle City Hall, hosted by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor John McNaughton (later AM), but no other functions were held. The Hunter Regional Group as such was not very active from 1995 to 1999.

A midday function, including a meeting of the Hunter Regional Group members, was held on 21 September 1999 at West's Leagues Club, Lambton to revitalise the Association, to elect a new committee and plan future functions. The new committee was Kevin McDougal OAM Chairman, Nance Adams OAM, OStJ Secretary and Professor Geoffrey Kellerman AO Treasurer.

A luncheon was held on 22 January 2000 at West's Leagues Club, Lambton with Mr. Kevin McDougal OAM as the convener. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, no further functions of the Hunter Regional Group were held for the next few years.

In November 2003, following a visit to the NSW Branch Annual General Meeting by Laurie Kelly AM, RFD, ED, and Peter Toms OAM, RFD, an approach was made to the Regional Groups Co-coordinator Mrs. Mary Doughty AM, to reactivate the Hunter Regional Group, and a function was planned for January 2004.

A current membership list was obtained from the NSW Branch Secretary and Laurie Kelly carried out a great deal of research to try and identify other people in the Hunter region who had received awards but were not members of the NSW Order of Australia Association.

The area allocated as the Hunter Regional Group was made up of a set number of post codes covering an area from Newcastle south to Doyalson, north to Bulahdelah and west to Scone, a very large geographical area. Some consideration was given to establishing an upper Hunter region based on Muswellbrook, but this has not eventuated.

A new committee was formed to plan future functions which included:  
Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Laurie Kelly AM, RFD, ED, Hunter Group Convener  
Professor Geoffrey Kellerman AO, Treasurer

Committee Members in 2004.

- Nance Adams OAM, OStJ
- Val Harvey-Hamilton OAM
- Robert Hicks OAM
- Kevin McDougall OAM
- John Miner OAM
- Peter Toms OAM, RFD

The committee agreed that all persons living in the area covered by the Hunter Regional Group would be invited to all future functions whether or not they were current members of the NSW Branch of the Order of Australia Association. New members who received awards would be contacted by the Regional Convener and congratulated and encouraged to join the Hunter Regional Group and the Order of Australia Association.

It was agreed that the cost of all functions would be kept as low as possible, as many older members had limited income. It was also decided that, where sufficient funding existed, new recipients would be invited to the annual morning tea at no charge in the year they received their award. This was later discontinued due to the rising costs of holding functions and the aim of keeping costs of all functions as low as possible for all members.

The committee members agreed that, as a general rule, the Hunter Regional Group would not carry out fund raising for charities or specific projects. It was recognized that most members have commitments to various fund-raising organisations that they have worked with for years, which often resulted in them being recommended for their awards.

Because of the large geographical area and the age of many award recipients, the committee agreed to investigate the possibility of holding functions in the Port Stephens area and the upper Hunter.

After three years of inactivity a successful luncheon was held on 24 January 2004 at the Cardiff RSL Club, attended by 119, including award recipients, their family, friends and supporters.

This was followed by a morning tea held at the Western Suburbs Leagues Club on Tuesday 6 July 2004. With the assistance of Kevin McDougall OAM, the then President of West's, a very reasonable cost was achieved. This function was attended by 115 award recipients and guests.

Since then, with the help of a very well organised committee, who meet twice a year, several functions were planned and conducted successfully.

In November 2006, a letter was written to the President of the British Empire Association asking if members in the Hunter Region would like to attend our functions. Unfortunately, due to privacy requirements, names and addresses could not be provided. Advice was received that our invitation would be passed on to members inviting them to contact Laurie Kelly if they were interested. However, no one made contact.

The Order of Australia Association NSW Branch Banner was presented to the Hunter Regional Convener, Laurie Kelly AM, acknowledging that the Hunter Regional Group was now a viable group. The presentation was made by Mr. Wolfgang Grimm AM, the then NSW Branch Chairman, at the annual luncheon on 29 January 2005. The banner was passed on to Mrs. June Cameron on 2 February 2013 when she took over the role of Regional Convener.

Recent NSW Branch Regional Groups Coordinators have been Ron Sharpe OAM (2009 to 2013), Garth Doyle OAM (2013 to 2019), Ron Sharpe (2019 to 2020), Christopher Dunne (2021 to 2023) and David North (2004-current). They attended or have been represented at many luncheons and morning teas in the Hunter Region. Ron Sharpe also attended Hunter Regional Group committee meetings from time to time and provided updates on NSW Branch activities. Their ongoing contribution is appreciated.

From when it was formally reorganised in December 2003 to March 2025, the Hunter Regional Group has arranged 58 activities consisting of 20 luncheons, 20 morning teas in the Newcastle area, 17 morning teas at Port Stephens and 1 morning tea at Muswellbrook. It has moved from a non-functioning group to one of the strongest regional groups in the NSW Branch.

The Port Stephens morning teas have been held at the Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay and Salamander Retirement Villages operated by Harbourside Villages with the assistance of local coordinators Ron Jordan OAM, Bart Richardson OAM and Ian Lovell APM. The morning teas have been provided free of charge and all profits have been donated back to the Harbourside Villages aged care Trainees scheme (\$4,217.00 to 2024).

In 2006 a Muswellbrook morning tea for upper Hunter residents was arranged with Brigadier John Colvin AM, RFD, ED (Retired) who at the time was the Mayor of Muswellbrook.

The luncheons and morning teas at Cardiff RSL Memorial Club were very successful, resulting in a need to limit the number attending to 150. The quality of the guest speakers attracted favourable comment.

### Photographs

For most of the functions the committee has arranged for photographs to be taken of new recipients and other groups of people attending the functions. Initially, committee member Val Harvey-Hamilton took many of the photos and posted them to the people concerned. Charlie Stevens also took photos at functions.

The Group was fortunate to have the voluntary services of a professional photographer, Mr. Graham Hynds, of Newlight Photography between 2010-2023. Photographs from recent functions have been taken by Alan Carter and are available for viewing on the Hunter Regional Group website.

[www.ajcnsr.com/oahrg](http://www.ajcnsr.com/oahrg)

### 2011 and 2024 Surveys

In June 2011, a survey sought feedback from all members on the functions held to date and to ensure that most people were satisfied. About half of the people on the mailing list responded and most people were happy with the efforts of the committee to date and the format used at functions. The survey invited recommendations for future guest speakers and invited members to join the committee if they wished. This resulted in two new members joining the committee, Mrs. June Cameron AM and Mr. Neville Sawyer AM.

Following the survey, the mailing list for members wishing to attend Hunter Regional Group functions was updated, reducing the membership from 300 to 250. By September 2023, the number on the mailing list had increased to 476. Another survey was undertaken in 2024 resulting in the number wishing to remain on the mailing list at 252.

## Hunter Regional Group Committee Members

Due to coronavirus restrictions, the morning teas scheduled for Port Stephens in July 2020, Wallsend in July 2020 and February 2021 were cancelled.

In 2022, Peter Corcoran AM took over the role of Hunter Regional Group Convenor from June Cameron OAM.

In 2023, there were changes to the committee to reflect the changing needs of the committee. Gerry Collins, Alan Carter OAM and Professor Maree Gleeson OAM joined the committee in 2023.

Gerry's skills as the Master of Ceremonies at functions ensures very professional events. Alan's computer expertise in creating the Group web site and taking over as the photographer has added to improved communication with members of the Order of Australia Hunter Regional Group. Maree acts as the Liaison Officer with the NSW Branch to ensure the effectiveness of the administration of our Hunter Regional Group.

The committee is grateful for the efforts of Major (Retired) Charlie Stevens OAM, RFD, ED who regularly updates this publication for distribution to new members. Charlie was both Secretary and Treasurer until 2023 and retains the current role of Treasurer. Alan Carter has taken on the role of Secretary.

Stephen Finney OAM maintains the database of members and Alan Cater OAM, who as our current Secretary, forwards correspondence to our membership list.

Bill (William) Hanley and Ian Lovel organise the event guest speakers. Ian also organises the Port Stephens events.

### Current Hunter Committee as at February 2025.

- Mr. Peter Corcoran AM, Hunter Group Convener. From 2022.
- Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Laurie Kelly AM, RFD, ED From 2003.
- (Committee member and Past Hunter Group Convener).
- Mr. Alan Carter OAM From 2023.
- Mr. Gerry Collins From 2022.
- Mr. Stephen Finney OAM From 2009.
- Professor Maree Gleeson OAM From 2023.
- Mr. William Hanley OAM From 2018.
- Det Supt (Retd) Ian Lovell APM From 2017.
- Major (Retd) Charles Stevens OAM, RFD, ED From 2006.

## Past Recent Committee Members

• Mr. Peter Toms OAM, RFD	Committee member	2003 to 2009.
• Mr. Kevin McDougall OAM	Committee member	2003 to 2010.
• Mr. John Miner OAM	Committee member	2003 to 2015.
• Mr. Robert Hicks OAM	Committee member	2003 to 2018.
• Mr. Neville Sawyer AM	Committee member	2012 to 2019.
• Mrs. Ruth Gorton OAM	Treasurer	2017 to 2019.
• Mrs. Nance Adams OAM, OStJ	Committee member	2003 to 2020.
• Mrs. Val Harvey-Hamilton OAM	Committee member	2003 to 2020.
• Professor Geoffrey Kellerman AO	Treasurer, Committee	1999 to 2022.
• Mrs. June Cameron AM,	Convener	2012 to 2022.

The Hunter Regional Group committee continues to work together to uphold the ideals of the Association and promote friendship amongst those who have Awards in the Order, particularly those living in the Hunter.

Following this brief history is a summary of functions held by the Hunter Regional Group based on available records. Any additional information or corrections from members with other archival material is most welcome.

Maree Gleeson OAM  
Acting Convenor  
Hunter Regional Group  
Order of Australia Association NSW Branch  
Updated: February 2025

# Summary of Functions held by the Order of Australia Hunter Regional Group, NSW Branch Order of Australia Association

Date	Function	Location	Cost	Number Present
15 Mar 1985	Dinner	Tattersall's Club, Newcastle		
	Convener J. Westphalen, AM, RFD, ED. Secretary D Williamson			
26 Jan 1986	Dinner	Newcastle City Hall		
	Group table as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council			
25 Jul 1986	Dinner	Tattersall's Club, Newcastle		
	Convener J. Westphalen AM, RFD, ED, Secretary D. Williamson, Guest speaker David Smith AC, AVO (Secretary of the Order)			
26 Jan 1987	Dinner	Newcastle City Hall		
	Group table as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council			
23 Jan 1988	Dinner	Newcastle City Hall		
	Group table as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council			
26 Jan 1988	Church Service	Christchurch Cathedral Newcastle		
	Members invited as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council Group			
1 May 1988	Church Service	Christchurch Cathedral		
	Morning Tea	Newcastle		
	Church service followed by morning tea at Newcastle Club, Newcastle			
1988	Cocktail Party Reception	Newcastle City Hall	Nil	
	Convener J. Westphalen AM, RFD, ED, Secretary D. Williamson, Hosted by Lord Mayor, Councillor John McNaughton			
26 Jan 1989	Church Service	Christchurch Cathedral Newcastle		
	Members invited as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council Group			
28 Apr 1989	Dinner	Newcastle Club, Newcastle		
	Secretary Miss D. Williamson			
1989	Cocktail Party Reception	Newcastle City Hall	Nil	
	Convener J. Westphalen AM, RFD, ED, Secretary D. Williamson, Hosted by Lord Mayor, Councillor John McNaughton			
26 Jan 1990	Church Service	Christchurch Cathedral Newcastle		
	Members invited as part of Newcastle Australia Day Council Group			
17 Nov 1990	Reception	Newcastle Club, Newcastle		
	Convener J. Westphalen AM, RFD, ED, Secretary D. Williamson, Host Dr. Owen James, Rear Admiral Swan AO, Chairman NSW Branch.			

1990	Cocktail Party	Newcastle City Hall	Nil	
	Convener J. Westphalen AM, RFD, ED, Secretary D. Williamson, Hosted by Lord Mayor, Councillor John McNaughton			
27 Apr 1991	Cocktail Party	Newcastle Club, Newcastle		
	Secretary D. Williamson			
21 Aug 1992	Reception	Newcastle City Hall		
	Convener/Secretary D. Williamson, Hosted by Lord Mayor, Councillor John McNaughton			
30 Jul 1993	Reception	Newcastle City Hall		
	Convener/Secretary D. Williamson, Hosted by Lord Mayor, Councillor John McNaughton			
21 Sep 1999	Meeting	West's Leagues Club, Lambton		
	Convener K. McDougall OAM			
22 Jan 2000	Luncheon	West's Leagues Club, Lambton	\$30	
	Convener K. McDougall OAM & Nance Adams OAM, OStJ. Guest speaker Mr. Norm Barney (Local Historian).			
24 Jan 2004	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	119
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. No guest speaker.			
6 Jul 2004	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Lambton	\$10	115
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. No guest speaker.			
29 Jan 2005	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$28	117
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Professor Trevor Waring AM (Psychologist Newcastle University).			
6 Jul 2005	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Lambton	\$10	
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Kevin McDougall OAM (President Western Suburbs Leagues Club).			
28 Jan 2006	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$30	130
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Rear Admiral (Retd) Peter Sinclair AC, AO.			
5 Jul 2006	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Mayfield	\$10	120
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Dr. Peter Hendry AO (Prisoner of War).			
28 Aug 2006	Morning Tea	Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre	\$11	30
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Councillor John Colvin AM, RFD, ED, Mayor of Muswellbrook. Guest speaker Mr. Bernie Banton AM (Asbestos spokesman and victim).			
27 Jan 2007	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$32	120
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Mrs. Michelle Edmunds (Cochlear Implant Club).			
1 May 2007	Morning Tea	Harbourside Haven Shoal Bay	\$10	40
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Mr. Bill King OAM. Guest speaker Councillor Geoff Robinson. Donation cheque for \$300 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			

18 Jul 2007	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Lambton	\$10	100
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Phil Williams, Business Manager, and Glen Ramplin, Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (Pasha Bulka, ship rescue).			
2 Feb 2008	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$32	111
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Mr. John Risby (former BHP General Manager Steep Division).			
11 Jun 2008	Morning Tea	Fingal Haven Retirement Village	\$10	32
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Alan Hudson OAM. Guest speaker Commodore Peter Phillipson ESM (Port Stephens Coastal Patrol). Donation of \$230 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
23 Jul 2008	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Mayfield	\$10	110
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Dr. David Nye (Newcastle Airport Corporate Affairs).			
31 Jan 2009	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	125
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Tony Tamplin (Newcastle Police Media).			
11 Jun 2009	Morning Tea	Fingal Haven Retirement Village	\$10	47
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Mr. Bart Richardson OAM. Guest speaker Flight Lieutenant Michael Duggan (RAAF Williamtown). Donation cheque for \$377 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
23 Jul 2009	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Mayfield	\$10	140
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Maree Gleason (Director Hunter Medical Research Institute).			
30 Jan 2010	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	114
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest Speakers Alan and Hazel Budd (Mercy Ships Australia). Donation of \$780 collected at luncheon for Mercy Ships Australia.			
23 Jun 2010	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$10	35
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Mr. Bart Richardson OAM. Guest speaker John Clarke (Local fishing historian). Donation of \$280 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
21 Jul 2010	Morning Tea	West's Leagues Club, Mayfield	\$12	120
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Major (Retd) Grahame Hall RFD, ED (Fort Scratchley Historical Society)			
5 Feb 2011	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$38	112
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Master of Ceremonies Val Harvey-Hamilton OAM. Guest speaker Greg and Sylvia Ray (Author and Newcastle Herald Reporter).			

22 Jun 2011	Morning Tea	Fingal Haven Retirement Village	\$10	35
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Host Mr. Bart Richardson OAM. Guest speaker Len Lollback (SES Co-Ordinator). Donation of \$280 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
12 Jul 2011	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$15	110
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Mr. Ed Tonks (Local Historian).			
4 Feb 2012	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	124
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Craig Hamilton (Radio announcer and motivational speaker).			
20 Jun 2012	Morning Tea	Harbourside Haven Shoal Bay	\$10	45
	Convener C Stevens OAM, RFD, ED. Host Mr. Bart Richardson. Guest speaker Mr. Bart Richardson OAM (Ex-Prisoner of War, Malaya and recent visitor to Japan as part of Japanese/POW Friendship programme). Donation of \$250 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
17 Jul 2012	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$15	123
	Convener L Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Master of Ceremonies Mrs. June Cameron AM. Guest speaker Ms. Karen Howard FAICD (Chairman Urban Medicare Local – previously GP Access)			
2 Feb 2013	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	125
	Convener and Master of Ceremonies Mrs. June Cameron AM. Guest speaker Bart Richardson OAM (Visit to Japan on POW Friendship Program)			
12 Jun 2013	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$10	31
	Convener Mrs. June Cameron AM. Host Bart Richardson OAM. Guest speaker Squadron Leader Michael Duggan. Donation of \$250-00 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
16 Jul 2013	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$16	110
	Convener and Master of Ceremonies Laurie Kelly AM, RFD, ED. Guest speaker Mr. Ron Ramsey, Director Newcastle Art Gallery.			
1 Feb 2014	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$37	142
	Convener and Master of Ceremonies Mrs. June Cameron AM. Guest speaker Dr Jeanette Dixon AM (Living and working in Space)			
25 Jun 2014	Morning Tea	Fingal Haven Retirement	\$10	32
	Master of Ceremonies Alan Hudson OAM Guest Speaker Louise Watters – Retirement Village management Donation of \$250-00 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
23 Jul 2014	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$16	110
	Convener and Master of Ceremonies Mrs. June Cameron AM Guest speaker Gary Webb - Australia's ports and their importance to the economy/continued well-being.			

21 Feb 2015	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	144
	Guest speaker Lieutenant Colonel Amanda Williams, Commanding Officer, 8 Combat Service Support Battalion – Modern Army			
24 Jun 2015	Morning Tea	Harbourside Haven Shoal Bay	\$10	35
	Convener Mrs. June Cameron AM. Host Bart Richardson OAM. Guest speaker Squadron Leader Michael Duggan – upgrading RAAF Williamtown. Donation of \$250-00 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
15 Jul 2015	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$15	125
	Guest speaker Neil Slater, Anzac Memorial Walk			
20 Feb 2016	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	170
	Guest speaker Joanne McCarthy - Role of Journalism today.			
22 Jun 2016	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$10	20
	Guest speaker Mrs. Marti McClelland – silk hobby and stage career. Donation of \$200-00 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
20 Jul 2016	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$15	140
	Guest speaker Professor Graham Vimpani AM – impact of media violence on children and young people.			
18 Feb 2017	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	160
	Guest speaker Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AC DSC CSM. World War I centenary and the living spirit.			
21 Jun 2017	Morning Tea	Harbour Haven, Shoal Bay	\$10	28
	Guest speaker Richard Jones OAM, CEO Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. Donation of \$200 to Harbourside Haven.			
19 Jul 2017	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	130
	Guest speaker Colleen Wardell OAM, Secretary, Order of Australia Association			
17 Feb 2018	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$35	115
	Guest speaker Michael Cassel. Hunter Development Corporation			
20 Jun 2018	Morning Tea	Fingal Haven, Fingal Bay	\$12	23
	Guest speaker Councillor Paul Le Mottee, Port Stephens Council. Donation of \$150 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
4 Jul 2018	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	118
	Guest speaker Dr Kirsten Molloy, CEO and Co-Ordinator of the Hunter Valley Coal Chain.			
16 Feb 2019	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$40	143
	Guest speaker Super Hubert OAM, entertainer and fund raiser.			
19 Jun 2019	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$12	19
	Guest speaker Wing Commander Tim Ireland, Deputy Director Air Combat Transition Officer, 3 Squadron RAAF Williamtown. Donation of \$200 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			

17 Jul 2019	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	113
	Guest speaker Nick Talley AC. Leading clinician, educator and researcher.			
22 Feb 2020	Luncheon	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$40	137
	Guest speaker Professor Alex Zelinsky AO FAA FIEEE. Vice Chancellor and President University of Newcastle.			
2020 / 2021	No functions were held during the time of Covid 19 restrictions. Contact was made with Awardees where possible.			
16 Jun 2021	Morning Tea	Harbourside Haven, Shoal Bay	\$12	27
	Guest speaker Councillor Giacomo Arnott, Port Stephens Councillor, NSW Fire Brigade, Industrial Lawyer. Donation of \$280 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
17 Jul 2021	Luncheon	Wallsend Diggers RSL Club	\$45	90
	Guest Speaker Mike Rabbitt OAM – Chanel 3 NBN presenter.			
12 Mar 2022	Luncheon	Wallsend Diggers RSL Club	\$45	100
	Guest speaker John Di Gravio OAM – Fortress Newcastle project.			
22 Jun 2022	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$15	23
	Guest speaker Gary Raymond APM OAM – Retired Police and Ambulance Officer – Granville train disaster. Donation of \$230 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund.			
23 Jul 2022	Luncheon	Wallsend Diggers RSL Club	\$55	90
	Guest speaker Hilton Grugeon AM. Hunter Businessman.			
18 Mar 2023	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	118
	Guest speaker Rosemarie Milsom BA DipEd. Art and Life.			
28 Jun 2023	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$15	37
	Guest speaker Ron Land, President Port Stephens Koala Hospital. Donation of \$490 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund			
26 Aug 2023	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	82
	Guest speaker Clare Collins AO. My journey into food and nutrition research and healthcare practice – A Cook's Tour.			
2 Mar 2024	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	112
	Guest speaker Gary Raymond APM OAM Police recollections			
2 June 2024	Morning Tea	Salamander Haven Village	\$15	25
	Guest speaker Bob the Bush Poet. Donation of \$459.20 to Harbourside Haven Scholarship Fund			
27 July 2024	Morning Tea	Cardiff RSL Memorial Club	\$20	97
	Guest speaker Bob Skelton Minmi Magster			

Order of Australia Hunter Regional Group  
Committee as at February 2025

Mr. Peter Daniel Corcoran AM

Citation: For significant service to rugby league, and to sport in New South Wales.

-----

Mr. Alan Carter OAM

Citation: For service to children with disability, and to the community.

-----

Mr. Gerry Collins

ABC rugby league football commentator and journalist.

-----

Mr. Stephen William Finney OAM

Citation: For service to veterans through a range of ex-service organisations in the Newcastle and Hunter region.

-----

Professor Maree Gleeson OAM

Citation: For service to medicine through the Hunter Medical Research Institute, to education, and to professional associations.

-----

William James Hanley OAM

Citation: For service to the communities of the Hunter Valley through local government and a range of conservation, commercial, sporting and welfare bodies.

-----

Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Lawrence Bernard Kelly AM, RFD, ED

Citation: For service as Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, the Royal New South Wales Regiment.

-----

Detective Superintendent (Retd) Ian Lovell APM

Citation: For distinguished Police Service to the people of New South Wales and overseas on behalf of the people of Australia.

-----

Major (Retd) Charles Stevens OAM, RFD, ED

Citation: For service to the community through a range of organisations including the Friends of the Second Infantry Battalions, the Fort Scratchley Historical Society and the Macquarie Soccer Referees Association.

-----

Order of Australia Hunter Regional Group Morning Tea  
Cardiff RSL Memorial Club, 27 July 2024



Dianne North OAM; Marg O'Leary OAM; Tracy Dudding-Byth AM; Gretchen Fryar AM; David North OAM; Peter Corcoran AM



Presentation of Order of Australia Hunter Regional Banner by Mr. Wolfgang Grimm  
AM, Chairman NSW Branch to Hunter Regional Convener, Lieutenant Colonel (Retd)  
Laurie Kelly AM, RFD, ED. 29 January 2005



AC – Companion of the Order of Australia  
(Worn around neck)  
(Left)



AO - Officer of the Order of Australia  
(Worn around neck)  
(Right)



AM - Member of the Order of Australia  
(Left)



OAM – Medal of the Order of Australia  
(Right)

Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)