



# AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 31 December 2018

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

**The official newsletter of the Australian Bravery Association.**

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S INVITATION TO CANBERRA

**8-10 FEBRUARY 2019**

**Andrew Kendall**



Dear ABA members and friends,

The annual ABA National Conference will be held in Canberra again in 2019. We have a number of special events lined up at some wonderful venues.

The Welcome Reception on Friday 8 February will be kindly hosted at, and supported by, the Royal Australian Mint, host of our 2017 dinner.

On Saturday 9 February members will gather at the Australian War Memorial for the Last Post Ceremony followed by pre-dinner drinks at Poppy's Café and the Black-Tie Dinner in ANZAC Hall. We are very fortunate to have Dr Brendan Nelson AO, Director of the Australian War Memorial, as the Guest Speaker for the dinner.

Our Service of Remembrance, to be held in the Australian Bravery Garden at Government House, Yurralumla, on Sunday 10 February, is well advanced thanks to the work of our tireless Padre, Jim Cosgrove. It will again be a moving event.

The conference will conclude with an informal lunch at the Queen's Terrace Café at Parliament House.

A bus will be available for attendees to get to and from venues.

Please get your registration forms in as soon as possible to book your places. I am looking forward to seeing you in Canberra. Travel safe.

I would also like to thank the members of the National Executive and our Ex-Officio members who have worked hard this year to keep the association running and support our members.

I wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## Coming events

**ABA National Conference  
Canberra  
8-10 February 2019**

**The program is attached along with  
your registration form**

- Welcome Reception – Royal Australian Mint
- AGM
- Black Tie Dinner - ANZAC Hall, Australian War Memorial
- Service of Remembrance
- Farewell Lunch – Queen's Terrace Café, Parliament House

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**Victoria ABA Reunion (Mildura)  
7-9 June 2019**

**NSW Regional Get-Together  
(Ballina)  
29 & 30 June 2019**

**Queensland ABA Reunion  
(Gold Coast)  
1-3 November 2019**

### **Editors' Note:**

*This newsletter is authorised and published by the Australian Bravery Association, 243 Wallarobba-Brookfield Road, Brookfield, NSW 2420. E&OE.*

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## THAI CAVE RESCUE – NATIONAL HONOURS FOR AUSTRALIAN RESCUERS

The rescue of 12 boys and their 25 -year-old soccer coach from a cave in Thailand in June 2018 captured the interest of the world. Nine Australians involved in the rescue were presented with various National Honours at a ceremony at Government House, Yarralumla on 24 July 2018 for putting their lives in danger during the Tham Luang cave rescue operation in Northern Thailand, from 30 June 2018 to 10 July 2018.



Clockwise from left: Matthew Fitzgerald BM OAM, Troy Eather BM OAM, Justin Bateman BM OAM, Robert James BM OAM, Christopher Markcrow BM OAM, Kelly Boers BM OAM, Benjamin Cox BM OAM, Craig Challen SC OAM and Richard Harris SC OAM (PHOTO: Rod McGuirk / The Associated Press)

Anaesthetist Dr Richard Harris SC OAM and his dive buddy Dr Craig Challen SC OAM, a retired veterinarian, were awarded the Star of Courage for acts of conspicuous courage in circumstances of great peril. Bravery Medals for acts of bravery in hazardous circumstances were awarded to six members of the Australian Federal Police Special Response Group - Senior Constable Justin John Bateman BM OAM, Leading Senior Constable Kelly Craig Boers BM OAM, Detective Leading Senior Constable Benjamin Walter Cox BM OAM, First Constable Matthew Peter Fitzgerald BM OAM, Acting Station Sergeant Robert Michael James BM OAM and Detective Leading Senior Constable Christopher John Markcrow BM OAM - as well as Navy Driver Chief Petty Officer Troy Matthew Eather BM OAM (Royal Australian Navy, Specialist Liaison Officer, Clearance Diving Team).

All nine were also awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to the international community through specialist response roles during the rescue.

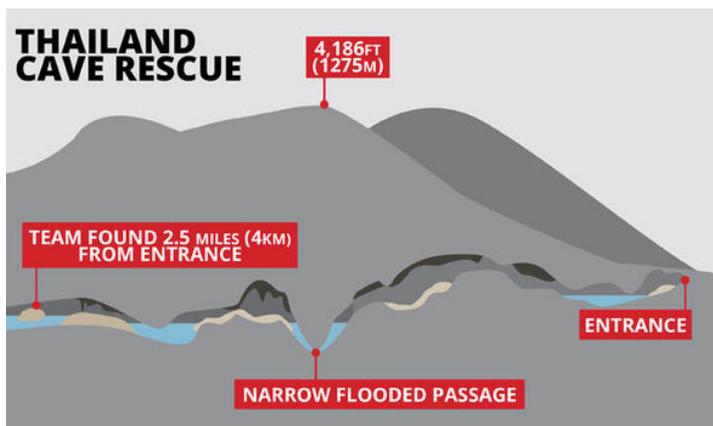
The citation for Dr Richard Harris' and Dr Craig Challen's Stars of Courage read:

*On 23 June 2018, 12 young boys and their soccer coach became trapped in the 9.6km long Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand. On 25 June, Thai Navy Seal divers entered the complex and began the search for the boys and their coach but were forced back by rising water.*

*On 27 June, the Prime Minister of Thailand sought international assistance and an Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group arrived on the scene to search for the missing group. They were later joined by an Australian Defence Force Clearance Diver. On 2 July, two members of a British expedition located the boys and their coach.*

Dr Harris, an anaesthetist and member of the Australian Medical Assistance Team, and his dive partner, Dr Craig Challen arrived at the scene on 6 July, and the next day they entered the cave system and reached the boys and their coach.

Dr Harris conducted initial medical assessments and was able to provide information to the awaiting authorities regarding the safest extraction methods. The rescue mission was hazardous, with poor or zero visibility, debris and constrictive passageways, variable air quality, and made more difficult with further rainfalls predicted.



The order of evacuation was decided, and on 8 July Dr Harris again entered the cave system, reached the boys and provided medical support for the extraction of the first four boys.

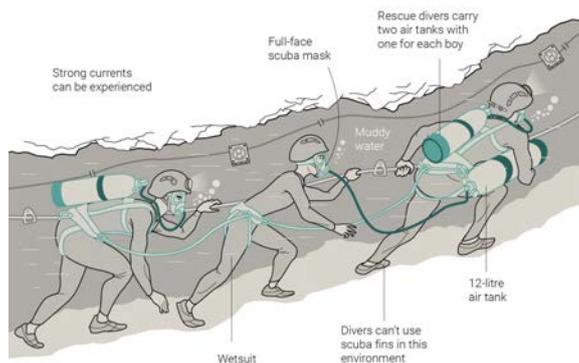
Dr Challen assisted to de-kit the boys of their diving equipment in one section of the evacuation route. The boys were then transferred from harnesses to stretchers and carried to the next section where they were re-kitted and prepared for the next dive.

This procedure was repeated until the boys reached Chamber Three, where they were assessed before being taken to a nearby field hospital.

During the extractions, Dr Challen stayed inside the cave system and Dr Harris remained in Chamber Nine with the coach and boys. The extraction process was repeated on 9 July with Dr Harris and Dr Challen performing the same duties, resulting in four more boys being safely extracted from the cave.

On 10 July, the final four boys and their coach were extracted using the same method.

The citations for the Bravery Medals read:



On 23 June 2018, 12 young boys and their soccer coach became trapped in the 9.6km long Tham Luang cave system in Northern Thailand. On 25 June, Thai Navy Seal divers entered the complex and began the search for the boys and their coach but were forced back by rising water. On 27 June, the Prime Minister of Thailand sought international assistance, and on 30 June an Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group arrived at the Tham Luang cave system to assist in the search for the boys and their coach. Multiple cave entries and dives were made by the team between 1 July and 6 July to search for the boys and identify forward base locations, to convey oxygen tanks and supplies, and to lay and maintain cabling and pipes to Chamber Three and beyond.

On 2 July, two members of a British expedition located the boys and their coach and after considerable discussion amongst many agencies an extraction plan was formulated and planned for 8, 9 and 10 July. On each of these days, the Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group and the Australian Defence Force Clearance Diver took their positions throughout the cave system. They worked together to assist in moving the boys through the chambers until the boys were transported to a safer area. The threat of sudden flooding, movement of debris, and deterioration of air quality posed continuous, potentially fatal hazards to all personnel in the cave system. On 10 July, the final four boys and their coach were safely extracted.

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## OUR NEXT GOVERNOR GENERAL & HIS WIFE

Congratulations to His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), the current Governor of New South Wales, who was announced as the person who will replace His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) as Governor General in June 2019.



General Hurley is the 38th Governor of New South Wales. He commenced his five year tenure in October 2014.

Prior to his appointment as Governor, His Excellency served for 42 years in the Australian Army, concluding his service as the Chief of the Defence Force. His Excellency was appointed a Companion within the Order of Australia in 2010 for eminent service to the Australian Defence Force, and had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his leadership during Operation SOLACE in Somalia in 1993.

In a 42-year military career, Hurley deployed on Operation Solace in Somalia in 1993, commanded the 1st Brigade (1999–2000), and was the inaugural Chief of Capability Development Group (2003–2007). His career culminated with his appointment as Chief of the Defence Force on 4 July 2011, in succession to Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston. Hurley retired from the Defence Force in June 2014, and succeeded Dame Marie Bashir as Governor of New South Wales on 2 October 2014.

His Excellency married Linda Hurley in 1977. Mrs Linda Hurley (nee McMartin) was born and raised in Sydney. She was educated at Kingsgrove High School and after attending Riverina College became a primary school teacher, commencing in 1976.



In the course of their married life, Mrs Hurley has supported her husband throughout his career on a wide variety of postings in Australia and overseas, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and Malaysia.

Mrs Hurley's career in education was in both the public and private school systems until her retirement from full time teaching in July 2011. She was an active member of the community as a Pastoral Carer at the Canberra Hospital and Hospice.

Mrs Hurley has an interest in the Arts, especially music. She is passionate about singing, and showing how singing, especially in a group, can have a positive impact on individuals and the community.

Mrs Hurley is a member and Patron of 'Solid Rock', a Christian Ministry to women in Defence. She has been a member of the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church choir in Canberra and is a member of the Australian Military Wives Choir.

Mrs Hurley is dedicated to championing causes that are developing new technologies to recycle rubbish, and ways to reduce our use of plastic, particularly plastic packaging and plastics used for single use items, which are not only harmful to the environment but add unnecessarily to landfill sites.

Mrs Hurley and His Excellency have three adult children: Caitlin, Marcus and Amelia.

His Excellency and Mrs Hurley have been keen supporters of the Australian Bravery Association and we look forward to working with them into the future.

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## ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES AWARDS

Each year the Royal Humane Society of New South Wales presents a number of awards for acts of bravery. The Galleghan Award recognises the most outstanding act of bravery in the year. Mr Robert Strange BM received a Gold Medal and the Galleghan Award for 2018 for his attempts to save a wounded colleague's life when detained at gunpoint near Moree on 29 July 2014.

His citation reads:

*The offender, a 79-year-old farmer, and his family had been involved in a bitter dispute with the Office of Environment and Heritage regarding illegal land clearing. The victim, who was murdered on this day, was a compliance officer with the Department and had been the primary investigator.*

*The victim, and Mr Strange were conducting inspections in the area when they stopped on the road to investigate some suspicious activity on one of the offender's properties.*

*The offender was alerted to their presence and drove to their vehicle with a loaded rifle in the tray of his utility. Without saying a word, he shot the victim in the neck. He then fired a second shot to his chest causing soft tissue damage.*



*Mr Strange tried to reason with the offender saying that the victim was "injured and needed help". Several times he tried to approach the offender but was told to "get back". By this time the victim had reached their vehicle and entered the rear. The offender then fired further shots through the back canopy.*

*Mr Strange continued to plead with the offender to be allowed to obtain assistance, but the offender repeatedly made reference to the department having ruined his family and he stated that the victim would be leaving in a body bag.*

*The offender told Mr Strange to leave but he refused and as night fell he again approached the offender who pointed his rifle at him telling him to get back or he would shoot.*

*Finally, the victim, who was bleeding from his wounds, ran towards the fence line. The offender fired the fatal shot into his back. He then lowered the rifle, told Mr Strange that he could leave and that he was going home to await the police. The victim died before the emergency services arrived despite Mr Strange's efforts.*

*For his actions Mr Robert Strange is awarded a Gold Medal and the Galleghan Award.*

Thank you and well done to the other Gold Medalists, Dr Martha Know-Haly SC for her actions in coming to the rescue of a female work colleague who was being attacked by her estranged husband at Carramar on 18 August 2015, and the late Mr Antonio Rokov SC who received a Posthumous Award for his actions in saving the life of a teenage boy, at the cost of his own, in a skydiving accident at Goulburn Airport on 21 November 2015.

The Society also presents the Sir Neville Pixley Award, a special award for brave children or children who have performed humane acts. A number of children received the award in 2018.

Miss Georgia Ritter received the Sir Neville Pixley Award for her actions in going to the aid of her mother who was trapped under a vehicle at Bundook on 2 May 2017. Mrs Natalie Ritter was driving a rugged terrain vehicle on the family's remote rural property at Bundook. The only other person at the property was her daughter Georgia, then

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aged 4, who was in the house about 700 metres away. Whilst attempting to make a three point turn the vehicle went off a steep embankment and rolled before coming to rest pinning Mrs Ritter underneath. Georgia ran to her mother, falling and grazing her face as she negotiated the steep terrain. She then returned to the house and telephoned 000 providing sufficient detail to the Emergency Services for them to give life saving information and to locate the accident site.

Miss Ayumi Bailey and Miss Aja Bailey also received the Sir Neville Pixley Award for their actions in administering first aid to Colin Bailey following a serious injury on a property at Moonbah on 5 October 2017. Colin Bailey, father of Ayumi Bailey (then aged 12 years) suffered a partial amputation of his right arm in an accident when moving a horse float out of a shed on his property. Upon hearing the accident Ayumi and her friend Aja Bailey (no relation, also aged 12 years) rushed to the shed where they found him unconscious and suffering significant blood loss. They applied first aid and called 000.

The full list of Royal Humane Society of New South Wales 2018 award recipients can be found at:  
<http://www.braveryaward.org/downloads/2018%20Booklet.pdf>

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## THE ROYAL HUMANE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA CLARKE GOLD MEDAL

The Clarke Gold Medal is an award of The Royal Humane Society of Australasia. It is the Society's highest award for the most outstanding case of bravery considered during the year. The 2017 Clarke Gold Medal will be presented by The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Melbourne Councillor Sally Capp to Mrs Bridget O'Toole SC on 23 August 2108.

Mrs O'Toole went to the rescue of her husband from being attacked by an assailant at Hastings, Victoria on 12 July 2013.

Her citation reads:

*At 5.00pm a disguised man entered a jewellery store with a large carving knife. The store at the time was attended by the owners Mr & Mrs O'Toole.*

*As Mrs O'Toole came out to the counter in the belief that a customer had entered, she was attacked by the armed assailant her pushed her into a glass cabinet and stabbed her several times.*

*During the attack Mr O'Toole who suffered from Parkinson's Disease, came out from the workshop to defend his wife and began wrestling with the assailant. Mr O'Toole was knocked to the ground and stabbed twice in the chest.*

*Mrs O'Toole attempted to pull the offender away from her husband and in doing so she was further assaulted by the assailant. The assailant then ran out of the shop.*

*Tragically Mr O'Toole was fatally wounded with stab wounds to the upper chest and died at the scene. Mrs O'Toole suffered numerous severe wounds.*

*The assailant was charged with the murder of Mr O'Toole and armed robbery and intentionally causing injury to Mrs O'Toole and was sentenced to a total term of 27 years' imprisonment.*



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## MEETING YOUR MEMBERS

### Mark Charteris

Mark Charteris has taken on the Ex-Officio role this year of Australian Bravery Association representative in the Northern Territory. He has been awarded the Commendation for Brave Conduct and Group Bravery Citation for two separate acts of bravery.

Mark grew up in the Yarra Valley Mountain District in Victoria. At age 17 he joined the Australian Army (1996) and became a Combat Engineer. He saw Active Service in East Timor (three tours) and the Solomon Islands.

After discharging from the Army Mark worked on various civil engineering projects operating plant equipment. He was operating one day when he witnessed a large wildfire develop under very high fire danger conditions. Witnessing the Fire Brigade lose control of the fire he assisted and eventually was able to contain the fire almost single handed. For his bravery he received a Commendation for Brave Conduct.



Mark Charteris (right) with fellow firefighter, Al Lee. Photo: Michael Franchi – NT News.

The citation for his award reads:

*On the morning of 14 December 2006, Mr Mark Charteris used a grader to assist firefighters to extinguish a bush fire near Thomastown in Victoria. Mr Charteris was working in Thomastown when he noticed a fire about 200 meters away. He immediately called 000. Emergency services arrived but were unable to contain the fire. Dressed in shorts and a short sleeved-shirt he first attempted to drive the grader down an access road but the speed and intensity of the fire forced him back. He then observed a three to four metre steep embankment which led to a river flood plain covered in high grass. With flames leaping from the bushes and producing a large amount of smoke he approached the embankment and drove slowly and cautiously down over the edge. Using the weight of the grader he moved the dirt away, creating an earth ramp. As he was forming the fire break, smoke entered the cabin of the grader making it difficult for him to breathe. The fire break he constructed contained the blaze and prevented the fire from moving into dense bush next to residential properties.*

*For his actions, Mr Charteris is commended for brave conduct.*

Mark later went to work at McArthur River Mine in the Northern Territory and subsequently became interested in firefighting due to belonging to the Mines Rescue Team. He eventually applied to join the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service in 2009 and have been a member for about 10 years.

Mark has served in both the Southern and Northern Regions of the NT. It was during his first 12 months stationed at Alice Springs Fire Station, that he was involved in a rescue of a woman trapped in flash flooding. For this action he and others received the Group Bravery Citation.

Mark has just finished two years working as the Hazard Abatement Officer for the Northern Territory and has now returned to Operational Duties. He was recently was awarded Northern Territory Firefighter of the Year for his work in the Hazard Abatement role.

Mark is married to Barbara with one son, Patrick, and enjoys fishing and spending time with friends and family. He has called his boat *Lazy-E* due to his links and love for the Royal Australian Engineers.

## Andrew Kendall



Andrew Kendall with the Governor General in May.

Andrew Kendall is the current National President of the Australian Bravery Association. He was awarded a Group Bravery Citation in 2011 and has been honoured to serve in various roles in the ABA, including Website Administrator, Deputy National President and National President, since 2012. Andrew is also the ABA representative on the board of the Australian Bravery Foundation.

Upon completing school Andrew initially studied Commerce and Law at the University of Queensland before working for two years in a Brisbane law firm. In 1993 he was admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Following his admission as a solicitor, Andrew decided on a career change and completed an Arts degree and Graduate Diploma of Education in to order to become a secondary school teacher of Legal Studies, Business and Humanities. He has been a teacher for 24 years. He worked for 20 years at St Laurence's College in Brisbane, serving for 8½ years on the College Leadership Team as the Dean of Staff. He completed his Master of Educational Leadership in 2014 and in 2017 he was appointed as Principal of St Joseph's School at Stanthorpe in Queensland, a P-12 co-educational school.

It was during his time at St Laurence's College that he and four other teachers were awarded the Group Bravery Citation for assisting students threatened by a group of armed youths on the afternoon of 28 July 2008. Eight youths armed with a meat cleaver, knives and a baton attacked and injured a number of students, one severely, until they were chased off by the teachers.

Andrew has also had extensive coaching experience in Futsal (indoor soccer) and soccer. In Futsal he has coached school, regional, Queensland and Australian Youth teams over many years and was the New Zealand National Mens' Coach for a period time, including for the World Cup Qualifiers in 2004. At St Laurence's College he had a successful career as the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Soccer Coach and Director of Coaching (Soccer) for over 10 years. He also ran the Boys' draw of Uhlspport Cup (30 teams) and ISSA Cup (20 teams) on behalf of Independent Schools Soccer Association for 10 years. These competitions are for Independent and Catholic schools in Brisbane and parts of South East Queensland.

In his time at St Laurence's College Andrew was also responsible for establishing the St Laurence's College Qld PCYC Emergency Service Cadets unit in 2014 which, when he left, had grown into the largest unit in Queensland with over 70 Cadets and 10 Adults Leaders.

Andrew joined the Australian Army Reserve as a 17-year-old in 1985 and has served for 17 years over two periods. Commissioned as Officer into the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery in 1988 his final posting was as Battery Commander, holding the rank of Major, of 5/11 Light Battery, 25/49 Royal Queensland Regiment. He transferred to the Standby Reserve in 2014 upon completion of his military service. For his service in the Australian Army he has been awarded the National Emergency Medal, Defence Long Service Medal and Australian Defence Medal.

Andrew is married to Kitty. They have three young children – Lillian (aged 9), Sasha (aged 8) and David (aged 6) – who all attend Andrew's school.



Lillian, Andrew, David, Kitty and Sasha Kendall at the Prep Prince and Princess Graduation Ball at St Joseph's School, Stanthorpe.

## NEW SOUTH WALES REPORT – Jim Preston and Brian Harland

Again, the first week of September was spent in Sydney to attend seven more Investitures along with Jim Preston, Pam Harland and Maree Harland who shared the duties. A total of 38 people received awards and again it was so rewarding on my part to meet so many brave and interesting people.

On 21 November 2015 the late Mr Antonio Rokov SC shielded a young person during a skydiving accident near Goulburn NSW. Mr Rokov an experienced skydiving instructor had meticulously prepared his equipment prior to undertaking a tandem skydive. He then briefed a 14 year old boy who would be undertaking the sky dive with him and provided reassurance to the boy's anxious family in the process. When they were approximately 20 metres from landing, a freak gust of wind caused their parachute to collapse. Mr Rokov and the boy quickly began to plummet during which time the boy was flipped horizontally. As they approached the ground Mr Rokov immediately twisted his body under the boy and took the full force of the impact. Sadly, Mr Rokov died as a result of the injuries he sustained. The boy, though injured, survived the fall. The Star of Courage was received by his wife Mrs Samantha Rokov. His parents Mr Leo and Mrs Pina Rokov travelled from their home in Adelaide to attend the Investiture.



Samantha Rokov with Pina and Leo Rokov



Matthew Warwick BM and Jennifer McCallum BM

Mr Matthew Warwick BM (Then Senior Sergeant with the NSW Police) received the Bravery Medal during an armed hostage incident at Mosman on the 3 August 2011. Mr Warwick was part of the Bomb Detection Dog section and entered the house to search for explosive devices. He was later required to enter the house with the negotiators.

Ms Jennifer McCallum BM received the Bravery Medal during the rescue of an occupant from a house fire in Byron Bay on 6 August 2015. When she became aware that her neighbour's house was on fire she entered on hands and knees to search until flames forced her to retreat. She entered again with another man who had arrived and they both managed to drag the occupant to safety even though the roof had collapsed whilst they were attempting the rescue.



Matthew Willows and Mrs Linda Hurley

Matthew Willows is pictured with Mrs Linda Hurley (the wife of the NSW Governor). Matthew was awarded the Commendation for Brave Conduct for his role during the rescue of a fisherman from treacherous seas at South Curl Curl Beach on 24 November 2015.



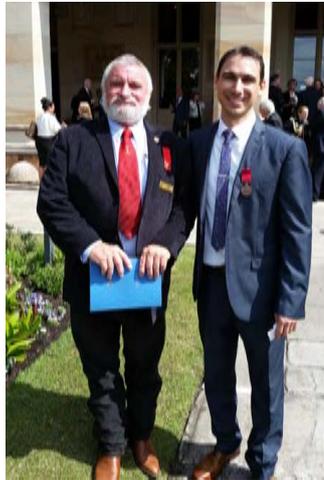
Jenny Lee Kelly and Peter Coxon BM

Peter Coxon BM went to the assistance of a woman who was being attacked in Woolloomooloo. A woman was standing behind a reception desk at a business in Woolloomooloo when a man entered the office with a 13cm serrated knife and proceeded to make stabbing motions close to her face. The armed offender then placed her in a headlock and, while attempting to inflict a fatal wound, cut her on the cheek. She was able to fight the attacker by placing her hand over the blade causing severe lacerations. Mr Coxon immediately ran towards the woman. He grabbed hold of the offender's arm and with the assistance of another man, was able to prise the weapon away and throw it across the room and restrained the offender until emergency services arrived. Peter has now moved to Adelaide in South Australia but travelled back to Sydney to receive his Award. He also invited Jenny Lee Kelly, who was the victim that day, to attend the ceremony with him. It was great talking to them both and hearing both sides of the incident.

Mr Timothy Day BM was awarded the Bravery Medal for saving his father from a burning vehicle on the family property at Tottenham on 19 January 2017. Whilst attempting to round up cattle the vehicle became stuck and, due to the extremely hot and dry conditions the heat in the engine and exhaust, ignited the long grass. Unable to access the driver's door he moved to the passenger door and managed to pull his father across the centre console and out of the vehicle. Timothy also mentioned in our conversation that he was on his way to Nymagee the following week to shear the sheep of a distant cousin of mine.



Brian Harland & Timothy Day BM



Jim Preston with Jonathan Quero BM

Mr Jonathan Quero BM went to the assistance of a woman involved in an armed hostage situation at Hamlyn Terrace. A man carrying a concealed butcher's cleaver entered a hospital emergency department. When the triage nurse opened the treatment area door the offender pinned her against a wall and held the weapon to her throat. After the offender released the nurse he quickly grabbed hold of Mr Quero and put the butcher's cleaver against his neck and threatened him. Despite being held in a headlock he continued to calm the offender, who eventually released him.

On the afternoon of 19 February 2016 Ms Shayne Hunt went to the assistance of an elderly man and woman in the centre of Nowra. They had just left a bank and a younger man had the older man in a headlock in an attempt to rob him. When the younger man let go and ran down the footpath, without hesitation Ms Hunt ran across the road

towards the man and rugby tackled him. The impact of her tackle forced the offender against a shop window and she was able to sandwich the offender against the glass until they both fell to the ground. Bystanders then approached and continued to hold the offender until police arrived.



Ms Shayne Hunt & Brian Harland



Brian Harland & Second Lieutenant Ingrid van der Vlist BM

On the evening of 21 July 2016 Second Lieutenant Ingrid van der Vlist BM (then Dylan) rescued a man from a burning vehicle at Crows Nest QLD. Second Lieutenant Dylan and another officer were participating in a night training exercise in a helicopter when a fire, caused by a vehicle accident, was spotted on the road below. After the helicopter landed, Second Lieutenant Dylan ran towards the vehicle which was alight. She saw an elderly man, partway out of the front passenger window, had been affected by the flames. She quickly pulled the man away from the wreckage and onto the ground before trying to extinguish the flames with her gloved hands. She then looped her arms under his elbows and dragged him a further 15 metres away from the burning vehicle which then erupted in a fiery explosion.

On the morning of 2 July 2015 Mr Brian Mitchell BM and Mr Grant McOmish BM went to the assistance of a man being attacked by a shark at Light House Beach near Ballina. One of their friends caught a wave and as he returned they saw a large tail fin travelling next to him. The shark then attacked and the man shouted in distress. They immediately paddled towards the injured man who was lying on his board, legs dangling in the water and blood trailing behind. Without knowing the whereabouts of the shark they took hold of their injured companion and paddled



Brian Mitchell BM & Grant McOmish BM

towards the beach. They reached the beach and dragged the man, who was now in shock, onto the sand. They asked another beach goer to call an ambulance and then applied leg ropes as tourniquets and worked at keeping the injured man calm and conscious until help arrived.



Pictured above is the NSW Governor, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), with Jim Preston. Maree Harland is pictured with one of the very helpful Aides de Camp, Errol, and Pam Harland with Andrew. One of the benefits of attending the Investitures is meeting these marvellous people.

*Brian Harland*

## **NSW Dinner**

The NSW Bravery Dinner was held at Coogee Diggers on 19 November 2018. A top night was had by all. Thanks to ABA Vice-Patrons, Keith Payne VC AM and Victor Boscoe CV, and Mrs Florence Payne OAM in particular for their support and attendance.

*Jim Preston*



## VICTORIA REPORT – Coralee Lever & Phil Hutson

On 13 December 2018, I attended the presentation of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia Bravery Awards at Government House, Victoria.

I was met by Sue Cutler of the Society who introduced me to Professor Maynard, (the President of the Society) and his wife Andrea. I also met with other members of the society who were most welcoming and gracious. The Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, accompanied by her partner Tony Howard QC, presented the awards to twelve recipients.

The recipients were:

|                   |                      |                        |              |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Jake Cooper       | Certificate of Merit | Jamie David Grant      | Bronze Medal |
| Rolf Hinz         | Certificate of Merit | Daniel John O'Connor   | Bronze Medal |
| Landon Vulic      | Certificate of Merit | Benjamin Andrew Dennis | Bronze Medal |
| Philip Ross Smith | Bronze Medal         | James Baker            | Bronze Medal |
| Jake Donovan      | Bronze Medal         | Gregory John Tanner    | Bronze Medal |
| Ian James McBain  | Bronze Medal         | Chris Raynor           | Silver Medal |

The highest honour of the day, a Silver Medal, was given to Chris Raynor, for helping to save a little girl from a burning home. Mr Raynor noticed the house across the road was bellowing smoke and then saw a woman who had locked herself out trying desperately to save her granddaughter. Mr Raynor, of Frankston South, entered the burning house by kicking and forcing open the locked front door and ran up the stairs to a living room where he found the young girl unconscious on the floor. He picked her up and carried her downstairs to fire service personnel, who were arriving outside.



After the presentation I had the opportunity to talk with a number of the recipients to congratulate them on their awards. I also provided them with a congratulatory letter inviting recipients to become members of the ABA.

*Phil Hutson*

### Frank De Lacey and the Cuckoo Clock Raffle

On 12 August Frank De Lacey passed away. Frank was a great supporter of the Australian Bravery Association and made up all our mallee stumps, used for our various awards, from 2006 to 2016. The Sunraysia Men's Shed has since taken over the task. We wish the De Lacey family all the best and thank Frank for his generosity and kindness. Photo: Frank De Lacey (left) handing over the job to prepare the mallee stumps to Sunraysia Men's Shed President Alan Cameron. Photo by Louise Donges.



Thanks to all who purchased tickets in the recent Cuckoo Clock raffle.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Coralee Lever*

## QUEENSLAND REPORT – Sally Gregory

Greetings from Queensland where it's been a busy year providing lots of companionship opportunities. With the announcement of the **Brave Youth of the Year (BYY)** 2017 award, came the opportunity for Kayleigh Caulfield BM and Jayden Caulfield SC to travel to Melbourne for the ABA National Conference, with their own bodyguard Jamie Ferguson BM, to visit Government House where they were presented with their award by Her Excellency Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria.



You may recall the shocking rescue experiences of the five Caulfield Kids when their estranged stepfather shot their mother [Rachael Moore](#) as she tried to shield them, resulting in shocking injuries to Rachael's left arm which has undergone over 40 surgeries to try to repair it. Dr Geoff Boyce sponsors the BYY, along with numerous other ABA members who so generously reached into their pockets to donate to cover extra costs not covered by the usual \$500 budget. Not wishing to be named, these champions deserve to sleep well knowing they helped give these kids a 'money can't buy' experience and a lifetime of happy memories with their ABA family.

As we go to press, the winners of the BYY for 2018 are being advised of their selection. Once again it appears we will have dual winners, two mates: Jae Water and Thomas Harper who rescued their friend from a shark attack at Ballina in 2016, showing great courage and commitment to caring. I'm looking forward to introducing them to you at the National Conference in Canberra in February, where they will receive their awards and get to meet the remarkable Aussies that

make up our association.

Thanks again to our generous members who have donated to help cover the cost of getting two recipients to Canberra. A fine example of our generous supporters are that huggable duo Lovey and Mike Pearson (our new Deputy National President, multiple bravery award recipient and awardee of the prestigious Meritorious Service Police Medal). Recently, Senior Sgt Mike retired after 40 years of service in the Queensland Police Service. Serial party people Jamie Ferguson BM, Kerry and Kay Danes OAM, my hubby Kevin and I gatecrashed his farewell and were not surprised to see that he was well respected and much loved by a room full of people. Guests included two Police Commissioners, Mike's kids, grandkids, mum and mates and of course Lovey, the teacher he met when he was a young constable in the wild north. Mike has a wealth of experience in community support, advocacy and running an NFP which will be of enormous benefit



to our ABA. We're thrilled to bits that he's left the police force so he can dedicate more of his time, experience and expertise to help the ABA.



Mike and I had the honour of attending the bravery award investitures at Government House Brisbane, where we were able to join Dr Peter Kerkenezov BM (our favourite ship's captain, Honorary Vet, light cavalry horseman, animal advocate and dive buddy) as he received a BM for [Brave Rescue at Sea](#). Susie and Peter have been regulars at ABA events for the past few years and always bring warm hearts, lively conversation and style to our events. Peter was recently let loose at the annual ABA conference in Melbourne where he was snapped with our brave girls Kayleah Caulfield BM, Molly and [Jade-Elle Brown \(CBC\)](#) and the chief hugger.

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We had a mini ABA reunion at Maryborough in March where Kaylea and I drove to Maryborough to see Jade-Elle Brown carry the Queen's Baton in the Commonwealth Games Relay. Staying at the Brown's ranch at Tinana, the kids had a ball watching movies, riding ponies, swimming, eating, playing the ukulele and op shopping before going into town to see Jade-Elle do her leg of the relay. We were delighted to be joined by Cheryl Parker and Victor Boscoe CV (ABA Vice-Patron), who followed through on a promise to be there for Jade-Elle.



The relay excitement continued the next weekend when the Brissy contingent gathered at Beenleigh to see our Brave Youth of Year 2015, [Calyn Hoad BM](#), carry the baton, handing it to our newest brave youth [Kaitlin Relf \(CBC\)](#). Calyn did a top job of walking with the baton, and could have gone much further given a chance, as he is now walking quite well, and only needs his wheelchair for longer distances - wonderful considering the shocking injuries he incurred when rescuing his little brother. Calyn pushed Kya away from an oncoming four-wheel drive and ended up pinned beneath the vehicle incurring catastrophic brain injuries which although healing slowly, have resulted in five years of intensive therapy and physical challenges. Calyn has a large and loving family and continues to make progress in his path to recovery, supported by a team of specialists who love and admire his courage, determination and loving personality. We love him too. What do we think of Calyn? HE'S ALRIGHT!

The delightful Kaitlin received her CBC at the May investiture where she was supported by her loving family including her grandmother. Lilly, a non-swimmer, was sure she was going to drown when a dam gave way and washed their car which was stopped on a hillside, into a torrent, causing them to cling to a tree for an hour until emergency services personnel could get to them. Kaitlin had her first swimming lesson two weeks prior and was able to instruct her nanna to try to hold her breath to help her float. Kaitlin, Tara and parents Andrew and Dave had a camping holiday at the Tallebudgera Tourist Park (near ABA QLD HQ), so we were able to catch up again and enjoy a barby and a hat party, while we walked the dog at our local beach. I love it when our ABA family grows.



Older members may notice the absence of info about the Queensland Bravery Weekend which normally features in newsletters. Due to a renovation of the Brisbane Inner City Parklands Plan, the Queensland Bravery Garden project has slowed down. However, the possibility for a gala opening event in Brisbane, for later in 2019 is still a possibility. We will keep members up to date on the progress. Having said that, I will be organising a fun **Queensland Reunion for the first weekend in November, 1 -3 2019, so pencil that in.**



Some of you may be aware that I run tours to exotic places for adventurous divers and snorkelers. Two of the most adventurous are ABA members Deb Critchley and Tom Voight (CBC). We three have explored amazing islands in remote locations including the Vanuatu islands of Espirito Santo and Tanna, the Philippines and more. Last month we ventured to the islands of Komodo in Southern Indonesia where we saw some amazing underwater critters, marvelled at cruising manta rays and visited Rinca Island, home of the dangerous Komodo dragons. Being advised not to approach the 2-metre giant reptiles, we thought we'd get up close and friendly at the airport photo set instead. Not nearly as scary. Message me if you're looking for an adventure. I organise two a year in May and November. All are welcome.

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Special shout outs go to Jamie Fergie BM who is recovering from a fall on the rocks at Coogee (when sober) in which he broke a finger, dislocated a shoulder and suffered numerous scrapes, and STILL made it to the NSW dinner – That’s Brave!

Don’t forget the ABA has two **Facebook** groups, one for the public and one closed group for Australian Bravery **Awardees**, so find us and join in the online fun and conversation, as we meet brave Aussies from all over, gain inspiration, share helpful strategies, good company, bad jokes and fun times.

By the way, I’m looking for a female to share a room for the Canberra National Conference (8-10 February 2019), so if you would like to split room costs at the Adobe Woden, please contact me: [sally.gregory@forbravery.org.au](mailto:sally.gregory@forbravery.org.au) .



Before I go, we have two members of our ABA family who are undergoing terrible grief and need our prayers. Gorgeous Megan, 32, daughter of Trevor and Julie Burns was taken on November 25 by the black dog.

She left behind a parting message of love and gratitude asking her parents to share it on their Facebook page. Here it is in part with permission from her parents.

*“I wanted to live a full and happy life, and I believe I put up a brave fight to survive, but unfortunately the universe has other plans for me. I’m grateful for the 32 years and 18 days I was on this earth. I was lucky to have grown up in a loving family. I travelled to a lot of incredible places around the world, I met some truly amazing people, and I took some awesome photographs, and generally experienced what this life had to offer.*

*My parting advice would be: Always believe in yourself and the magic of life. Immerse yourself in the simple beauty of the sea, the beach, sunshine, flowers, animals and nature. Nourish and surround your soul with only good people who have good intentions. Stand up and speak up for yourself - never let anyone tell you that you are not important or treat you badly, because you are important, you are uniquely perfect in every way. Those who you know are struggling - let them know they are not alone. In the end, the only thing that matters is love, pure unconditional love. 🙏🌻💕 ”*

Trev and Julie, we hope you can feel the love and loss we share with you at this time of devastation. We’re here for you. *Hugs Sal – the Chief Hugger.*

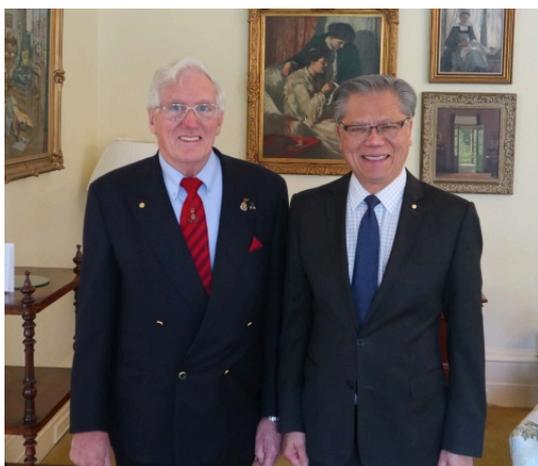
*NB: Did you know the ABA has an Honorary Psychologist? Pam Davidson BM is happy to talk with you about anything that’s interfering with your quality of life. Here’s her email address: [pam.davidson@forbravery.org.au](mailto:pam.davidson@forbravery.org.au) .*

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## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA REPORT – Bill Lowther SC**

Hi everyone. I hope you are all well and happy and looking forward to a break over Christmas.

At Mildura, I introduced the story of our how acts of bravery bring peace of mind to the families of those people that have been rescued, saved from injury, death or loss of property. The peace brought about by brave people brought a harbour of peace to the relatives for not having to go to a funeral, hospital for injury of their loved ones. The pictures I took and passed out to everyone was a harbour of peace and was well received by all and I had requests for more pictures for other people afterwards. So I guess that was well received. I am hoping that the little booklets will be available for our ABA gathering in Canberra during February 2019.



William Lowther SC with His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia, at Government House on Monday, 23 July 2018.

I have written two small stories to help children and others who have had some kinds of abuse. I hope they will also be ready in eBook and hard copies as well.

For some time I have become increasingly frustrated as I have been hearing about acts of bravery but have not been able to obtain the contact details of the rescuers. Hence many rescuers have not been recognised for their brave deeds. I will be meeting the South Australian Assistant Police Commissioner to discuss if the South Australian Police are able to provide rescuers with ABA contact details following their rescues. This will allow the ABA to nominate people for Bravery Awards.

Recently I have delivered a presentation to the Australian Defence Force and earlier to the Royal Australian Air Force to explain and show what the ABA is about and what we would like to achieve.

In January I will be giving a presentation to the British Sub Aqua Club and introduce them to the ABA website in the hope they can inform us of any rescues that they become aware of.

I would also like to see the ABA put out a letter and information to the Education Department to help our youth understand that helping people out in trouble is well worth doing, and have an introduction to some of the bravery shown by our members. This perhaps would encourage them to also inform us of brave youths that rescue others.

My kindest regards to everyone. I look forward to meeting up in February.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT – Brian Harland

The end of the year is once more upon us and the start of preparations for the Annual General Meeting begin.

This year I have been thinking about more involvement for the membership and would like members to either email me ([brian.harland@forbravery.org.au](mailto:brian.harland@forbravery.org.au)) or ring me on my mobile (0417 280 965) to let me know of any suggestions, concerns, points of interest that I can note and bring up at the AGM for discussion or implementation.

### Volunteers Wanted

We are always looking for enthusiastic members to help out. Members are encouraged to nominate at the 2019 AGM for positions on the National Executive or for Ex-Officio positions. Different positions are listed on the back page of this newsletter. If you are interested, please have a chat with myself or one of the National Executive.

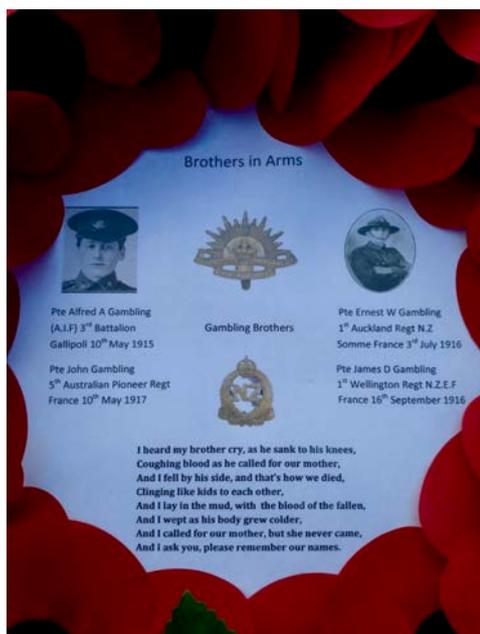


The 2019 AGM will be held at 9.00am at the Hellenic Club, Woden on Saturday 9 February 2019. The agenda and details of how to nominate for positions and make proxy votes will be sent out shortly.

## UK REPORT - Christopher Harding

Recently, Chris Harding, Australian Bravery Association UK Representative, was invited by the Australian High Commission Defence Team, to attend the Memorial Service in Hyde Park to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ending of WW1. Chris sent the following report.

*Two wreaths were laid on 10 November, one on behalf of the ABA, at Australian War Memorial Hyde Park Corner, London during a Memorial Service Commemorating the Centenary of Armistice, and the fallen servicemen and women during the various conflicts since WW1.*



*WW1 also had a massive impact on my family, as we lost 10 servicemen during WW1, including my Great Grandfather and four Great Uncles, the latter being the Gambling brothers who served in the Australian & New Zealand Imperial Forces. The Gambings were the younger sons of Hampshire farmers, who migrated to Australia from the 1890 to 1910. Some of them relocated with their families to New Zealand.*

*On the outbreak of WW1, the Gambings, like many other young fathers and sons, followed the government's call to take up arms, with some of the Gambling sons deciding to return back to Australia, the country of their birth, to sign up. Two of the Gambings were identical twins, Ernest and Sidney, both born in Gympie Queensland. Ernest returned to Australia, while Sidney stayed in New Zealand and joined the Auckland Regiment. Ernest was killed at Gallipoli and Sidney survived the war. Unknown to Ernest, his English cousin William Gambling fell at Gallipoli, five days before him.*

*My host was Lt Col Tony Evans of the Australian Army, who after the service introduce me to His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. We had a short discussion on the brothers and the Australian Bravery Association, and the good work being carried out by ABA. Also, in attendance were The Honourable Kevin Rudd and the High Commissioner to UK, The Honourable George Brandis QC.*

*During the service the Governor General spoke of the high sacrifice carried out by the lost generation of Australia during WW1, and that Australian losses and wounded amounted to 65% of men called to arms, the highest rate within the Empire's forces. He went on to say, this high death rate had a huge impact on communities, especially rural areas, who had to rally around and support young families who had lost their fathers, and young men who would have worked the land.*

Lest we forget.



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## NSW REGIONAL WEEKEND GET-TOGETHER BALLINA NSW – 29 & 30 JUNE 2019

On 29 and 30 June 2019 the ABA will be holding the New South Wales Regional Weekend Get-Together in Ballina.



Ballina is located at the mouth of the Richmond River in northern NSW. It is serviced by an airport, bus/train station (combination thereof) and easy road access as it lies at the junction of the Pacific and Bruxner Highways. It is regarded as the 'gateway' to far northern NSW. Nearby lies the trendy tourist town of Byron Bay and the regional centres of Murwillumbah and Lismore. Tweed Heads and Coolangatta are 30 minutes by car.

The rainforest certainly meets the beaches here. There are many other activities including Golf, bowls, whale watching, river cruises and hiking (Mt Warning and Minyon Falls), and attractions like Crystal Castle and Nimbin.

There are many bravery award recipients within the region captured by Tenterfield in the West to the Gold Coast in the North and Coffs Harbour to the South. We would love to see you all and your friends and family visit our region. We have tried to make the program as flexible for you as possible and hope you can attend at least one function.

We have invited a 'high profile' guest for the formal Black-tie Dinner and local dignitaries as well. There will be some positive local media coverage of the event as well in an effort to raise the profile of the ABA in Northern NSW.

There are many accommodation options ranging from Airbnb through to motels in the area. We encourage you to search the internet or talk to a local.

### SATURDAY 29 JUNE 2019

**11am to 1pm.** Meet and Greet morning tea/luncheon. The River Café, Ballina RSL, 1 Grant Street, Ballina. Pay as you go. Dress casual.

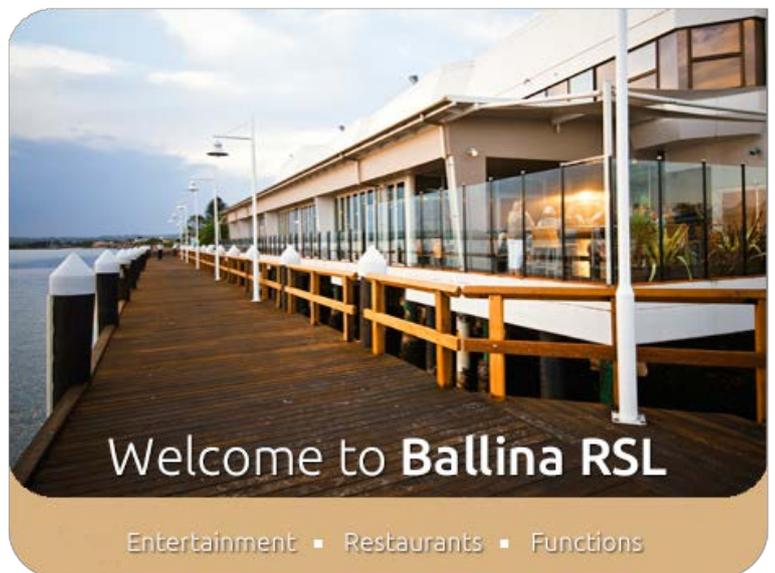
**2pm to 4pm.** Tour the Ballina Naval and Maritime Museum, Regatta Ave, Ballina. Donation. Dress casual.

**6pm.** Reception prior to Black-Tie Dinner. Ballina RSL Club, Function Room. 1 Grant Street, Ballina. Dress – Black-tie/Mess Dress, Evening Wear, miniature medals.

**6.30pm** – Formal Dinner at conclusion of Reception. Entertainment and 3 course meal. \$80 pp. Drinks - pay as you go. (Payment and booking slip will be sent out in the New Year)

### SUNDAY 30 JUNE 2019

**9am till 12 noon.** Breakfast at the Lighthouse Beach Café in the Ballina Surf Club, 65 Lighthouse Parade, Ballina. Pay as you go. Dress – casual.



For more details about the event please contact John Thurgar on 0439 610 913 or [john.thurgar@forbravery.org.au](mailto:john.thurgar@forbravery.org.au). Thanks also to Peter Kerkenezov for his assistance with the organization of the weekend.



## NOTES FROM YOUR EDITOR – Andrew McKillop

Hello everyone.

2018 has seen our share of high points such as our annual Courageous Kids Campout, our great reunions and fellowship. We also share in Trevor and Julie Burns sorrow with the loss of their beautiful Megan.

I would like to remind everyone to check your membership due dates and renew prior to it expiring. Additionally, if you have changed any of your personal details please inform Mr John Thurgar, ABA Membership Secretary, so that we can maintain contact with you. If anyone has any interesting articles or ideas for our newsletter, please let me know as I am always looking for new and interesting snippets.

Kind regards and wishing you all a very Merry and safe Christmas and New Year.

Best Wishes to all – Andrew

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## ABA ON FACEBOOK

The Australian Bravery Association now 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.

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## MERCHANDISE

Don't forget we have a large range of merchandise for purchase and further advertise the ABA. We have recently received fresh stocks of ties to go with the fine quality shirts. Full colour photos and merchandise order forms are on our web site.

All Order forms to: **Brenda Cochrane, ABA National Treasurer, PO Box 127, Bundaberg Qld 4670 or**  
Email: [brenda.cochrane@forbravery.org.au](mailto:brenda.cochrane@forbravery.org.au)

|                                 |      |                           |      |                       |      |
|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| 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 above mail orders

Mark Whittaker's book - **BRAVE** : \$20.00 + 10.00 postage

## ABA VICE PATRONS

Keith Payne VC AM, Darrell Tree CV, Victor Boscoe CV, Allan Sparkes CV OAM, Tim Britten CV, Richard Joyes CV, and Doug Baird

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**Honorary Legal Officer:** Bernard Collaery  
**Honorary Psychologist:** Pamela Davidson BM - Email: pamela.davidson@forbravery.org.au  
**Honorary Surgeon:** Associate Professor Geoffrey Boyce FRCP (Edin and Glas) FRACP FACP FAAN FAADEP  
**Honorary Veterinarian:** Dr Peter Kerkenezov BM - Email: peter.kerkenezov@forbravery.org.au  
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