



RVAHJ Conference 2011

December 2011

Issue 4

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF

HONORARY JUSTICES

Custodes



Seasons greetings to
members, family and
friends from all at the
RVAHJ





Wow! What a year! As I look back over the past 12 months that I have been president of the RVAHJ I have reflected on the amazing and dedicated people that I have been fortunate to meet along the way. What an absolute pleasure to be working with the current Directors of the Board and I can see a great deal of commitment that will assist

recruitment of new honorary justices and you can now direct people who are interested in the role of justice of the peace or bail justice to the DoJ website for details on how to apply. We, as honorary justices can assist this process by identifying suitable people within the community and encourage them to apply if they are able to make a contribution. In particular it has come to my attention that there is a short supply of active bail justices in some areas and this means that a small few have

'The conference the RVAHJ held in October was very successful and feedback that I and the directors have been receiving has been very positive and rewarding.'

been providing this service and handling the bulk of callouts.

The dedication of these few BJs in the performance of their duties is to be

commended. Where possible current BJs can help by entering their availability on a regular basis to the roster and continue to contribute to the role they were appointed to perform.

On a more sombre note, I acknowledge the passing of the Board's minute secretary, Heather Simmonds. Heather was a very active volunteer both as a bail justice and as an Independent Third Person with the Office of the Public Advocate. She will be missed by the Board and also as an active participant of the Glen Waverley branch of the Association.

Finally on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend seasons greetings to all members and their families and wish you a save and prosperous New Year. The Board looks forward to working with you and the relevant government departments in 2012.

Linda Rainsford, RVAHJ president

The Department of Justice (DoJ) has recommenced the

the Board to continue to deliver a high standard of service.

I have also had the wonderful experience of being invited to attend a significant number of branches across the State and the opportunity to meet many honorary justices who are dedicated to the role that they play in the community. It is through meeting and talking to the membership that we learn about what it is that works well and the respective issues that they encounter in the performance of their duties.

The conference the RVAHJ held in October was very successful and feedback that I and the Directors have been receiving has been very positive and rewarding. I hope that in the future the Association can hold similar such events to enable honorary justices to come together and not only listen to expert speakers but also to network with other honorary justices.

During the conference the delegate from Births Deaths and Marriages (BDM) spoke of the changes to their requirements in the near future that will allow JPs who have been trained by BDM on how to certify documents for BDM applications. These trained JPs will be able to perform this task at nominated police stations where signing centres are located. Signing centres are an important way to provide our services and I encourage you to consider volunteering your time at a location near you.

Welcome new members



WELCOME

RVAHJ president Linda Rainsford, extends a warm welcome to the following new members of the Association

Gavin Douglas Watt JP

ALBERTON WEST

Douglas Charles Willox JP

TAYLORS HILL

Katrina Amanda Alford JP

GROVEDALE

Neil David Armstrong JP

MORNINGTON

Robert George Atkin JP

BEARII

Helen Patricia Blaby JP

MILDURA

Lindsay Graham Bright JP

BUNINYONG

Michael George Colosimo JP

NARRE WARREN

Douglas Cameron Comrie JP

RED CLIFFS

Michael Sydney Custance JP

NARRE WARREN SOUTH

Barry Ian Davy JP

WANDIN NORTH

Rajesh Vithal Dudhani JP

GLENROY

Gavan Jonathan Evans JP

KINGSBURY

Katherine Jane Foley JP

HAMPTON

Anthony Bryan Fricker JP

BELGRAVE

Malcolm Robert Gammon JP

STRATHFIELDSAYE

Judith Grace Heeps JP

RUPANYUP

Sharon Howard JP

INVERMAY PARK

Lindsay Victor Lynch JP

MILDURA

Rajaratnam Manoharan JP

TAYLORS LAKES

Susan Lesley Martin JP

CRANBOURNE

Joanna Michaela Palatsides JP

ENDEAVOUR HILLS

Robert Thomas Penny JP

HAMILTON

Neville Bruce Perrin JP

BENDIGO

Ellen Frances Phipps JP

YARRAWONGA

Caroline Anne Rogers JP

PAKENHAM

Dominic Sciberras JP

BOX HILL NTH.

Usha Sharma JP

KEYSBOROUGH

Stephen Vincent Shortis JP

DIXONS CREEK

Steven Soos JP

ELSTERNWICK

Emily May-Yin Tang JP

TEMPLESTOWE

Grant Bryan Harding Thomas JP

CASTLEMAINE

Faye Ellen Louise Vallance JP

TEMPY

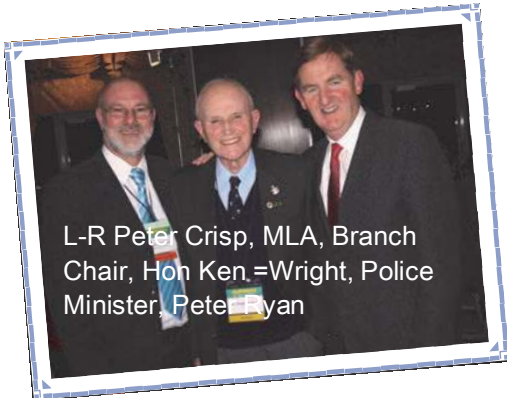


**Photo front cover—Judge Paul Grant,
President of the Children's Court of Victoria.**

SUNRAYSIA BRANCH BY HARVEY J HILARY-TAYLOR JP

POLICE MINISTER VISITS SUNRAYSIA SIGNING CENTRE AT MILDURA

The Minister for Police Peter Ryan visited Mildura recently and whilst in the area visited the signing centre at the Mildura police station



L-R Peter Crisp, MLA, Branch Chair, Hon Ken Wright, Police Minister, Peter Ryan

Minister Ryan was accompanied by local Member Peter Crisp MLA and Police Superintendent Paul Naylor.

Minister Ryan discussed the service offered by the local JPs at the signing centre and praised the efforts of the volunteers in having the facility open to the broader community on a regular basis

Minister Ryan also said that being able to discuss the difficult aspects of witnessing documents with experienced JPs in a mentoring capacity was helpful to young police officers

Sunraysia branch chairman, the Hon Ken Wright welcomed Minister Ryan to the signing centre and stated that the roster was a win-win for police, clients and JPs.

Mr Wright said, 'police officers now have more time for policing duties, and clients and JPs have more certainty of the time and place of witnessing documents'.

In responding, Minister Ryan warmly congratulated the honorary justices on the work they were doing at the signing centre and in addition, advised that the police numbers in Mildura had been increased and more were on the way.

During afternoon tea he circulated and met all JPs present.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA BRANCH BY IAN LYONS JP

At a recent meeting of the Mornington Peninsula Branch the guest speaker was Mr Terry House from TRAG- Teenagers Road Accident Group is a programme aimed at highlighting the awareness of young people to the dangers of driving on our roads today and also raise awareness of the devastating effect that road trauma has on families and friends.

Terry showed a video and spoke of personal experience of having lost his daughter in a road accident and his subsequent involvement in TRAG. A very lively and informative Q & A session followed and Terry distributed videos and pamphlets and a set of "P" plates- a TRAG innovation whereby the back of the plates depicts an accident site. The hope is that by having the graphic constantly on the windscreen the message might sink in. For information on TRAG (guest speaking) phone Mr Terry House on 0411117374.

The Annual General Meeting of the Mornington Peninsula branch was held at Frankston police station on Wednesday November 2nd. Mr Geoff Shaw, the State Member for Frankston was at hand to install the office bearers and committee members for the ensuing year. Those elected were Chairman: Graham Unwin, Vice-Chairman: Barry Lewis, Treasurer / Secretary: Fay Hunter Committee: Henryk Kay, Peter Fulton and Ian Lyons.

The final meeting of the branch for 2011 followed the AGM with Geoff Shaw MP being the guest speaker.



He spoke on his involvement with the City of Frankston from his childhood memories, primary and secondary education, business involvement to his standing for Parliament. He also spoke on law and order issues and informed a questioner that the unoccupied buildings in the shopping precinct were to be re-developed with some high rise, encompassing shopping, commercial and residential floors within the buildings.

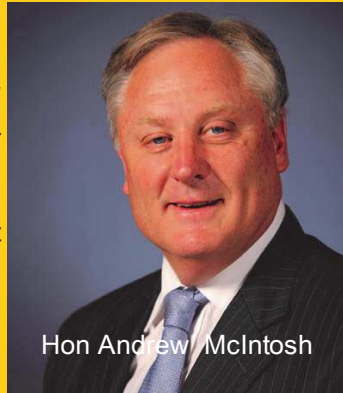
We also want to formally welcome Susan Martin to our branch.

SOUTH WEST BRANCH BY BRUCE TURNER JP

MEETING REPORT

19/9/2011

Meeting with the Hon. Andrew McIntosh (Kew) Minister for Corrections, Crime Prevention, responsible for the establishment of an anti-corruption commission.



Hon Andrew McIntosh

An invitation was received from the Electorate Office of Dr Denis

Napthine MP, to meet with Minister McIntosh together with local JPs and/or bail justices to take place on Monday 19 September 2011 at 3:00 pm at the Warrnambool Courthouse, with an opportunity to bring forward items for discussion.

The meeting was attended by the Hon Andrew John McIntosh (Kew), Jan Noblett, Regional Director Department of Justice, and Paris Room, Crime Prevention Advisor to the Minister. Justice members included Ted Kennett JP, Bruce Turner JP, Geoff Harlock JP, Pauline McDonald JP and Alan Bowes JP and Vicki Turner.

A lively conversation ensued with the following seven items raised, and discussed in earnest and in-depth.

1. Shortage of JPs in the catchment area.

132 registered - 54 financial members Signing Centre Rosters include 16 in Warrnambool, and 2 in Portland.

2. New JP applications.

Called for assistance to recruit more JPs for the area, as the department has advised it would not be recruiting in Warrnambool until at least next year.

3. Shortages of bail justices in the region.

Five recent retirements - leaves six BJs to service the whole area with two in Warrnambool, two in Colac, one in Camperdown and one in Portland

4. BJs re-applying for roles they have been serving in for many years.

Requiring strenuous police checks and further training. Loss of

continuity of their role. Loss of faith in the department system, causing bitterness and disenchantment.

5. Disappointed with the lack of communication from the Justice Department.

Phone calls go un-answered. Unable to get clear information regarding members. Frequently getting the geographics wrong; asking BJs to travel long distances. BMD meetings cancelled at late notice - David Atkinson

6. Ian Judd's letter was tabled, with a copy provided for attendees

7. Alan Bowes 50th Year highlighted.

Summary

We are a unique non-profit volunteer organisation, looking for assistance to better serve the community and the government. It was pointed out that the Attorney General, Mr. Clark, fully supports the justice's role in the community and thereby the further recruitment of BJ/JPs.

Meeting Outcome

Mr McIntosh explained the reason for mandatory retirement age 70. A member of the High Court who died at 90 was found to be con-curing with everyone. It is now uniformly compulsory for Judges to retire at 70. He said, 'There is a lot of concern that we are retiring people who have the capacity to continue.' Andrew will take this up with the Attorney General.

Jan Noblett, noted the key issues and gave an undertaking to look into the following items and report back to the Secretary, Bruce Turner.

1. Call-out Centre issues (geographical).
2. JP Application blockages.
3. The urgent recruitment of more BJ/JPs for the region.
4. Birth, Deaths and Marriages signing issues.
5. Improvement of the Departments' communication channels.
6. Retirement age and BJ re-application issues.

The meeting closed at 3.45 p.m.

WIMMERA BRANCH BY GEOFF PENNA JP

NEWS

From the Wimmera Mail Times

Call for justices

By KAITLYN OPIE

ROYAL Victorian Association of Honorary Justices state president Linda Rainsford visited Horsham last week.

Ms Rainsford was guest speaker at the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices Wimmera branch annual meeting on November 10.

Branch chairman Don Jagger said Ms Rainsford was the first woman president of the association.

"It is very notable in its own right – it's broken the barrier, or glass ceiling," he said.

The dinner meeting was at Horsham RSL and about 40 Justices of the Peace attended.

Ms Rainsford, who was appointed state president in December 2010, said it was important to note she was not a Justice of the Peace, but a Bail Justice.

She said both JPs and Bail Justices were needed in the Wimmera.

"We want people who are of a community mind, particularly because you need to be supported by a reference.

"We also need people who are able to freely give of their time, so busy working people are probably

not the best people to be JPs because they need to sit at the police station on a rotating roster.

"That said, we do want more young people, more women and people of an ethnic background."

A Justice of the Peace is based at Horsham Police Station on Wednesdays.

The role involves certifying documents, statutory declarations and witnessing affidavits.

The role of a Bail Justice also involves witnessing statutory declarations and receiving affidavits, but unlike a Justice of the Peace a Bail Justice leads after-hours bail and remand hearings.

"A Bail Justice is really like an after hours court – they need to be able to make a decision and assess the needs of the offender and the needs of the community," Ms Rainsford said.

She said people could call the Department of Justice on 8684 0000 or 1300 365 111 or visit www.justice.vic.gov.au/ for more information.

Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices Wimmera branch office bearers, 2012: chairman, Don Jagger of Horsham; secretary, Geoff Penna of Elmhurst and treasurer Shirley Smith of Minyip.

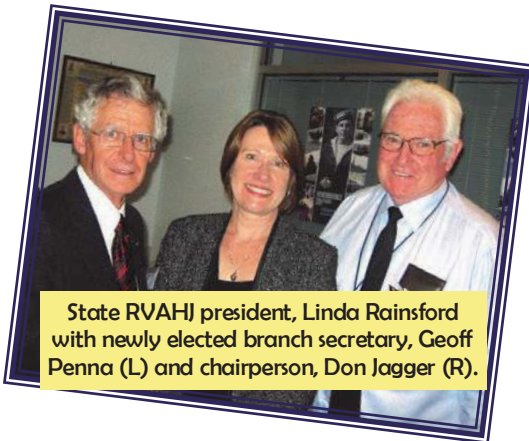


HORSHAM VISIT: Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices state president Linda Rainsford with Wimmera branch chairman Don Jagger during a visit to Horsham last week. Picture: AMELIA ELLISTON

Wimmera Branch 2011 AGM news

The State president of the RVAHJ, Linda Rainsford was a guest at the recent Wimmera branch AGM held in Horsham. The branch, one of the strongest in Victoria, heard about the most recent developments within the Justice Department that directly relate to both bail justices and JPs.

Branch chairman, Neil Thornton JP from Stawell stepped down from the role and was succeeded by Don Jagger JP from Horsham.



State RVAHJ president, Linda Rainsford with newly elected branch secretary, Geoff Penna (L) and chairperson, Don Jagger (R).

Former secretary/treasurer, Shirley Smith JP of Minyip remains as treasurer for another year however, a new secretary was appointed. Geoff Penna JP from Elmhurst agreed to accept the position.

'The Wimmera branch meets quarterly for dinner in different locations throughout the region and we usually attract excellent after dinner speakers,' said Geoff.

MONASH BRANCH BY HELEN GILHOME

The Monash branch invites justices to:



On the following dates in 2012:

5th March, 2012 Malvern Town Hall Council Chambers – meeting commencing at 7 p.m.

21st June, 2012 Lunch Elsternwick Hotel, Cnr Brighton and Glenhuntly Rds at 12.30 p.m.

20th September, 2012 Malvern Town Hall Council Chambers – meeting commencing at 7 p.m.

Enquiries to Helen Gilhome (Secretary) helen.gilhome@gmail.com or mobile 0401 338 176



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Port Fairy

Renting.....

Port Fairy holiday rentals – prices to suit all pockets. McNally Properties offer a **15% discount*** on booking to Honorary Justices and Law Officers ‘after’ negotiating the usual rates. With a variety of restaurants and stunning day trips Port Fairy is a year round holiday destination AND the off season rates are very affordable. Simply negotiate a rate then quote your membership and receive another 15% off. We have a variety of homes and units available for nightly and weekly bookings.

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Heather Simmonds joined the RVAHJ in 2004 after her appointment as a bail justice - and what a bail justice she was. She truly cared, in particular for the young people making application for bail and for the children she was being asked to remove from their parents. She dealt with some incredibly sad cases with great empathy, skill and composure. Heather supported the Association and her fellow justices in many ways. She was inaugural secretary of the Glen Waverley branch. Her comments were always considered and spoken in that calm concise way of hers. She always made sure that members were made welcome and that there was a cuppa and biscuits after each meeting. She was organiser of training events (even the photocopying) and she also organised social events not only for her branch but for combined branch functions. Heather helped bring to fruition merchandise (Record of



Hearing Pads) and had a big role to play in the centenary lapel badge. What a patient soul she was with us as many months went into the planning, costing and sampling of just this one item.

She also was Board minute secretary. And these are only the regular tasks. There were many 'one offs'!!

Whatever task she was asked to undertake, she did with good humour and great skill with no task being too menial.

Heather had hoped to do some travelling but unfortunately illness struck not only her, but her husband Paul.

She was incredibly cheerful in the face of adversity and attended meetings, bail justice and minute taking duties whenever she was well enough to do so (and sometimes even when she wasn't well enough).

Heather will be greatly missed by her Association family.

Vale Heather – a woman who cared.

By Helen Gilhome

Extract of a letter received from Geoffrey Lee JP, RVAHJ Member

(It is) my opinion that no justice of the peace should witness documents until they have completed a document signing training course.

This is...highlighted by the fact the Vic. Police force has failed to properly have Affidavits sworn, as I said in my letter and submission, it's only going to be a matter of time before it is some smart lawyer or other will ask whether or not the documents were sworn or affirmed or the relevant questions were asked regarding a Statutory Declaration.

Luck just happens that it wasn't a JP at fault this time, but it's only a matter of time with untrained people.

I have personally had two experiences, once with a lawyer who was just going to accept my Affidavit without it being sworn, and secondly at the Narre Warren Police Station with the duty JPs, I being asked for ID to have a Stat. Dec. witnessed on both occasions. I of course gave them the correct advice!

Yours sincerely,
Geoffrey E Lee JP

Members and stake-holders are invited to submit articles for publication, however, publication is at the discretion of the editor. Readers are advised that views or opinions expressed in published articles are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the RVAHJ.

It was a quiet Sunday in Melbourne and about 150 justices travelled from across the State to attend what was a landmark conference, which was both informative and a great get together.

In introducing the Attorney-General, Robert Clark, president Linda Rainsford pointed out that this was a conference that would focus on the future and not the past. President Linda thanked the Attorney-General and the Department of Justice for granting the Association the funds to conduct the conference, for without their generous support we would not be able to achieve this.

The Association also decided that the conference should not only be available to all honorary justices, but that it should be free. Speakers were from the Department of Justice, Children's Court, Police and Births, Deaths and Marriages.

President Linda went on to say that the Association has been working together with the various government departments to strengthen the relationships between those departments and honorary justices and to ensure that we can continue to provide the best service possible to the community.

In introducing Attorney-General, Mr Clark, president Linda pointed out that the Victorian Honorary Justice System has recently undergone a time of significant change and the outcome of those changes are only now starting to be felt. The change in government and the appointment of Mr Robert Clark as the Attorney-General and the support he has given honorary justices has been greatly appreciated. He has taken time out of his busy schedule on many occasions to visit groups and branches at the local level, attended one of our training sessions and he gave up his Sunday morning to speak to at the conference.

In opening the conference the Attorney-General congratulated the Association on its centenary and expressed how grateful the government was for the services bail justices and justices of the peace provide for the community.

'Communities rely on the services honorary justices provide and it is right that your valuable volunteer efforts be recognised,' he said.

'It is the Government's commitment to promote the high standing and independence of honorary justices. To this end no justices will be removed from office except on the advice of an independent decision maker. The selection and engagement of this decision maker is currently being finalised.'

Mr Clark added that the new fixed, five year appointment term for bail justices will ensure that all bail justices receive the training and support they need to stay active in their communities. The net effect of this reform will be a much greater participation rate from bail justices. This should help ease the burden on the hard working bail justices who currently handle the vast amount of majority of matters.

In opening the conference the Attorney-General congratulated the Association on its centenary and expressed how grateful the government was for the services bail justices and justices of the peace provide for the community.

'JP appointments will continue to be for life,' said Mr Clark.

'JPs will be able to keep their title without being required to be available for duty, when they can no longer perform their duty due to age, ill health or other reasons.'

'The RVAHJ has an important role to play in supporting and advocating for its member honorary justices,' he said.

Mr Clark expects to see the department consulting with the RVAHJ on matters of importance to honorary justices and he invited the RVAHJ to continue to work in partnership with the government to improve support for honorary justices.

We were privileged to have Judge Paul Grant, President of Children's Court of Victoria as a speaker at the conference. Judge Grant gave an incite into the work of the court and a working picture of what challenges are faced in applying the law in this regard. His talk was especially interesting to bail justices.

Members of the police were able to present some informative aspects of their work and details of their operations.

Erin Keleher from Births, Deaths and Marriages (BD & M) presented an interesting report on the reason for restrictions to JPs not being able to witness documents for their Registry. He noted that it is important that justices are not put into a position of danger when forged documents are presented to them without the protection of police.

With this in mind BD&M have commenced an initiative to train selective JPS who are on roster at police stations where they may receive the protection available while being able to retain any documents which may appear forged.

More information about this move forward will be made available in the future.

Two days following the conference the Attorney-General was asked a question in parliament about honorary justices to which he recorded a most supportive and congratulatory speech to the House. It may be found in Hansard for all to read.

Refer Page 13 in this edition for a copy of the Hansard transcript.

I would remark that the conference was a great success for the information presented by a variety of highly regarded speakers while providing a network for justices to discuss their interests and concerns to other justices.

Your association is giving serious consideration to a repeat of such a conference on an every second or third year basis. Feedback from you will be most helpful.

Finally, thanks go to those directors who assisted me in the planning, arranging and running of the conference and to you for attending.

Michael Cheshire JP , Conference Organiser

Ed's Note: I wish to once again extend a super thank you to Michael Cheshire JP for the article and Ben Loois JP for these great photos





Demand piles up on our JPs

by John van Klaveren

The workload of voluntary Justices of the Peace at the region's police stations has more than doubled, according to coordinator Joan Scott. She said the JPs were now on average signing each week (sic) more than 2580 documents such as Affidavits, Statutory Declarations and Proof-of-Identification forms. The JPs had signed more than 142,000 documents since the service began in 2007 (sic), she said.

'Demand is increasing and if we had more volunteers we could be available more often,' Mrs Scott said.

'Our volunteers often work longer than the rostered hours. They could always stay there longer.'

'I'm always on the lookout for more Justices of the Peace who can spare three and half hours to fill a roster spot.'

Mrs Scott said she had a pool of 30 JP registered in the region. She cited increasing witnesses or certifications for higher workload.

'Our volunteers often work longer than the rostered hours. They could always stay there longer.'

'I'm always on the lookout for more Justices of the Peace who can spare three and half hours to fill a roster spot.'

volunteers although 300 were complexity of paperwork requiring

'Forms have grown no end along with the instance, many workers now need a Statutory sick.

'I'm always on the lookout for more Justices of the Peace who can spare three and half hours to fill a roster spot.'

complexity of things we deal with. For Declaration to prove they were truly

'Immigration issues, affidavits, overseas pension documents, traffic fines, certified true copies, senior's cards and university forms are just some of what we deal with.'

Mrs Scott said JPs now had to deal with computer-based documents as well but were disallowed from acting as referees or guarantors. 'Some people get annoyed if we can't sign something but there are limits to what we can do.'

Mrs Scott said the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices provided training to keep up to date with new documentation requirements. The volunteer roster saved the equivalent of two full-time police over a year, she said.

Justices of the Peace are available between 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on weekdays at Geelong Police Station and on Monday and Friday at Corio station.

Source: Geelong Independent



More photos from the 2011 RVAHJ conference

QUESTION TIME

Legislative Assembly

Honorary justices: government support

Mr NEWTON-BROWN (Pahran) — My question is to the Attorney-General. Can the Attorney-General advise the house of recent developments in the government's support for Victoria's important honorary justice community?

Mr CLARK (Attorney-General) — I thank the honourable member for his question and his interest in the institutions of justice in Victoria. His question is very timely because on Sunday I had the honour of giving the opening address to the centenary conference of the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices. Since 1910 that association has played an important role in delivering justice services here in Victoria. It provides support and training, and opportunities for Victoria's honorary justices. There are approximately 4800 justices of the peace in Victoria and 500 bail justices. The Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices has branches in many parts of regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne, and it is the largest and oldest group representing the interests of honorary justices in Victoria.

As many honourable members would be aware, justices of the peace have a record of service that stretches back over centuries, since their establishment in England as officers of the Crown charged with securing the peace in their respective districts. While the role of honorary justices has changed over the years, their important service continues as persons of standing in the community who can witness documents and perform other duties requiring an objective and independent third party.

Since coming to office the coalition government has been determined to restore the standing, community recognition and independence of honorary justices, which regrettably was undermined under the previous government. We are putting in place reforms to ensure that any termination of the appointment of an honorary justice will only occur on the decision of an independent and respected decision-maker. This will include any non-reappointment of a bail justice who seeks reappointment.

We have also made clear that we will allow justices of the peace to retain the title 'JP' without being required to be available for active duty when they can no longer continue to perform their duties because of their age, ill health or other good reason. We have rejected the suggestion made under the previous government that JPs should be appointed only for limited terms. However, we have also made clear that we expect that persons who accept appointment as honorary justices should make themselves available for duty on a reasonable basis because it is unfair to other hardworking honorary justices if a minority shirk their responsibilities.

Under another reform the Honorary Justices Office will provide training for all prospective JPs prior to appointment, free of charge. The training package for bail justices is also being updated.

Under the previous government's legislation bail justices are appointed for a limited term of five years and persons aged over 70 can only be appointed as acting bail justices. I have instructed the Honorary Justices Office to invite all bail justices approaching the age of 70 to indicate if they would be interested in continuing to serve under an acting appointment, and I have made clear that I intend to reappoint as an acting bail justice any serving bail justice who is willing to continue to serve unless there is clear justification for non-reappointment. This means that active volunteers reaching 70 years of age, whose experience and dedication would otherwise be lost to the community, are able to continue to serve.

I am also very pleased to inform the house today of the appointment of 22 new justices of the peace, whose appointment was approved by the Governor in Council this morning. Applications for appointment as a JP are now being accepted from across Victoria, and I look forward to making further appointments of persons who are willing and able to serve the community in performing the important document-witnessing role and other duties undertaken by JPs. After years of mismanagement and neglect by the previous government, the Victorian coalition government is proud to actively support and acknowledge the fine work of Victoria's honorary justices. *Reference: The Hon Robert Clark, Attorney General, Hansard, Victorian Parliament, 25 October, 2011, page 4780.*

Ten years on – a retrospective look at a RVAHJ signing centre . By Helen Ward

It has now been 10 years since Murray MacGregor JP, in consultation with Victoria Police established the first document signing service at a police station. The Dandenong centre is a prime example of the popularity of signing centres overall. This is demonstrated by the fact that the number of documents signed each year has increased significantly with 1104 signings in 2001 peaking in 2009 at 89,660. Up to end August 2011, 68,026 documents had been signed.

It is estimated that in 2009 the time saved by police having honorary justices perform this important service was equal to three full-time police officers.

By way of some background, the first sitting roster was on the 21st August 2001 when Charles Norman Fox Connor JP attended at the Dandenong Police Station from 1300 - 1510.

On that inaugural day he processed the grand total of five Affidavits and nine Statutory Declarations. Pioneer justices that year were (in date order) Charles Norman Fox Connor JP, started 21st. August 2001, Alan Harper JP, started 24th August 2001, Graeme Claude Johnson JP, started 21st. November, Murray James McGregor JP, started 26th November 2001 and Malcolm T Lee JP, started 3rd December 2001.

As word got out Murray was asked to establish signing centres at various other locations around Melbourne. The late Laurie Taig took over the role of coordinating rosters from Murray in 2003.

Of the original five JPs only Murray McGregor attended the roster up until October 2011 when ill health forced him to step back, but he continues to attend on a casual basis.

In 2003 Murray was awarded a medal of distinction from the RVAHJ for his involvement in establishing the signing centre roster.

This service now averages about 100 documents an evening and is doing very well. The time of current operations are 10.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. - Monday to Friday and 5.30 p.m. - 8.30 p.m. Monday to Thursday.

Mistletoe has long been a symbol of love, peace and goodwill. Mistletoe is an aerial parasite that has no roots of its own and lives off the tree that it attaches itself to. Without that tree it would die. Two hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Druids used mistletoe to celebrate the coming of winter. Even the warring clans would stop their battles and claim a temporary truce when they would chance upon mistletoe.

They believed the plant had special healing powers for everything from female infertility to poison ingestion.

The Tradition

From the earliest times mistletoe has been one of the most magical, mysterious, and sacred plants of European folklore. It was considered to bestow life and fertility; a protection against poison; and an aphrodisiac. It was gathered at both mid-summer and winter solstices, and the custom of using mistletoe to decorate houses at Christmas is a survival of the Druid and other pre-Christian traditions.

The Story of Mistletoe

The story goes that Mistletoe was the sacred plant of Frigga, goddess of love and the mother of Balder, the god of the summer sun. Balder had a dream of death, which greatly alarmed his mother, for should he die, all life on earth would end. Balder could not be hurt by anything on earth or under the earth. But Balder had one enemy, Loki, God of Evil and he knew of one plant that grew neither on the earth nor under the earth, but on apple and oak trees. It was lowly mistletoe. So Loki made an arrow tip of the mistletoe, gave it to the blind God of Winter, Hoder, who shot it, striking Balder dead. For three days each element of the universe tried to bring Balder back to life. Frigga, the goddess and his mother finally restored him. It is said the tears she shed for her son turned into the pearly white berries on the mistletoe plant and in her joy Frigga kissed everyone who passed beneath the tree on which it grew. The story ends with a decree that who should ever stand under the humble mistletoe, no harm should befall them, only a kiss, a token of love

Kissing under the mistletoe

Kissing under the mistletoe is first found associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia and later with primitive marriage rites. They probably originated from two beliefs. One belief was that it has power to bestow fertility. At Christmas time a young lady standing under a ball of mistletoe, brightly trimmed with evergreens, ribbons, and ornaments, cannot refuse to be kissed. Such a kiss could mean deep romance or lasting friendship and goodwill. If the girl remained unknissed, she cannot expect not to marry the following year.



A reminder that all membership fees become due on January 1 and your invoice for 2012 membership is on the reverse of the address sheet that accompanied this edition of *Custodes*.

To reduce our postage and administrative costs, individual invoices are not sent.

If you are planning to be away in the new year, we encourage you to send your payment early to avoid having your membership lapse.

Paying your membership

We regret that we are unable to take payment over the phone however, a variety of payment methods are available.

Cheque/Money Order

Make cheques/money orders payable to: RVAHJ and post to: PO Box 317, Elwood, Vic. 3184

Credit Card

Payments by MasterCard or Visa only will be accepted.

Online - go to our website www.rvahj.org.au, click on *Membership* then *Renew* then fill in the details.

By Fax – fill out the credit card section on your invoice and fax to (03) 9525 7765

Internet Banking

Direct deposits can be made to the following account: BSB 063-001 Account no. 10331656

Include Payer Ref: Reg. No./Invoice No

(Note: unless you clearly identify yourself as the payer, your payment cannot be linked to your membership account).



Membership invoice on
reverse of *Custodes*
address sheet

Q & A – Interstate Enduring Powers of Attorney

Question

Can Victorian Honorary Justices witness interstate Enduring Powers of Attorney?

Answer

The laws regarding Powers of Attorney are different in each state. For example, at the time of writing, South Australian Enduring Powers of Attorney may be witnessed by a person authorised to take Affidavits but an Enduring Power of Attorney for New South Wales requires a 'prescribed' witness, which is defined as, 'A solicitor, barrister, Registrar of a Local Court or a licensed conveyancer, employee of the Public Trustee or employee of a trustee company who has completed an

approved course of study'.

It should be kept in mind that, as honorary justices for Victoria, we are less likely to be aware of any changes to interstate legislation that might affect these documents and, by the time the document is activated, it may be too late for the donor to re-do it or make their wishes known.

Therefore, unless you're certain of the requirements, you should refuse.



Refresher Training

A refresher training course will be conducted at the Felltimber Creek Community Centre, Ritter Road, Wodonga on 25th February, 2012 commencing 9.00 a.m. (registration from 8.45 a.m.) to 3.00 p.m.

Training will cover your duties and legal responsibilities when witnessing documentation (Affidavits, Statutory Declarations, Certified True Copies and Powers of Attorney).

To book, please complete the registration form below and return it to the Association by fax (9525 7765) or mail (PO Box 317 Elwood 3184) by 11th February, 2012.

COST : Members: Free
 Non members : \$100.00

BOOKING FORM: Training Course - 25th February, 2012 Wodonga

(please print clearly)

Name:.....

BJ/JP Registration Number:.....Email:.....

Address.....

.....Post code.....

Landline:.....Mobile:.....



HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

The RVAHJ office will be closed for the Christmas/New Year break from Friday, 16th December 2011 and re-open on Thursday, 12 January 2012.

If you need assistance with procedural matters whilst the office is closed, please contact one of the Directors listed on the back page of this magazine.

Victoria Police recruit Protective Service Officers for safer railway precincts Ken Lay, APM – Acting Chief Commissioner

A major Victoria Police priority is to make our railway station precincts safer for commuters.

Local police stations have ramped up patrols around these transport hubs and we have introduced a dedicated Transit Team, which is doing a great job keeping commuters safe.

To add to this, Victoria Police is about to start recruiting and training 940 Protective Service Officer (PSO) to patrol train platforms at night.

A big part of the transit PSO's job will be to improve the public's perceptions of safety around train stations.

I am confident that for commuters using our rail system after dark, getting off the train and knowing there will be two armed PSO's there, will give them confidence and a sense of security.

The PSO's will not only make people feel more protected, but along with the other police responses, will work to reduce crime and make our transit system safer.

For many years, PSOs have worked hard to keep public buildings and our courts secure.

This broadened role will make them even more important as we all work to ensure our community is a safer place.

Source: Police Life Magazine



State Trustees would like to say Thanks with a 20% off special offer

State Trustees has been helping Victorians with their financial needs for over 70 years so they can make the most of their opportunities.

We recognise that JPs have played a crucial role in helping State Trustees to achieve this community outcome. By way of thanks for this ongoing assistance, we'd like to offer you and your partner **20% off the standard State Trustees price** for a Will and Enduring Power of Attorney (financial)*

Call us today for an appointment to have one of our specialists prepare your Will to ensure it clearly reflects your wishes, and takes into account your circumstances.

*Offer valid until 30 June 2012



ABN 68 064 593 148 stt.tas.gov.au

To make your appointment or for more information, call **03 9667 6444** or visit statetrustees.com.au



SOUTH GIPPSLAND BRANCH BY WENDY CAPLE JP

On Saturday November 12th the local branch of the Royal Victorian Society of Honorary Justices met for their AGM and annual dinner. Garry Runge, our local liaison officer, and immediate past president of the Victorian Association, presented Bob Leslie JP and Ron Stanley JP with centenary awards following their nomination by the local branch for services as Justices of the Peace and to the community. During the year Ron had received a 40 year service award, and John Campbell JP received one for 35 years of service to the Association.

A new committee was elected with Peter Paul JP the incoming Chairperson, Lindsay Powney JP, Vice-Chair, Wendy Caple JP Secretary/Treasurer, and Lorelle Logan JP, Mary O'Connor JP and Ron Hateley JP as committee members.

Following the meeting, members and their partners listened to an informative talk given by representatives of Thiess Degremont on the facts and figures regarding the desalination plant at Wonthaggi.

The local branch meet four times a year to discuss the role of JPs and any issues that may arise, and to listen to a variety of interesting guest speakers. If you are a Justice of the Peace and would like to join the local branch, please contact Wendy Caple at Inverloch Primary school on 5674 1253.



Photo is of Ron Stanley JP (on the left) and Bob Leslie JP (on the right) receiving their Centenary Awards from Garry Runge JP (in the centre of the photo).

BENALLA BRANCH BY STEVE LONDON JP

Fourteen members, partners and guests attended the Benalla branch AGM and dinner on 4 October at the Benalla Golf Club. Special Guests included Dr Bill Sykes, Member for Benalla and Linda Rainsford President of the RVAHJ.

Guest Speaker was Geoff Spowart of the Department of Justice. Geoff is the Hume Region Manager of Dispute Settlement Centre.

President Linda spoke to the meeting about her role and several current issues which we are facing. These included maintaining a working relationship with The Dept of Justice and Attorney General, training requirements and signing centres.

Benalla is unique in that its centre is not located in a police station but is at the office of Bill Sykes our Local Member.

Dr Sykes raised the issues of the future of JP's, selection and appointment procedures and matching the new appointments with areas where they are needed.

Geoff Spowart explained the operation of the Dispute Settlement Centre which assists people to resolve disputes on many and varied issues. These include neighbourhood issues such as fences, trees, animals, noise and drainage. It also covers workplace issues, clubs and associations and matter referred to mediation by a Magistrate.

The service provides a procedure which aims to identify the issues, talk them through with both parties, reach an agreement on the outcome and to maintain a relationship between the parties after the dispute is resolved.

Courts are an adversarial system which cannot produce the same outcomes. Eighty-five percent of disputes are resolved satisfactorily. Mediation is free, quick, easy, confidential and convenient. Many reach a result within 10-14 days.

The outgoing Office Bearers Ken Whan (4 years) and Sec/Treas. Steve London (13 years) have both stood down and were replaced by new President Athol Graham and Sec/Treas. Joy Poole.

Summer 2011 merchandise

Item	Cost	Qty	Sub-Total
2012 Membership Renewal	50.00		
Photo ID's			
JP/BJ Wallet	85.00		
Tag with Clip <i>(No PFee)</i>	14.25		
Tag with Cord <i>(No PFee)</i>	14.25		
Dresswear			
Name Badge (Magnetic) ◆	25.95		
Lapel Badge <i>Blue</i>	9.95		
Lapel Badge <i>Red</i>	9.95		
Cufflinks <i>Blue</i>	19.95		
Cufflinks <i>Red</i>	19.95		
Cufflinks <i>Centenary</i>	19.95		
Tie Bar <i>Blue</i>	12.95		
Tie Bar <i>Red</i>	12.95		
Tie Bar <i>Centenary</i>	14.95		
Tie <i>Centenary</i>	33.50		
Stamps – Self Inking			
ID Stamp *	29.50		
ID Stamp with seal *	45.20		
Certified True Copy	32.70		
Cert'd True Copy with ID & seal *	45.20		
Annexure/Exhibits	45.20		
Stamps – Handle			
ID Stamp *	24.95		
ID Stamp with seal *	38.00		
Certified True Copy	24.95		
Cert'd True Copy with ID & seal *	35.05		
Annexure/Exhibits	33.25		
Miscellaneous			
Business Cards (x 100) ▲	64.00		
Business Cards (x 200) ▲	99.00		
Clock	19.95		
Pen (gift-boxed)	29.95		
Plaque (with engraved plate) ♠	79.95		
Oaths Card <i>(No PFee)</i>	3.60		
Window Transfer <i>(No PFee)</i>	3.60		
Processing Fee 1 st Item - \$7.50		\$	
then \$2.50 each extra item -		\$	
(No PFee items excepted)	TOTAL	\$	

SPECIAL ORDERS

♠ Plaque *(Engraved plate text):*

Name: _____
Line 2: _____

▲ Business Cards:

Name: _____
Reg. No/s. _____ Ph: _____
Fax: _____ Mob: _____
Address: _____
Town/Suburb: _____ P/code _____
Email: _____

◆ Metallic Name Badge *(Print as you want name to appear):*

Name: _____

* Stamps: Notes: Full, legal name (no initials) and a street address *(Not PO Box) required.*

Surname: _____
First & Middle Name/s: _____
Street Address: _____
Town/Suburb: _____
Postcode: _____ Reg. No. _____

Delivery Details:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Pcode _____

Payment: Send Chq/Money Order or Credit Card Details:

MasterCard Visa *(Note: Phone payments not accepted).*
Cardholder Name: _____
Card No. _____
_____/_____/_____
M M Y Y Cardholders signature:

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The official journal of the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices has appeared in various formats since 1910. As is common practice in publications, the current *Custodes* does not necessarily represent the views of the RVAHJ since it encourages contributions from a wide cross-section of members and beyond. Articles and letters are most welcome, but are subject to the discretion of the editor.

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Advertising in *Custodes* reaches a state wide audience of influential community leaders and business professionals.

Attractive advertising rates are available.

Contact the Editor, to discuss value for money advertising for your business.

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Spring - July 21 Summer - October 21