



AN OVERVIEW OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA AND THE NOMINATION OF A DESERVING PERSON FOR AN AWARD.



*(This is one of two guides prepared by the Scouts NSW Australian Honours Advisory Committee (AHAC)
The AHAC1 is a guide about the Order of Australia; AHAC2 is designed to assist you in preparing
and lodging a nomination for a deserving person*

What is The Order of Australia?

*The purpose of the Order of Australia is to recognise, by national honour, those who have made **outstanding** contributions that benefit their communities, and ultimately our country.*

The second purpose of the Order of Australia is that it serves to define, encourage and reinforce community standards, national aspirations and ideals by acknowledging actions and achievement and thereby identifying role models at all levels and in all spheres of the community.

While endeavour may have been sustained over many years, in essence, membership of the Order of Australia is not an award for long service but for outstanding service.

Service other than outstanding services, such as length of service; good service; dedicated service or loyal service should all be recognised by the person's organisation. This should be covered by the award systems currently in place within the defence forces, emergency services, companies, clubs, councils, sporting groups and organisations such as scouts. (Possible recognition for **outstanding service and contributions** is covered by the Order of Australia as outlined in this guide.)

Introductory:

The nominated person, for an Order of Australia award, must be an Australian Citizen. Any Australian citizen can nominate any Australian citizen who they believe meets the criteria outlined by the Order of Australia Council.

There are certain standards to be met and there are limits on the number of Australia wide awards which can be made in the three(3) categories plus one that is recognised by the Order of worthy service but not outstanding.

- AC** – Companion of the Order: Eminent achievement and merit of the highest order in service to Australia – maximum of thirty-five (35) awards per year.
- AO** – Officer of the Order: Distinguished service to a higher degree to Australia and humanity at large - maximum of one hundred and forty (140) awards per year.
- AM** – Member of the Order: Exceptional service in a particular locality or field of activity for a particular group – maximum of three hundred and forty (340) awards per year.
- OAM** – Medal of the order: Is a recognition of Service worthy of recognition no actual maximum set by the Ordinance.

The most common award received, by those who have involvement in 'scouting', is the Medal of the Order of Australia. They are grouped and assessed with others who provide 'community service'.

Nationally up to 5 Honours per series of award announcements are bestowed on those with 'scouting' mentioned as a significant and major part of their outstanding community service in the actual award citation. Usually, these awards are to people who have also given outstanding service in other organisations as well as in scouting. This amounts to over 30% of the youth service awards and more than any other similar organisation.

The time frame between the nomination through to the awarding of an Honour is between eighteen months and two years, starting from the day the nomination reaches Government House Canberra. Delays are often due to tardy responses to the Secretariat's requests for references, or the need for additional details. It is claimed that in January 2017 over seventy-four per cent (74%) of nominations were successful.

The Council meets twice a year, usually in February and August, to consider whether the person nominated for an award or appointment has demonstrated achievement at a high level above what might be reasonably expected through paid employment; or made a voluntary contribution to the community which stands out from that of other volunteers.

The nomination and detail in the references for a particular nomination, using terms others will understand, must convince the Order of Australia Council that the candidate meets all/most/some of the official requirements as outlined

What is involved in making a nomination?

Analysing successful awards over many years reveals that there are certain common features and these factors should be kept in mind when compiling the nomination. (AHAC 2 & 3, available on the Scouts NSW website, give you more specific and detailed assistance in actually preparing a nomination.)

1. Confidentiality– the nominee must not be aware a nomination is being made until any award is announced by the Governor-General. (If the nomination fails to lead to an Honour, this would be very disappointing for the person concerned and possibly lead to feelings of rejection/failure.)
2. If the nominee was born overseas ensure they are naturalised Australian. They must be Australian Citizens.
3. The prospect of making a successful nomination will be enhanced by the formation of a local small group of three or four people each knowing the proposed nominee well and focused on a different area of the nominee's achievements. That group working together has the best prospect of identifying wide-reaching examples of the nominee's service and achievements, especially service and achievements in other organisation or community activities. In this regard, it should be noted that many awardees have made significant contributions to society other than through Scouting. That is readily apparent from an examination of the Secretariat's media releases when awards are announced. Often the nominee's service to other organisations and community activities is greater than the service to Scouting, as significant as that service may be.
4. Remember you are building a broadly based story of your nominee, which embraces all that they have done to contribute to society and that which has been done beyond the call of duty. Look for the 'exceptional' qualities of your nominee which have contributed to, and impacted the community, and helps make Australia a better place.
5. Referees:
 - Perhaps the most difficult, yet most important, task is in choosing strong referees who agree, in confidence, to support your nominee and in preparing a written reference. It is suggested that you find three or four referees who can emphasise, such concepts as 'significant difference', 'have gone above and beyond what could be reasonably expected of someone in that role' and details of any 'outstanding achievements or contributions, in the areas in which they know the nominee.
 - The quality of your referees helps enormously in the process. As well as personal referees well-known people and community leaders should also be considered. You will be required to list the referees and their contact details with your nomination.
 - The Secretariat also makes separate independent inquiries from other sources.
6. Nominations proceed faster, toward a decision regarding an award, when the Order's Secretariat asks for the references directly from the referees, especially as they often ask for extra information. Referees respond quicker to the request from the Order's Secretariat than if the nominator tries to collect them and send them in with the nomination, which usually delays the submission of the nomination by some months as they usually check with the referee.
7. Whilst mere length of service does not warrant an award, the length of service associated with the nominee's significant achievements in any particular field or role can be very important and should be clearly articulated. At least 12 years devoted to a particular community field of endeavour appears to have a significant influence on the Secretariat's decisions to make an award.
8. Service in multiple fields (e.g. Rotary, RSL, Lifeline, school, sports etc.) or roles (e.g. coach; manager; secretary etc.) is a major advantage.
9. The Order of Australia Council is said to meet only twice a year to decide on Awards, usually in February and August. They could have as many as two thousand (2,000) nominations each year. Therefore it's important in their initial scan of the nomination that members of the Orders Selection Committee easily identify the main points. Again, remember a concise summary at the beginning and an attention-getting conclusion of the actual nomination focus the readers.

If a person's nomination isn't accepted for an award it is usually at least 3 to 5+ years before the Order considers any fresh nomination for the same person.

IN PREPARING A NOMINATION KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING

The Order of Australia is **NOT AN AWARD FOR LONG SERVICE BUT OUTSTANDING SERVICE**. It rewards people who have made a **significant difference to their community, their country or at an international level above those in a similar position.**