

Order of the Eastern Star

The largest
fraternal
Organisation in
the world for
women and
master masons



*Masonic Orders beyond the Craft
April 2019*

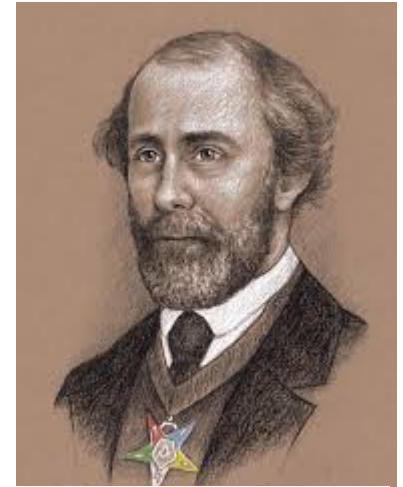
Introductions

- Angela Sweeney
 - Member of the Order for 40 years
 - Past member of Rainbow
 - Past Worthy Matron of Wollongong Chapter (1999-2000); Fraser Chapter (2003-2004, 2015-2016), Canberra Chapter (2007-2008)
 - Past Worthy District Grand Matron (2005-2006)
 - Currently Associate Matron – Capital Chapter No 52
 - Webmaster for The United Grand Chapter of Australia
 - Member of the Strategic Working Party – The United Grand Chapter of Australia
- I acknowledge the distinguished members of the various Orders represented here today
- I also acknowledge the members of our Order that have come along today to support this presentation



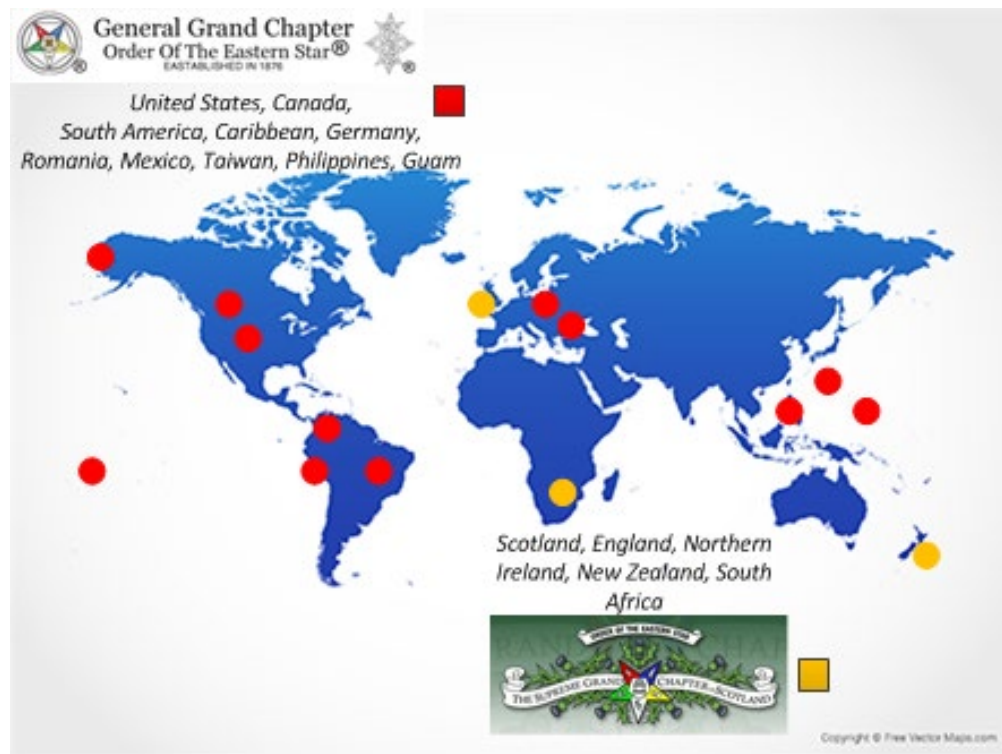
History of the Order

- In mid 1800's, Dr Robert Morris – a Master Mason and Poet Laureate of Freemasonry, believed that female relatives of Masons should have an organisation that they could also benefit from the knowledge and self-improvement principles of Freemasonry
- An organisation that would allow both Master Masons and women to participate together – part of the Masonic Family
- Dr Morris chose 5 biblical heroines as the key symbolic messages of the Order. Each heroine has a story that emulates the virtues and moral standards of life. The first ceremonial book for the OES was published by Dr Morris as “The Rosary of the Eastern Star.”
- In 1866, Dr Morris became associate with Mr Robert Macoy who took over the planning and organisational aspects of the Order. In 1868, Mr Macoy published the ritual using Dr Morris's ceremonies. This Ritual remains virtually unchanged to this day.



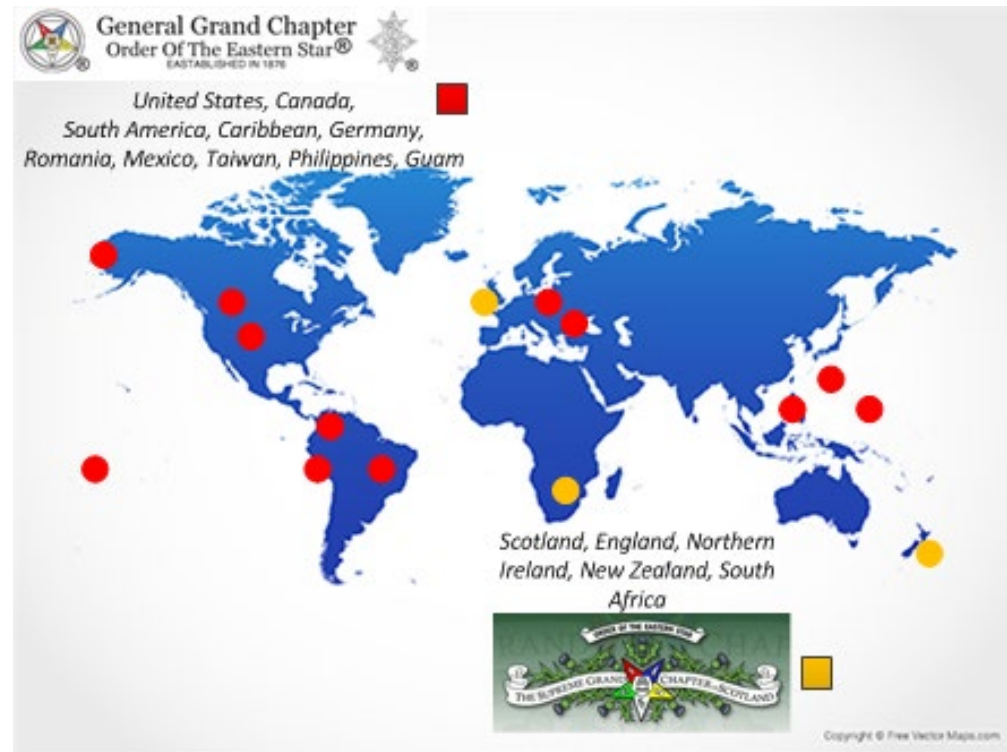
Growth of the Order - Internationally

- The Order was introduced into Scotland in 1868 by Bro Robert Morris when he visited Edinburgh. The first recorded Chapter in Scotland is **Victoria Chapter No 1**, and the date of their Charter was 30th September 1874.
- With the growth of Chapters over the following years, the **Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland** was eventually instituted as the authority for the Order in the United Kingdom, and today, their jurisdiction spans not only in Scotland, but to England, Northern Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa.



Growth of the Order - Internationally

- The first Chapter in the United States, **Queen Esther Chapter No 1**, was instituted on 1st December 1874 in Washington D.C. In 1876, the **General Grand Chapter** was established in the United States as the authority for the Order in that country.
- Today, their jurisdiction spans to include Canada, Germany, Peru, Aruba, Guam, Philippines, Brazil, Romania, Columbia, Mexico, Taiwan and the non-continental states of Alaska and Hawaii.

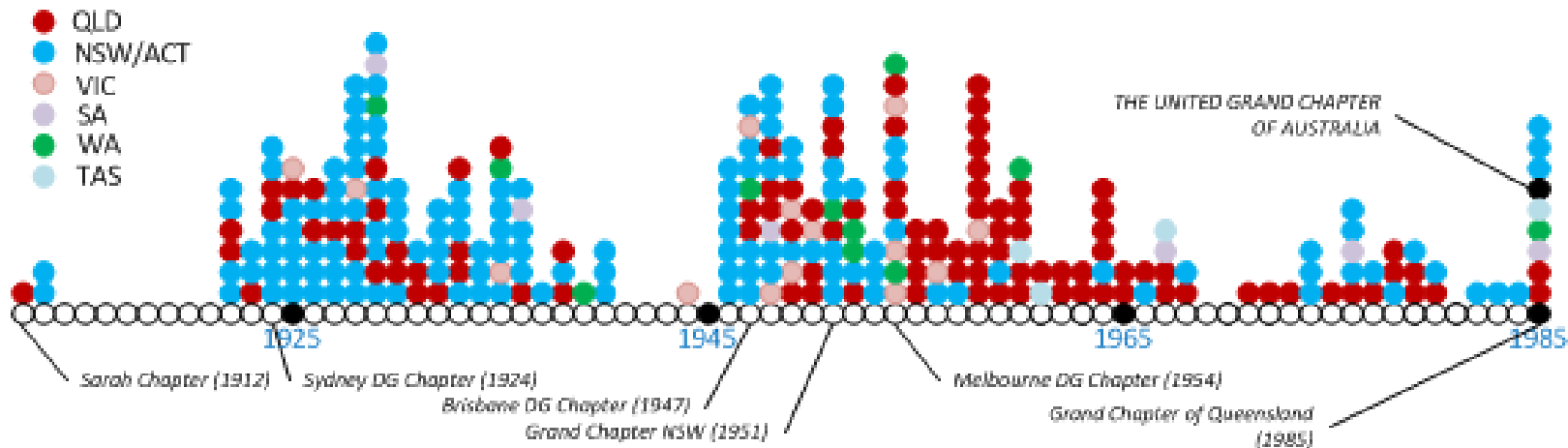


Growth of the Order - Australia

- The OES in Australia was introduced by Brother Stewart Hall and Sister Sarah Hall from the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland. Both members had been involved in the founding of the first few Chapters in Scotland and had come to Australia for health reasons.
- **Sarah Chapter No 31** was instituted on 13th July 1912 in the Valley Masonic Hall, Wickham Street, Brisbane. Sister Hall was the founding Worthy Matron, and Brother Hall, the founding Worthy Patron.
- In May 1912, authority was granted by the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland, to form the first Chapter in NSW. In the end, two petitions for Chapters were approved of and both **Southern Cross Chapter No 33** (in Sydney), and **Hartford Chapter No 34** (in Lithgow) were instituted on 13th March 1913.
- In 1924, the Supreme Grand Chapter approved a petition for **Sydney District Grand Chapter** to be formed, and to have the power to supervise 9 Chapters in NSW and the 'Federal Capital Territory'. By 1946, NSW/ACT had 80 Chapters and in 1946/47, the Sydney District Grand Chapter was divided into a number of Districts to enable more efficient management.



Timeline – Growth of Chapters in Australia 1912 to 1985



- By the mid-1980s, 265 Chapters had been instituted across Australia including 14 District Grand Chapters and 1 Grand Chapter, with Queensland and New South Wales achieving most of this growth.
- Members began to discuss the future direction of the Order in Australia and the possibility of obtaining autonomy from Scotland by establishing a 'Sovereign Body' of the Southern Hemisphere or specifically, Australia.
- After much effort and discussion, **The United Grand Chapter of Australia Order of the Eastern Star** came into being on 8th June 1985 with *"supreme and exclusive jurisdiction within the confines of the States and Territories of Australia and its dependencies"*.



Growth of the Order - Australia



The OES in Australia shares the decline of membership with all Associated Orders over the past years.

We still however, have Chapters in most states and territories in Australia, and are focussing on the Marketing of our Order so that we may gain new members



Governance & Meetings

- A Chapter has 18 Office-bearers with similar responsibilities as other Associated Orders – ie. a Secretary, a Treasurer, someone to ensure the security of the Chapter while in session, to conduct ceremonies, and to marshal visitors and members around the Chapter room
- The chief Office-Bearer is the Worthy Matron. She shares the responsibility of leading the Chapter with the Worthy Patron
- To attend a Regular meeting, all members must follow the 'dress code' of the Order. Sisters wear a white long dress or white top/blouse with a long white skirt. Brothers wear a black dress suit



Membership

- To become a member of the Order in Australia, candidates must have a belief in the existence of a 'Supreme Being'. The Order itself is not a religion and membership is open to all faiths.
- A new member takes an Obligation at an Altar which is the centrepiece of a Chapter room. The Chapter room is not a place of worship, and the Altar is symbolic of a faith that a member has, and the belief in a 'higher power'.
- When taking a membership Obligation candidates are asked to hold a holy book which represents for them, the commitment of a binding promise to their Supreme Being.

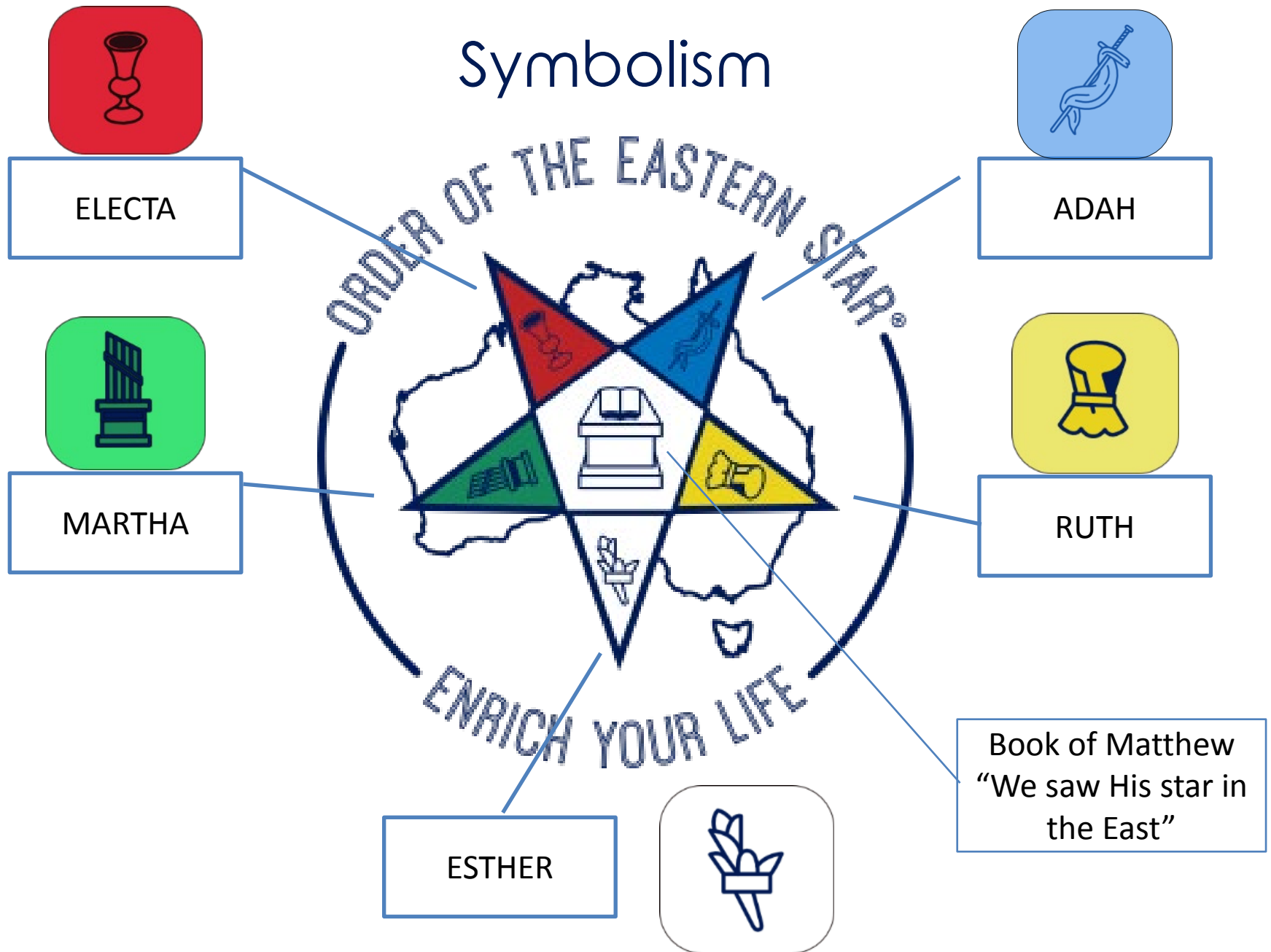


Membership

- To be eligible to join the OES, females must be of good moral character and males must be Master Masons.
- In international jurisdictions, membership qualifications exist that require females to be related to a Freemason.



Symbolism



Adah



The story is of a man called Jephthah and his daughter Adah. Jephthah made a promise to his God, and Adah's loyalty to her Father and what he believed in is the inspiration of this story.

The Sword must sometimes be taken up in the defence of right, and in the performance of duty.

The Veil symbolises modesty and fearlessness.



Ruth



The story is of Naomi and her daughter in law Ruth. Ruth gave up her life, her people and her God to care for the ageing Naomi.

Ruth was devoted to Naomi's welfare regardless of what the consequences of that meant to herself.

The sheaf of wheat symbolises the collective greatness of small deeds or duties.
The patience of Ruth's labouring for Naomi is inspirational.



Esther



It is the story of a Jewish woman, Esther, who became the Queen of Persia, but kept secret the fact that she was of Jewish descent.

On learning that her King had issued an edict to destroy the Hebrew race, Esther was prepared to sacrifice her own life to approach the King and save her people.

The Crown and Sceptre together as one symbolises the forces of power and authority welded together to insure justice for all.



Martha



Martha's brother Lazarus had taken ill and died. Martha, having faith in Jesus, sought him out in order to ask that he would bring Lazarus back from the dead.

Her faith gave her hope. Hope makes us strive and reach for something higher.

The broken column stands for
unshakeable faith.

It also reminds us of the uncertainty of
life and that our loved ones can be
taken all too soon. We must have faith
and hope to get us through.



Electa



In biblical times women would often be persecuted for the faith they had. Regardless, these Christian women sought for compassion and forgiveness to those that hurt or threatened them.

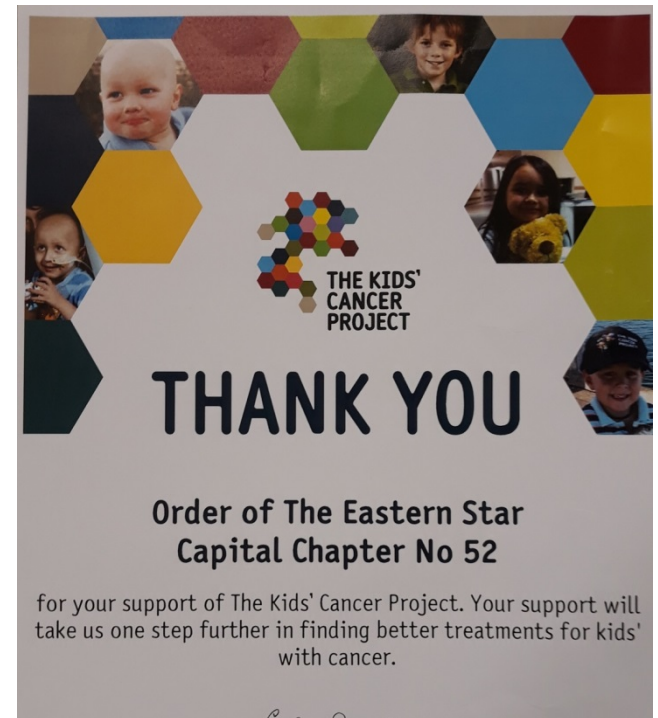
The cup symbolises the allotted portion of life's joys or sorrows.

We should always offer the cup of charity, hospitality and love to each other and those less fortunate.



Charity Work

- A key part of belonging to the Order of the Eastern Star is giving back to our community and enriching the lives of others. We take great pride in our charitable work with donations to various organisations and assistance given to the victims of State and National disasters over the years.



Charity Work

- One key difference the Order has to other associated organisations is how Charity funds are raised. Various social events/functions or raffles are held for members to get together socially, have fun, and raise money for Charity at the same time. These activities create lasting friendships with members sharing their love of serving and supporting the community while having fun together.



The Masonic Family

- I was brought up in the Masonic Family.
- My Father, Grandfather and Uncle were Freemasons
- My Mother, both Grandmothers and my Aunt were members of the OES.
- I was a member of Rainbow and then joined the OES. Demolay was present in our community at the time and there would often be functions held that involved families who all had connections to Orders associated with the cCaft. I have been in the Order 40 years this July.
- Gary Sweeney – joined Freemasonry after hearing about the family connections
- Ben Sweeney will soon be installed as Master of his Lodge. He will also soon, stand beside me as my Worthy Patron, when I go back into the Chair of Capital Chapter at the end of the year. Ben represents the 4th generation of my family to be a member of Wollongong Chapter OES.



The Masonic Family

- I believe that there is a place for all of us in the Community and together we can strive to grow our membership and in turn, strengthen what we all do for those less fortunate than ourselves.
- I also hope that the time is right to re-establish Rainbow and Demolay in the Canberra region. I think the community today needs the Masonic Family and it is hoped that you will support these endeavours if we – the Canberra Masonic Fraternity – go down that path together.
- THANK YOU for inviting the OES to present to you all.
- I'll take any questions now, but if you wish to speak to any of our members here today, please don't be shy, and visit our table for more information about who we are and what we do



The OES in this Region

Capital Chapter No 52

Meets on 4th Saturday of the Month @ 1:00pm

except December (3rd Saturday); recess January

Northside Community Centre, Majura Hall, Dickson ACT

CONTACT: capitalchapteroes@gmail.com

Goulburn Chapter No 94

Meets on 1st Saturday of the Month @ 2:00pm

recess January

OES Hall, Cowper Street, Goulburn

CONTACT: goulburn94oes@gmail.com

