



Australia Day Medallions 2021

Speaking Notes

For	Angelene Falk
Date	Thursday 28 January 2021, 2.30-3.30pm
Venue	Via Teams
Duration	Approximately 60 minutes

Purpose

The purpose of this brief is to provide you with speaking notes for the Australia Day Awards Ceremony.

Speaking notes are over leaf.

Additional information

- This is the 11th year the OAIC has awarded Australia Day medallions. According to previous speaking notes we started making the awards in 2011 (for example, the 2013 speaking notes say – *“The OAIC awarded its first Australia Day medallions in 2011, and then again in 2012”*.)
- The source of Australia Day originally being an event for emancipated convicts is the Australian Government’s Australia Day website, <https://australiaday.org.au/about/history/> which states: “The marking of 26 January is an important date in Australia’s history and has changed over time: starting as a celebration for emancipated convicts and evolving into what is now a celebration of Australia that reflects the nation’s diverse people.”

Speaking Notes

Introduction

- I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to their Elders both past, present and future.
- Welcome to our Australia Day Awards ceremony.
- This is the 11th year in which the OAIC has awarded Australia Day medallions and I am delighted to recognise our hard-working staff in this way.
- These awards are an important opportunity to recognise the outstanding contributions by OAIC staff over the past year.
- It's been a uniquely challenging year – testing our resilience as we shifted to working from home arrangements - while performing our regulatory functions and carrying on business as usual and in many cases, business **more than** usual!
- This year I have been impressed to see the way our organisation lifted to respond to the challenges. Each of us has been challenged personally and we also made a very important contribution to Australia's COVID response as an organisation.
- Today we pay tribute to those who have not just excelled in their work, but also demonstrated collegiality, commitment and willingness to go the extra mile.
- Before we get to the awards, let's take a moment to reflect on why we mark Australia Day
- The marking of 26 January has changed over time: starting as a celebration for emancipated convicts and evolving into what is now a celebration of Australia that reflects the nation's diverse people.

- At the OAIC we use this day to acknowledge the contributions and performance of staff for making outstanding contributions to the Australian community through their work at the OAIC.
- This year, Australia Day comes after a very challenging year.
- Twelve months ago, we were in the midst of the worst bush fire season ever recorded.
- In March, the World Health Organisation declared coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic.
- Public health experts, scientists and governments set about tackling the spread of the virus.
- Organisations like ours moved to work from home arrangements almost overnight.
- Businesses were forced to reinvent their service delivery models
- The transition to work from home arrangements took flexibility and adaptability, as we moved to online meetings – learning to turn off and on the all-important mute button and more
- I am proud to say that our staff demonstrated extraordinary dedication and commitment through this period
- We set to work to ensure we provided the advice and guidance needed to prevent and manage the COVID-19 response while protecting Australians privacy and access to information rights. We moved priorities, resources and ensured we were focused on our role to play an important part in addressing a one in one hundred year challenge.
- Our list of achievements over the last 12 months is nothing short of remarkable:
 - From resolving record numbers of FOI complaints, privacy complaints and Information Commissioner reviews to launching a multitude of Consumer Data Right resources
 - For the first time in the history of the OAIC, we commenced civil proceedings in the Federal Court – in this situation, against Facebook

- We had our biggest Privacy Awareness week yet and ran our first International Access to Information Day campaign
 - We handled complaints, resolved disputes, conducted assessments and investigations, and issued determinations and guidance across our functions
 - We made submissions on important areas of law reform in the public interest
 - We set in place or strengthened foundations in many of our corporate areas.
- None of this important work would have been achieved without the extraordinary efforts of all OAIC staff.
 - Every one of you has contributed to our work in the unique circumstances of the last year and for that I convey my appreciation to you all on behalf of the Australian people.
 - It has been an extraordinary year and an extraordinary effort. This was reflected in the large number of nominations we received for this year's awards.
 - I am pleased to say we will be awarding more medallions this year than we have in recent years – but despite this our decisions on who to recognise this year was particularly difficult.

New staff

- Before I move on to the award recipients I would like to acknowledge our new starters over the past year.
- Despite the challenges of managing recruitment during the pandemic, the OAIC has continued to grow.
- I warmly welcome all of those new staff members who have joined us in this unique situation where we have rarely been in the office.
- I acknowledge that you have taken up your new role and have got to know your workmates virtually, and that there is a difference with in person interactions. Thank you for your efforts to connect and for your contributions.

- I do expect that we will have much more time where we are in our Office in 2021 which I am very much looking forward to.
- If I didn't meet you in person at the end of last year - when we returned to the office for a period of time - I hope I get the chance to do so over the coming months.

Medallion Recipients

Now for the Australia Day Medallions. Every one of you can be proud of the hard work, skill and commitment you have demonstrated in the last 12 months.

- As I mentioned, we had a large number of nominations this year – people whose colleagues wanted to recognise for their extraordinary effort and as being collegiate and supportive
- I would like to congratulate all the nominees on their achievements
- This year, we are awarding 7 medallions
- There is a common thread to the recipients, their contributions have been outstanding not only to delivering their work, but in the manner in which it has been delivered, working collegiately, engaging positively and supportively.

RECIPIENT 1: § 22

- The first medallion goes to § 22 (Assistant Director, Policy, Regulation and Strategy Branch)
- CITATION: § 22 has received this award for outstanding contribution in leading policy and law reform work for the OAIC to safeguard personal information for the Australian community, and for her contribution to supporting staff.
- DETAILS:

- s 22 has demonstrated dedication to her work and care for her colleagues at the OAIC over the last 12 months
 - As the central member of the National COVID-19 Taskforce s 22 developed guidance for industry, prepared advice for Government and other entities and engaged with state and territory stakeholders
 - She advised the Executive on the challenging and novel issues associated with COVID-19
 - Despite the many hours of work, s 22 still found time for her colleagues, checking in with them about their wellbeing – and initiating the popular “guess this photo” competition in the early days of our remote working arrangements
 - s 22 has been awarded this medallion in recognition of her ground-breaking work as part of the COVID-19 Taskforce and for her collegiality
 - She has shown resilience, strength and flexibility, and a deep compassion for her colleagues in the Regulation and Strategy Branch during a challenging year
- Congratulations s 22

OPPORTUNITY FOR A FEW WORDS

RECIPIENT 2: s 22

- The second medallion is being awarded to s 22 (Governance and Procurement Manager, Corporate and Governance Branch)
 - CITATION: s 22 has received this award for outstanding contribution in ensuring the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner meets governance and procurement requirements.
 - DETAILS:
 - s 22 is a highly valued colleague at the OAIC, whose expertise is deep and broad – she knows the intricate ins and outs of the agency. There are many things that go on behind

the scenes in our organisation that are critical to our smooth running. They are the sort of things that may go unnoticed when they are happening, but that can very quickly come to notice when they are not!

- s 22 has been central to our smooth running including:
 - ensuring that we continued to meet our obligations through the changed work arrangements. There are a myriad of important processes we must comply with and s 22 is in the background, year after year, keeping on top of these things and ensuring they are done.
 - She was instrumental to our success in moving out of the office and back again this year. She has been vital in ensuring that we could return to the office safely.
 - at the same time she has been central to substantial improvements in many areas (including our work in risk, controlling documents and updating our accountable authority instructions).
 - In addition s 22 has been a tremendous support to s 22 and the corporate team in uncertain times.
- s 22 is supportive of her colleagues, taking time to teach them about financial procedures, and she always strives to achieve the best outcomes for the agency
- s 22 has been awarded this medallion in recognition of her commitment to our organisation and the support she has shown for her colleagues across the OAIC.

○ Congratulations s 22

• OPPORTUNITY FOR A FEW WORDS

RECIPIENTS 3 and 4: s 22

- Our third and fourth medallions today go to s 22
 (People & Culture)

- CITATION: s 22 [REDACTED] each receive a medallion for outstanding commitment to supporting the well-being of staff, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, through personal engagement with OAIC staff members, and the thoughtful delivery of programs and services.
- DETAILS:
 - s 22 [REDACTED] have been recognised for their incredible work in supporting the OAIC during the COVID crisis and transition back to work period.
 - They have provided outstanding support to colleagues when they needed advice, support or assistance
 - They also ensured that support programs were offered broadly across the OAIC. We offered strong support to staff very early in our COVID experience, through the Corona care program. Regular contact with staff continued with s 22 [REDACTED] making many calls supporting staff well being.
 - Support continued throughout the year with initiatives such as the Positivity Institute webinars and the RU OK Day packs making a difference for colleagues during an uncertain period.
 - Their work supporting OAIC staff members was undertaken on top of the many other functions for which the People and Culture team are responsible. Their dedication in ensuring smooth and safe transitions to working from home deserves acknowledgement.
- Congratulations s 22 [REDACTED]

- **OPPORTUNITY FOR A FEW WORDS**

RECIPIENT 5: s 22 [REDACTED]

- Our fifth medallion today goes to s 22 [REDACTED] (Director, FOI Regulatory Group)

- CITATION: s 22 [REDACTED] has received this award for outstanding contribution to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner and the Australian community in performing freedom of information regulatory and policy functions.
- DETAILS:
 - s 22 [REDACTED] has made a significant contribution to the achievements of the FOI Regulatory Group and the promotion of FOI across the OAIC.
 - s 22 [REDACTED] expertise in and contribution to the area of freedom of information has spanned all FOI regulatory functions - from the investigation of FOI complaints and conduct of reviews, to consideration of extension of time and vexatious applicant declaration applications, as well as processing of FOI requests
 - s 22 [REDACTED] has also successfully inducted new OAIC staff, mentored new FOI Regulatory staff and prepared educational resources.
 - She has prepared advice on complex enquiries, submissions and bills scrutiny – and provided briefings to the Commissioner and Executive for estimate hearings
 - While s 22 [REDACTED] has focused on FOI, she has also lent her knowledge on cross functional issues such as public sector data sharing, cross agency access to information collaboration and the Open Government Partnership. s 22 [REDACTED] has drawn connections and added a depth of experience to these strategic issues for the OAIC.
 - Although she has managed an extensive portfolio of work, s 22 [REDACTED] has also consistently exhibited commitment, collegiality and professionalism, with true dedication to the public purposes of the OAIC.
- Congratulations s 22 [REDACTED]

- OPPORTUNITY FOR A FEW WORDS

RECIPIENT 6: s 22 [REDACTED]

- Our sixth medallion today goes to s 22 (Communications Adviser, Strategic Communications, Corporate and Governance Branch)
- CITATION: s 22 has received this award for outstanding contribution to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner through creating informative and engaging content for internal communication initiatives and for commitment to and engagement in initiatives that support all OAIC staff.
 - DETAILS:
 - Internal communication is one of those things that can be hard to get right in an organisation.
 - We have worked to purposefully develop our internal communication in a number of ways which has included our weekly newsletter, the Weekly Wrap.
 - s 22 work producing the Weekly Wrap has made it a publication that is highly valued by staff. It has enabled us to remain connected during remote working, with its mix of useful recaps and stories of OAIC achievements and our external environment, humour and perplexing riddles.
 - For many OAIC staff members the Weekly Wrap is something to very much look forward to at the end of every week. It allows us to finish the week with a smile and as well as hearing about important things that have happened in the organisation through the week.
 - The ongoing success of the Weekly Wrap is an absolute credit to s 22
 - s 22 has also provided fantastic support to other areas of the organisation. For example she has been of great assistance to the FOI Regulatory Group through her work in delivering the inaugural ICON webinar and the publication of the FOI essentials website.

- s 22 is also an enthusiastic and thoughtful contributor to cross-OAIC initiatives and has consistently gone the extra distance to support her colleagues.

- Congratulations s 22

s 22 IS SCHEDULED TO BE ON LEAVE BUT IS EXPECTED TO CALL IN TO THE PRESENTATION

RECIPIENT 7: s 22

- Our final medallion today goes to s 22 (Director, Determinations, Dispute Resolution Branch)
- CITATION: s 22 has received this award for outstanding commitment to the achievement of the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's regulatory vision through developing a comprehensive and rigorous approach to establishing and implementing the legal and policy framework for privacy determinations.
 - DETAILS:
 - s 22 has driven the achievements of the Privacy Determinations team
 - She gave life to the enforcement ambitions of the OAIC by applying rigorous legal and critical thinking
 - s 22 developed a comprehensive approach to the structures needed to support extending our regulatory approach in a priority area.
 - She built the framework largely from scratch developing policy and process documentation and creating all our precedents and conventions.
 - Changing our regulatory posture and responding to expectations for a strong presence in the privacy area is a critical element of the OAIC's work. s 22 commitment and hard work has allowed us to deliver a strong outcome in the privacy determinations area, creating precedent to inform, guide and shift behaviour of regulated entities to comply.

- This medallion is awarded to s 22 in recognition of her groundbreaking work in determinations, together with her collegiate approach.
- Congratulations s 22

- OPPORTUNITY FOR A FEW WORDS

Concluding remarks

- Well done again to all of our OAIC medallion recipients. Your names will be published on the Australia Day website
- Congratulations to everyone for your ongoing commitment to the work we do for the community
- Again, I would like to acknowledge all OAIC staff for their commitment, flexibility and focus in working to advance privacy rights and access to information for all Australians
- Before I conclude, I would also like to acknowledge that s 22 is moving out of her position as Assistant Commissioner towards semi-retirement at the end of this week.....
- Thank you

- We have all benefited from § 22 skills, expertise, experience, guidance and wisdom.
- § 22 came into the OAIC at a time of significant growth, and has developed the Corporate area to match, and ensure the important needs of the OAIC and our staff are met.

§ 22 has many significant achievements, too numerous to list, but I will remark particularly upon § 22 ability to identify the priority issues, grapple with risk and get things done: whether it be through ensuring we have our house in order with government security and governance requirements, working with staff to understand and improve our staff engagement, through to leading our transition in and out of the workplace during the pandemic.

§ 22 has achieved so much because of her ability to inspire, motivate and bring people along.

§ 22 we will miss your leadership and good humour, but I'm pleased to say that § 22 will be continuing with us on a project basis, and so we are grateful to continue to have access to your brains trust.

I thank you for your determination and dedication to achieving results for the OAIC, and in turn for the Australian community.

We wish you the very best in enjoying more non work time, doing the things that are important to you, as well as continuing to work with you as you move to semi retirement.

We have a card and a small gift to start you off on your new years resolution, a fitness device.