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REGIONAL EDITION

OCEANIA

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ROLAND ISLER
REGIONAL EDITOR | OCEANIA
COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD | AUSTRALIA

Editorial:

Dear friends and readers.

I'd like to introduce myself as the new editor of the «Regional Edition Oceania». My predecessor, Marc Godat, who has done such a sterling job for over a decade, deserves our sincere gratitude for his dedication.

The «Swiss Review» is published both in print and online and is the only medium that reaches every Swiss

household in Oceania. These pages are by the community for the community. It is your opportunity to let people know about the activities of your club or association...or you might just have an interesting story you want share. Please get involved in making this «Regional Edition Oceania» a valuable and interesting source of information for our community.

Submission dates for articles and advertisements for the remaining two issues of the «Regional Edition Oceania» for 2017 are: ■ **1 May** and ■ **27 August**.

Please send your text-file articles and high resolution photos (150 dpi or more) by the above deadlines to: risler@csa-oceania.org
I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Elect the Oceania Delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) is the representative body in Switzerland for Swiss people living abroad. Australia has four seats on the CSA, New Zealand has two. Elections for the Oceania delegates of the CSA for the term 2017–2021 will take place in June.

Elections of delegates in New Zealand

The two representatives on the Council of the Swiss Abroad representing New Zealand will be chosen from among members of the four regional Swiss Clubs – Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki and Wellington. They will be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Society of New Zealand, held on 4 June 2017.

Elections of delegates in Australia

■ How does the election work?

In an effort to reform the election process, Australia is one of only two countries taking part in an e-voting pilot program. The aim is to conduct the elections in a more democratic way by giving all eligible Swiss in Australia the opportunity to elect their representatives. The elections will be carried out entirely by electronic means, utilising the e-voting system provided by the Canton of Geneva. There will be no ballot paper.

All eligible candidates that have registered to stand for election will have their photo and profile summary published in the next (May 3/17) edition of the Swiss Review. The photo, summary and full profile information will also be published online on the website of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and the CSA Oceania website and relevant social media channels.

Voting codes will be emailed to all eligible Swiss in Australia by 12 June and voters will have until 27 June to cast their vote. Results will be announced by the end of June and published in the September issue of the Swiss Review (5/17) as well as online on the OSA and CSA Oceania websites and relevant social media channels.

■ Who can vote?

All registered Swiss citizens, who are 18 years and over and are residents of Australia are eligible to vote.

If you have not yet provided the consulate your personal email address, you must do so by the end of May via the online desk on www.eda.admin.ch/ or by contacting the consulate on syd.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

■ Do you have what it takes to represent the Swiss community in Australia?

All registered Swiss citizens, who are 18 years and over and are residents of Australia are eligible to stand for election as a delegate to the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

If you have an interest in the Swiss community in Australia and in the Swiss political process, and you are fluent in either German or French, you might be the right person for this rewarding and important voluntary role serving your community.

Find out more about eligibility criteria and delegates' duties on the OSA website aso.ch/en/politics/csa-elections-2017

The election registration form as well as further information can also be found on the OSA website. Candidates should email the completed application to direction@aso.ch no later than COB on **Friday, 31 March 2017**.

For any queries please contact the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) on direction@aso.ch

For information about the current delegates and the services they provide go to www.csa-oceania.org/

Switzerland – at the forefront of polar exploration

Switzerland, a landlocked country in the heart of Europe, is far away from the poles. Yet Swiss scientists are among the world leaders in the field of polar research. At first glance this might seem astonishing. However, glaciers, ice and snow have had a significant impact on life and landscape in Switzerland and have brought forward excellent Swiss high altitude research – which in its characteristics and application has a very close relationship with polar research. In fact, research in regions of high altitude and high latitudes is mutually beneficial.

Landlocked Switzerland began exploring the poles in the 19th century. Since then the Swiss science community actively participates in multinational collaborations and international science programs. Switzerland has become a world leader in the field of polar research.

Swiss researcher Dr Xavier Mertz was part of Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition (1911-1914). The Mertz Glacier in East Antarctica, one of the research stops of the Antarctic Circumnavigation Expedition (ACE), is named after him.

In 1912, the Swiss meteorologist and polar researcher Alfred de Quervain led a team of explorers across the Greenland ice sheet for the first time from West to East.

In 1990, the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow, and Landscape Research, in collaboration with ETH Zürich, set up the research station 'Swiss Camp' in western Greenland.



The Swiss flag was hosted for the first time in Antarctica by Xavier Mertz in 1912 (left). The same year, Alfred de Quervain and Hans Hüssli together with two German team members, did the same in Greenland (right).



The Antarctic Circumnavigation Expedition (ACE) was the first project run by the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI), which was created in the spring of 2016. The expedition was composed of 22 different projects and brought together a team of 60 crew and 55 scientists from six continents. They focused on different areas of study, all fundamental for a better understanding of Antarctica's ecosystems. The Antarctic circumnavigation on the Russian scientific research icebreaker *Akademik Treshnikov* commenced in Cape Town on 20 December 2016. After a stopover in Hobart and the southern tip of South America, it arrived back in Cape Town on 19 March 2017.



The *Akademik Treshnikov* off the coast of Antarctica near Siple Island, whose main geographic feature is Mount Siple, a 3,110-meter-high volcano



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Consulate: Norbert Schweizer receives a prestigious award for humbling work



Norbert Schweizer is one of the latest recipients of the pre-eminent Australian award, the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for 'service to the community through voluntary roles', and rightly so. This is the

second year in a row such an honour has been bestowed on a Swiss.

Leading a full life as a partner in a Sydney law firm has not meant sitting back at the end of the day to relax; on the contrary, Norbert has given up his free time to so many different organisations, that it is hard to believe there are enough hours in a day.

68-year-old Norbert was born in London and arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom with his parents in 1952. He attended school and university in Australia, and married his Swiss-born wife, Sonja. Together they have two sons, Richard and Marcus, of whom they are immensely proud.

All this seems pretty normal, but beneath the perfect exterior are other layers also.

Norbert has worked tirelessly on a not-for-profit basis for a number of Jewish, Catholic and Lutheran churches, retirement villages, schools and other community and welfare organisations. Why did this need to help emanate? His parents survived the Holocaust, which played a significant role in shaping his desire to support the more vulnerable members of the community.

Having a son diagnosed with schizophrenia more than a decade ago has also played a major role in Norbert's involvement in the area of mental health. Norbert has devoted a considerable amount of time to the Schizophrenia Research Institute. As part of his work in the area of mental health, he was involved in the merger of the Institute with Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA), of which he is now a director.

The Swiss connections came through his wife, Sonja, a Swiss citizen. Having a Swiss wife brought Norbert closer to the Swiss community in Sydney, where he is the honorary lawyer for the Swiss Club of NSW. He has also supported the Swiss Community Care Society, an organisation which helps

mainly elderly, impoverished and disadvantaged members of the Swiss community in NSW for countless years. In 1998 he was appointed a life member of the Society for his work and support. Norbert was also a founding member of the Swiss Historical Society and a contributor to the publication 'The Swiss in NSW – A History'. More-over, he was a founding director of the Swiss-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (now called SwissCham) and continues as the Chamber's only original director. Norbert has also worked closely with the Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney for a number of years. In fact, all this work with the Swiss and his Swiss connections through his wife meant that he applied and was granted Swiss citizenship in 2003.

Norbert has described receiving the OAM as a great honour and very humbling.

Community News and Events

VIC: Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose

Over Easter the group will travel to Canberra. We will be the only Swiss group to participate at the National Folkstanzfest.

On 6 May the group is organising an **Unterhaltungsabend** at the Swiss Club of Victoria.

It is always a fun night. Bookings can be made with the Swiss Club on 9650 1196 or Sylvia on 9531 6575.

We like to keep the Swiss folklore alive here in Australia by performing traditional Swiss dances on different occasions.



Pre-Christmas entertainment for the seniors at the Tabulam and Lutheran nursing homes by the Companion Singers, the Matterhorn Choir and the Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose

ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

This year our connections will go back many years when we celebrate the **50th birthday** of the Swiss Club. Some friendships started back then and are still strong. Saturday, 15 April (Easter Saturday) is the perfect occasion to meet 'old' friends, make new ones. Book the date in your calendar. More details will come soon.

In the meantime we offer regular events: every fortnight a small group meets to play 'Jass'. Once a month, the choir has a rehearsal. Both activities are very pleasant and the company is great. Everybody is welcome to join or even just to watch once. Every Monday there is a Swiss Radio program on CMS 91.1FM. Additionally we have many interesting activities planned for the year.

NSW: Swiss Yodellers of Sydney

A new event, the Deerubbin Choir Festival (made up of choirs of all nationalities) will be held on Saturday, 20 May from 2-5pm at

the South Windsor Baptist Church, 739 George Street, South Windsor. The Swiss Yodellers will be taking part in this inaugural festival and everyone is welcome to attend.

We will also perform at the Swiss Seniors Luncheon at the Concordia Club in Tempe on 22 July.



Our first daytime harbour cruise was held on Sunday, 26 February and proved a great success by all on board.

The annual Swiss National Day function will be held at Castle Hill Show Ground on Sunday, 6 August.

NSW: Cercle Romand Sydney

The Cercle Romand is celebrating its **40th anniversary** with a luncheon on 8 April.

On 21 May we will host our raclette (with genuine Swiss cheese!) at Bobbin Head, North Turramurra.

For more information and contact details go to www.cercleromand.com.au

NSW: Swiss Play Group

The Swiss playgroup is an independent group of parents and children who meet up every last Friday of the month.

We meet at a wonderful venue which has great facilities and is pram/stroller friendly. The venue is sponsored by the Swiss Community Care Society. Our activities are based around Swiss themes each month and include craft and other activities, play dough, stories and singing in local dialect.

Go to www.swissplaygroup.com or our 'Swiss Families in Sydney' facebook page to find out more.

QLD: Swiss Yodel and Folklore Group Baerg-Roeseli Brisbane

30 years – that is how long we have been a Group of Singers and Musicians performing traditional Swiss entertainment!



Foundation took place in September 1987 and our first big performance was at the Swiss Pavilion at Expo 1988 in Brisbane.

We perform regularly at the Swiss National Day in Brisbane and for many years, we also entertained the Swiss Seniors at their annual Seniors Day.

Now we are practising hard to spoil you once again at our **30 Years Celebration Party**.

The time and date will be published in the Swiss News of Queensland and on facebook.

We hope to see many faces coming along, celebrating with us!

QLD: Swiss Club Sunshine Coast

Forthcoming Events:

- AGM on 11 March at the Anglican Church Hall, Cooroy, starting at 6.30pm.
- Monthly Lunch – held on the first Friday of the month.
- Camping trip to Woodgate, Qld, 20-25 March.

SA: Swiss Club of South Australia

We listened and we've planned an unforgettable evening to celebrate the Swiss Club of South Australia's **50th anniversary**. Fasnacht (Swiss Carnival) is a celebration many members recall with happy and colourful memories.

- **Saturday, 6 May at 7pm.**

Carclew House, North Adelaide

More details and a formal invitation will be sent to all Swiss South Australians. Make sure your address details are up-to-date with the Consulate General in Sydney – syd.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

An enchanting evening with music, Swiss food, masks, memories and fun is awaiting you!

To celebrate the occasion we are creating something truly special. A keepsake book of stories and photos that have shaped the club over the 50 years. We need your help

to compile the book. Please send pictures and stories to Sarah Hill on sarahmelaniehill@gmail.com or 5 Bunday Street, Magill SA 5072.

We also like to tell you that we have a brand new website! Visit us on www.swissclubsa.com.au

WA: Swiss Club Down South

If you live in the Southwest of Western Australia, contact Nicole May on email may_cowtown@bigpond.com or SMS 0404 157 432. She will keep you posted on any upcoming events.

NZ: Wellington Swiss Club

The Wellington Swiss Club is celebrating its **60th Birthday** this year.

In the early 1950s, many young Swiss immigrated to New Zealand. Some would meet for a beer on a Friday after work at the Royal Oak Hotel. Some established Swiss families invited the newcomers into their homes. They met at the 1st of August function and enjoyed speaking their own language, sharing experiences and doing things together.

On 7 October 1957 the Wellington Swiss Club was born. It counted 38 founding members, six of which still live in Wellington today. Karl Bischof was the first president.

We enjoy a great relationship with the Swiss Embassy and their staff. Our Ambassador hosted our club's 60th anniversary at the Älplerchilbi at his residence in Lower Hutt on 4 March.



www.csa-oceania.org

**the website of the Council of the Swiss Abroad
for the Swiss Community of Oceania!**

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Swissinoceania/

THE SWISS COMMUNITY IN OCEANIA

There are over 32,000 registered Swiss living in the region of Oceania.

The CSA Oceania – the Council of the Swiss Abroad representing the Swiss community of Oceania – consists of a team of six elected council members, two from New Zealand and four from Australia. Together they work on behalf of the Swiss Abroad in Oceania, representing their interests as Swiss citizens living in this region.

The CSA Oceania website (see left) was established to provide information for and about the Swiss Abroad in Oceania, about the **Organisation of the Swiss Abroad** and CSA Oceania. It also aims to facilitate networking and provide a point of contact for anyone wishing to join a community group, interested in the services of an organisation or needing the contact details of an official Swiss representation (Embassy, Consulate).

Go to www.csa-oceania.org for a comprehensive list of:

- Swiss Community Groups ■ Swiss Organisations ■ Swiss Representations

ARTICLES AND ADVERTISING IN THE «REGIONAL EDITION OCEANIA»

Contact the Editor Roland Isler on T: +61 (0)412 935 565 or E: risler@csa-oceania.org