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REGIONAL NEWS

OCEANIA

Please note:
Next Editorial Deadline
19 April 2019



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

Editorial:

Dear readers, dear compatriots,

On Saturday, 23 March the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in Bern. Oceania was well represented with three delegates attending. Important topics were on the agenda: the future of e-voting is threatened – signatures are being collected to launch a popular initiative that aims to stop e-voting for five years – and again, there are political voices in Switzerland that put suffrage for citizens living abroad into dispute (read more about this in this edition of the Swiss Review). Prior to this, council delegates met with parliamentarians from

all political parties at the Federal Palace for a frank exchange of views. Your elected team of delegates is resolute in defending the interests of Swiss in Oceania. A report of the meetings can be found on the CSA-Oceania website www.csa-oceania.org/

Please take note of the following «Swiss Review/Regional Edition Oceania» dates for the remaining issues for this year:

Issue	Editorial deadline	Publication date
■ May 3/19	Fri, 19 April	Tue, 28 May
■ July 4/19	no regional edition	Thu, 18 July
■ September 5/19	Fri, 23 August	Thu, 26 September
■ November 6/19	no regional edition	Fri, 29 November

I look forward to receiving your contributions by the above editorial deadlines and to answer any enquiry regarding advertising in the «Regional News Oceania». Contact: risler@csa-oceania.org or +61 (0)412 935 565.

Team Switzerland tops

Australian Football International (AFI) has been established as a body to grow and develop the game internationally, with a focus on Footy 9s (only 9 players per side instead of 18). AFI has recognised that whilst many countries do not have ready access to the large fields required to play the traditional form of Australian Football, existing fields can be utilised to deliver programs that capture its core elements. As a result Footy 9s has been developed to allow the game to be played on smaller fields, and in major stadiums, throughout the world, in the hope that one day it will become an Olympic discipline. <http://aflinternational.com/footy9s>

The inaugural World 9s competition was held in Melbourne on 16 February with a total of eight national teams competing in two divisions.

Team Switzerland came out on top in Division 2, winning all its games as well as the Grand Final! A magnificent effort, congratulations to the winning team!



Photo courtesy of Colin Eichenberger

**CSA Oceania**
Organisation of the Swiss Abroad



The **CSA Oceania** is your elected team of delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad – two from New Zealand and four from Australia. Together they work on behalf of the 32,000+ registered Swiss living in Oceania, defending their interests as Swiss citizens living in this region.

Visit their website www.csa-oceania.org

- for links to all **Swiss Community Groups**, Swiss Organisations and Swiss Consular Representations in Oceania
- for information about the **Organisation of the Swiss Abroad** and the **CSA Oceania** and the services they offer
- for **important information** about issues concerning Swiss Abroad

For any assistance or advice, contact the **CSA Oceania** on info@csa-oceania.org

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Community News and Events

PNG: Reach out to neglected children

The kids' ministry, called 'Moningstar', is based in Goroka. Every week we spend many hours visiting children in various settlements. There is also a team in Lae and in Jiwaka Province which invests time and signals hope for tomorrow. Through our holistic approach, which includes teaching of Bible stories, as well as practical applications of hygiene, games and more, we communicate God's love and care. Visit our webpage: www.moningstar.org

Philemon Plüss



NZ: Taranaki Swiss Club

On the 9th of February the Taranaki Swiss Club hosted the Wellington Swiss Club in one semi-final of the Cowbell Competition (a trophy that was donated many years ago to foster camaraderie among the four North Island Swiss



Adam Frieslaar being congratulated by Othmar Hebler, Taranaki Swiss Club President (left) and Jürg Bono from the Swiss Embassy.



Schwingenkönig for 2019 is Thomas Werder.

Clubs). The disciplines are shooting, shot put, keglen (9-pin bowling) and jassen. We always enjoy our friendly rivalry against our southern Swiss Club neighbours. Taranaki were too good in the shooting and shot put, but the keglen was a very close affair with us taking out the honours by only four points. Although the jassen wasn't required a pair from each club did battle, with Taranaki winning this too. A thoroughly friendly competition, with the Wellington Swiss Club coming in great numbers. We really enjoyed hosting you!

On the 10th of February we held our annual picnic with a massive crowd of in excess of 300 people, many regulars but also a lot of new faces!!

The schwingen is always the highlight with Thomas Werder, once again, winning the senior title with two Swiss tourists taking out 2nd and 3rd placings. The junior division was won by Adam Frieslaar with Ryan Buhler second. Many thanks to all the competitors, for without your support there wouldn't be a competition!!! The Shot put titles were taken out by Thomas Werder (you had a great day!), Lisa Appert and Daniel Drummond (men's, ladies and juniors respectively). Grateful thanks to our marvellous helpers who didn't stop all weekend!!!!

Upcoming Events:

4 & 18/4: Keglen at 7.30pm.

7 & 14/4: Jassen at 1.15pm.

14/4: Championship and Society Shoots at 1pm.

2 & 16/5: Keglen at 7.30pm.

11/5: Fondue Evening – served from 6pm to 8pm.

19/5: Swiss Society Competitions – shooting, shot put, keglen and jassen. There is a separate division for juniors. Great social day. Bring along your own lunch. The Championship Shoot starts at 1pm.

26/5: Jassen at 1.15pm.

1-3/6: We will be travelling by bus to Wellington to compete in the final of the Cowbell Competition against either Hamilton or Auckland, and to attend the AGM of the Swiss Society of New

ARCHIVIST NEEDED

The different Swiss Clubs and Societies in NSW are all getting older, and many of their members are in the senior age group. Some associations have been around for many decades and their history is becoming longer.

At the Oceania Swiss Club Presidents' Conference in September 2018 it was emphasized by CSA delegate Roland Isler how important our history and therefore archiving is. The new way to archive documents is, like many other things in today's world, electronically. Eventually we will not store our documents in boxes in some people's garage but simply in the 'Cloud'. At this stage, however, we all have boxes somewhere but their contents needs to be sorted. Not every paper which was kept is of importance.

The Swiss organisations in Sydney are looking for a person who is able to see what needs to be kept and what can be discarded. If we are left with just the important things it might be possible to digitise those at a later stage.

If you are familiar with archiving work we would be very happy to hear from you. The number to call is 02 9743 5323 or 0432 031 085.

Zealand. Please ring Othmar on 06 278 6878 or 027 677 8915 if you are interested in coming along.

NZ: Hamilton Swiss Club

Upcoming Events:

28/4: Cowbell Competition semi-final vs Auckland Club. 10am. AGM 4pm, followed by light dinner at Swisscraft premises, Frankton.

10/5: First of five card evenings at Union Parish Church Cambridge, 7.30pm.

29-31/3: Weekend of hiking and socialising on Mount Ruapehu.

Please check the website for updates: www.swiss.org.nz/hamilton or email anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz

NZ: Swiss Society of New Zealand

Upcoming Event:

2/6: AGM held at Wellington Swiss Club, Wainuiomata, 2pm.

NSW: Swiss Yodlers of Sydney

Upcoming Event:

28/7: Swiss National Day Celebration 2019. Castle Hill Showground, Education and Federation Pavilion, 131Z Showground Road, Castle Hill.

NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS)

■ Casual Friday Lunch

Why wait for the next big luncheon until you see your Swiss friends again? Meet them at the Concordia Club in Tempe or come on your own to the monthly **Casual Friday Lunch**.

Every third Friday (except in April when it is the second) from about 12.30pm there will be a table with little Swiss flags where you find other compatriots who will welcome you. Enjoy a tasty meal and the company of other Swiss. No need to book. Just turn up and order and pay individually for your food and drinks.

You may want to use your Opal card! The Club is very close to Tempe Railway Station! For enquiries call Regula on 9743 5323 or 0432 031 085, email: swissccs@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

■ Two Concerts (Opera House, resp. Concourse in Chatswood) and Lunch on 5 April and in October.

■ National Day Luncheon in Tempe on Saturday, 3 August.

■ Christmas Luncheon in Tempe on 7 December.

NSW: Cercle Romand

Upcoming Events:

■ **Cinema, Pasta & Pizza** night in Leichhardt will be held on Saturday, 13 April. Details can be found on the club website.

■ **Raclette at the Park** will be held on Sunday, 19 May at Bobbin Head. May is the beginning of the cool months in Sydney and the best time to enjoy a raclette, a glass of wine and good company in this beautiful park by the water.

The committee thanks all its members for supporting these events and looks forward to seeing you in the coming months.

Le Cercle Romand...que du bon temps

www.cercleromand.com.au FB: Cercle Romand Sydney

9th Australian National Jass Tournament



Darwin, Sunday 9th of June

Registration closes on the 1st of May 2019.

If you are interested and haven't received a form by email please contact us on ruth.jasstournament@gmail.com
See you in Darwin!

Ruth Milwright and Anita Bickel

ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

We would like to introduce the Canberra Swiss Club committee elected in November 2018.



Swiss Club Committee (from left to right: Gaby Hoffmann, Membership Secretary; Heather Bundy, Secretary; Chris Heiniger, Vice President; Matthias Käser, Member; Werner Albrecht, Member; Evelyn Schneider, Newsletter Editor; Peter Zimmermann, Member; Sam Sainsbury-Käser, Treasurer; Gaby Hasler, President)

Non-committee VIPs are: Webmaster, Heinz Büttikofer; Choir Convener, Regula Neilson; Public Officer, Hedy Zimmermann; Jass Coordinator, Gaby Hoffmann; Swiss Radio Program rep, Werner Albrecht.

The committee is full of ideas and energy. Started with a film night, the coast weekend is awaiting. As long as the weather is still friendly, nature can be enjoyed at the family walk/bushwalk. Reintroduced this year is wine bottling. It is combined with a family picnic. BYO empty, clean bottles. Very soon the excitement is not to hold back with a brand-new website, designed and implemented by Heinz Büttikofer. There you will find all information about the Club. We just have to wait a little more. Facebook is also in progress. All committee members are happy to be contacted for enquiries. But much better is to come along to one of the events, join the Choir or Jass Group or listen to the radio program Monday nights on CMS 91.1FM between 6pm and 8pm.

See you soon! Your President, Gaby Hasler

QLD: Yodel Choir & Folklore Group 'Baerg-Roeseli'

Our rehearsals are in full swing, in the air-conditioning of the community hall. We are so thankful to St Thomas Anglican Church who hosts us every couple of weeks.

Simply contact Gabriel on 0435 570 241, yodel@swissclubqld.org.au

QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

January lunch was attended by 31 'Swaussies' with a beautiful view over the calm 'warm' water, inviting a few for a little dip.

February was a travelling / or 'having visitors' month so only 12 gathered including two NSW Swiss visitors.

Upcoming Events:

15th of each month: lunch at AquaVue, Esplanade Torquay-Hervey Bay or as advised.



19/4: Good Friday - Easter bunny at Theresa and Grant's property in Dundowran Beach with pool and view over the lagoon, with BBQ and Egg-hunting in the park. Price for the most beautiful decorated eggs, followed by Egg-popping 'Eiertütsche'.

For details contact Cecile Scherrer on 0409 286 326 or cecile.scherrer@bigpond.com or go to www.swissclubqld.org.au/fraser-coast

QLD: Swiss Society of Queensland

Upcoming Events:

■ Easter Bunny

All Swiss members and their families are welcome to join us again for the big Easter basket hunt.

Date: Sunday, 7 April 2019

Time: 10am onwards

Venue: Simpson Falls picnic area, located at the very end of the street.

Table marked with a small Swiss flag.

Cost: Member kids free; Non-member kids \$7 each.

RSVP: By 29 March 2019 to Anita Meier 0401 957 309, anita@qbrg.com.au

Bring: Picnic, drinks, soccer ball, frisbee, sunscreen, fold up chairs, insect repellent.

■ Jass Meisterschaft Brisbane

Date: Sunday, 28 April 2019

Time: 8.30am for a 9am start

Venue: Anglican Church Hall,

56 Racecourse Road, Ascot

Cost: \$20 Members; \$30 Non-members

Cost include lunch and dessert and coffee and cake during the day.

RSVP: 21 April 2019

Rita von Rotz, 0431 707 144, vonrotz@optusnet.com.au or luana_st@hotmail.com

[hotmial.com](mailto:luana_st@hotmail.com)

Note: Early RSVP is very much appreciated. Lunchers and socialisers should also book for catering purposes.

■ Fondue Evening
Date: Saturday, 4 May 2019
Time: Door opens @5.30pm for a 6.15pm start.

Venue: South Brisbane Sailing Club,

68 Hill End Terrace, West End.

Cost: \$30 Members; \$38 Non-members; \$70 Member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12); \$90 Non-member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12). Price includes fondue, coffee and dessert. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. No BYO.

RSVP: By 21 April 2019
Anita Meier, 0401 957 309, anita@qbrg.com.au or Diane 0488 136 405, dianelanyon@gmail.com

■ Raclette Night

Date: Saturday, 22 June 2019
Time: Door opens @5.30pm for a 6.15pm start.

Venue: South Brisbane Sailing Club,

68 Hill End Terrace, West End.

Cost: \$30 Members; \$38 Non-members; \$70 Member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12); \$90 Non-member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12). Price includes fondue, coffee and dessert. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. No BYO.

RSVP: Anita Meier, 0401 957 309, anita@qbrg.com.au or Irene Killalea, 0439 793 945, irenekillalea@bigpond.com

■ Raclette Night
Date: Saturday, 22 June 2019
Time: Door opens @5.30pm for a 6.15pm start.

Venue: South Brisbane Sailing Club, 68 Hill End Terrace, West End.
Cost: \$30 Members; \$38 Non-members; \$70 Member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12); \$90 Non-member families (2 adults and 2 children under 12). Price includes fondue, coffee and dessert. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. No BYO.

RSVP: Anita Meier, 0401 957 309, anita@qbrg.com.au or Irene Killalea, 0439 793 945, irenekillalea@bigpond.com

VIC: Swiss Club of Victoria

Upcoming Events:

27/3-21/4: Melbourne International Comedy Festival. More info at www.comedyfestival.com.au/

6/4: SwissKids Easter Event - The SwissKids Easter event is one of our annual highlights. Grill Cervelats, play

games and hunt for Easter eggs.

24/4 & 22/5: Social Jass - For all who enjoy the game but want to play for enjoyment only. No competition, just social! Inexperienced players most welcome (not suitable for total beginners - basic knowledge of rules and card values needed). Enjoy dinner before the game. Please call the Swiss Club Restaurant on (03) 9650 1196 to make a booking.

27/4: Matterhorn Jass Night - All levels welcome. Cost \$25/person incl. supper. Please contact Sepp Goldiger on (03) 9758 1586 or 0425 791 036 for bookings.

1/5 & 5/6: Ladies Luncheon - Meet up with friends and make new ones, enjoy a delicious 2-course meal including wine, soft drinks and coffee. Club Members: \$27/person, Non-member Guests: \$30/person. It is important to book with Roger and his team at the Swiss Club Restaurant on 9650 1196.

2/5 & 6/6: Kapelle Gräezi Mitenand - has been performing at the Swiss Club Restaurant in Melbourne for over 20 years. Call the Swiss Club Restaurant on (03) 9650 1196 to secure a table.

4/5: SwissKids - SwissKids is a group for interested families and their children to experience Swiss traditions and culture, play and have fun together.

18/5: Unterhaltungsabend and 70th anniversary of the Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose - see see next page.

DIE SCHWEIZ ANDERSWO (Switzerland elsewhere)

An exhibition, developed in collaboration with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, that looks at the history of the Swiss abroad with a special focus on the life histories of individual emigrants from the past and present day.

■ FORUM SCHWEIZER GESCHICHTE SCHWYZ
13.04.2019 - 29.09.2019

■ SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM ZÜRICH
09.07.2020 - 18.10.2020

Oceania is also represented with exhibits. The book 'To Australia! Letters of an Emigrant' published by your editor, focuses on the gold rush experience of Johann Jakob Locher from Speicher. See <http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B01AQQKMW6>. CSA delegate from Sydney, Beat Knoblauch, undertook to supply various archival documents about the Swiss in NSW.

1/6: SwissKids - SwissKids 'Räbeliechtl' (turnip lanterns) parade and dinner.

1/6: Swiss Club Jass Night - All levels welcome. Cost \$25/person incl supper. Please contact Paul Eisenegger on (03) 9544 4681 for bookings.

To find out more about any of the above events or our interest groups, please go to our website <https://swissclubvictoria.com>

VIC: Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose

In 1949 a group of Swiss interested in practicing Swiss folk dances got together...and seventy years later, the Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose is still going!

Please come and help us celebrate our special birthday at our Unterhaltungsabend at the Swiss Club on 18 May at 7pm.

There will be a 3-course dinner, dancing to the sound of Kapelle Gruezi Mitenand and a Tombola with lots of prizes.

Cost: \$45/person. You can book with the Swiss Club on 9650 1196 or ring Sylvia on 9531 6575.

VIC: The Matterhorn Yodel Choir

Upcoming Events:

27/4 & 10/8: Matterhorn Jass Night - Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill, start 7.30pm. All levels welcome. Cost \$25/person incl. supper. Please contact Sepp Goldiger on (03) 9758 1586 or 0425 791 036 for bookings.

16/11: We will organise a special event to celebrate the choir's 50th anniversary. Please keep this date free for an entertaining Swiss evening. More information will follow, or contact Erwin Weinmann on 0400 850 816 or ozrondo1@gmail.com

We are always looking for new members to join our choir. Please contact our conductor Chris Hostettler, 0428 427 434, helvet@bigpond.com

VIC: Groupe Romand du Victoria

The Groupe Romand was founded in 1990 as a social club for French-speaking Swiss and other Francophones to meet and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. We are affiliated with the Swiss Club of Victoria but have our own membership structure.

The Group organises a number of recurring events like fondue or raclette evenings, picnics, pétanque afternoons, mini-golf days and the viewing of French movies. We are also active within the wider Swiss community for the celebration of the Swiss National Day as well as Swiss cultural events such as the Swiss Festival.

New members, new ideas and new talent are always welcome. Contact the Co-Presidents:

Patricia Callegari-Medcalf, T: 9583 2860 M: 0408 299660
secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com

Anne-Lise Kavadas, T: 9489 0274 M: 0409 509 343
annelise.kavadas@gmail.com

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A Swiss teacher in Vanuatu

by Sabin Aepli

Summer 2017, Luganville on the small South Pacific island of Espiritu Santo: I sit in the shadow of the school yard and chuckle, watching what's unfolding before me. The school received a special gift. A trampoline! Two locals have been commissioned to put it together. However, they have no idea what a trampoline is, let alone how to assemble the parts. I wait until I realise, "No, that's not how it works, they never manage it." To begin with, I show the two men how to put the aluminium legs together. It gets exciting when it comes to assemble the jumping surface with the springs. To mount the springs, they must be stretched, pulled apart. This is a completely unknown phenomenon for the two Melanesians, they are at a loss. I intervene helpfully. And this is the second strange phenomenon for the two native men: a white woman who explains and even solves a technical problem! Together we can do it. The trampoline is an absolute hit at school. Most white children know this sports equipment and have fun with it. However, the island children, who are used climbing up palm trees, first have to learn how to jump. What a spectacle, if a local and a white child try out the trampoline at the same time – the roly-poly chaos is perfect!

This is just one – but typical – experience of my stay in the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu. How and why did I get there?

I am a visual design teacher in eastern Switzerland. In the canton of St. Gallen, all teachers are entitled to a several-month study leave during their working life. It can be arranged quite freely as long as it adheres to some pedagogical guidelines. In the summer months of 2017, for example, I had already climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, enrolled in a traineeship with a Swiss artist and learned basket weaving in Botswana. For the compulsory social internship, a colleague put me in contact with the 'Luganville International School' on Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu (<https://www.lis.edu.vu>).

Jacques Wong – a shopkeeper with about fifty employees – founded this private school in July 2016 in Luganville, the second largest city in the island republic of Vanuatu. Intended firstly for his own children, then for the children of his local employees, it soon attracted many white children from the city, for which the public school offered too little and whose parents could afford it financially. The kindergarten and primary school levels are taught in English according to the Australian curriculum. In 2017, already twenty children were enrolled and plans for the construction of a second school house were on the table.

Jacques grew up in Vanuatu and studied in France before returning to his Pacific island home. His father, as shipowner, had transported copra* from the coconut islands to the capital, lost his boat in a cyclone, set up shop, and handed the business over to his sons after his death. All

the shops in Luganville are run by enterprising Asians, because the locals are mostly self-sufficient and too good-natured for hard, often-calculating business.

After my flight via Australia to Vanuatu I was warmly welcomed by Jacques. He offered me accommodation in one of the simple rooms he occasionally rented out above his shop, where, by the way, you could buy absolutely everything. I had applied for no particular position and was prepared to do any work at all within his school operations, but he wouldn't have that. Later, I realised why: menial housekeeping tasks are done exclusively by locals. There are always one or two boys on call for every kind of job, but for me, Jacques had come up with a very special task.

In front of his schoolhouse, a converted family home, he presented me the 7x3.8 meter, whitewashed entrance wall: "Look, this wall is for you to paint!" A mural then! Ok, but of what? After endless discussions, it was clear: the home flags of the nations of all students, plus one country-specific object and the word for 'Hello!' I gladly accepted the challenge and started planning. First, a scaffolding was set-up to paint the background colour onto the wall, then with the help of the boys, it was dismantled and rebuilt a few meters further. Again, and again, with the patience of the Melanesians and without a surly word.

I wanted to involve the schoolchildren in the work as much as possible. For this, the classroom topic of 'measurements and measure' that was taught at that time was a perfect opportunity. And so, I turned my flag picture into an applied mathematics project. The children learned to increase the size of the flags fivefold and to copy it onto the wall. The simpler parts were painted by the students, I took over the more difficult ones. By the way, I was able to get the children out of class as needed, without any problem

*Copra is the dried meat or kernel of the coconut, which is the fruit of the coconut palm. Coconut oil is extracted from copra, making it an important agricultural commodity for many coconut-producing countries.





at all. I got a bit jealous of this relaxed school style, when I thought of the strict Swiss punctuality and scheduling. There was no exact timetable. The children came in the morning to class, whenever the bus, or the taxi arrived at the school.

For the symbolic figures on my mural – for example a kangaroo

for Australia – I borrowed a projector from the parish. A helpful boy even conjured up the necessary extension cable. After sunset, here near the equator already at 6pm, I projected the outlines of the figures of my templates to the wall. To the delight of the children, the painting work followed the next morning.

The 'Neocolor' crayons that I had brought with me caused a huge amount of excitement with the students and even with the numerous assistant teachers. Something completely new for them. You could not just paint with them, no, with applying scratch or water technics everyone became a creative little artist!

Did I find time to explore the great nature of this island world in addition to my school engagement? Naturally! Together with my son, who visited me in Vanuatu, we drove in a rental pickup truck along endless pothole-tracks from Luganville along the island shore of Espiritu Santo, until a broad, even with a four-wheel drive vehicle untraversable river stopped us. We visited the nearby villages and gorges, snorkelled endlessly on beautiful beaches and travelled to the active volcano Mount Yasur on the island of Tanna. I climbed it four times and marvelled at the glowing lava, which

is spewed out every few minutes. A long-cherished dream came true.

We explored the island of Efate with a rented quad-bike and made a trip to the small magically beautiful islands of Pele and Nguna. We lived in simple bungalows or impressive tree huts, run by locals, right on the snow-white beach. We experienced unforgettable encounters with people full of warmth, cheerfulness and openness. After that, I spent one week alone on the island of Rah, which is part of the 'Banks' archipelago. It was an adventurous travel to get there in a small plane with several stops on grassland slopes. I found on Rha the simple island life that I was looking for and fulfilled another dream I had: to help in the construction of simple dwellings made of natural materials. The hospitality and openness of the locals towards me was beautiful. But their natural way of life is threatened – by enterprising, unscrupulous whites. How? One day, we saw two Australians landing in a small helicopter watched by the curious eyes of the village children. What did they want here? We could not, or did not, want to believe what they were telling us. For little, really very little money, they bought land from the locals with the promise, "with that money you will all be able to afford a mobile phone." And so they went ahead and built a mobile phone tower on the acquired land of the Melanesians. Then they sold it to a communications company, which in turn could profit... from the potential mobile phone customers of the island, of course.

Well, what remains as my nicest memory of my stay in Vanuatu is the time spend with these wonderful, warm islanders. But there is also the fear that in the future, tourism and the materialistic thinking of the whites will probably become an inevitable threat.



Consular information

ACT: Semaine de la Francophonie

In March, 'La Francophonie' was in the spotlight in Australia! The Embassy of Switzerland organised a 'semaine de la Francophonie' (French Week), in collaboration with other French-speaking diplomatic missions in Canberra. For the first time, the festivities took place over a whole week and included cultural events, such as film screenings and conferences. For its part, Switzerland was on stage with the Swiss singer Marc Aymon from Valais accompanied by Ephraïm Salzmann, a musician from Upper Valais. The two artists highlight treasures of Swiss heritage with a modern and lively interpretation of traditional folk songs from the Swiss Alps. They performed at the French-Australian school 'Telopea Park' and during the closing ceremony at the Alliance Française. They then headed to Sydney for an additional concert organised by the Consulate General at the 'Lycée Condorcet' before continuing their tour to Azerbaijan!

Created in 1970, the 'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie' brings together 88 States and governments. Its mission is to promote the French language, cultural and linguistic diversity, peace, democracy and human rights, support education, research and develop cooperation.

We hope to see more of you in 2020 and do not hesitate to send us your comments or suggestions, à la prochaine!

Follow us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyCanberra

Find out more about Marc Aymon:

<https://marcaymon.com/>

Alliance Française Canberra:

<https://www.afcanberra.com.au>



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Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney

Mobile passport station visits in Australia in 2019

The team of the Consulate General in Sydney plans to visit in 2019 the following cities with the mobile passport station:

■ Perth (first half of April)

■ Melbourne (October)

Registered Swiss citizens will be contacted by email or letter two months prior to the visit with detailed information regarding dates, venues and procedures. Please ensure that the Consulate General has your up-to-date personal data and email address.

The Consulate General aims to provide this service to its compatriots rotating the locations, servicing each capital city on a regular basis.

Please note

It is important that your consular representation – the Embassy of Switzerland in Wellington or the Consulate General in Sydney – is notified of any changes of your contact details, in particular your phone and email address, so you can be reached in case of an emergency.

You can update your data by sending an email to wellington@eda.admin.ch or sydney@eda.admin.ch respectively (please note these email addresses have recently changed, please update your records).

Swiss made Pilatus jets for the Royal Flying Doctor Service



Swiss Ambassador to Australia Pedro Zwahlen with Rebecca Tomkinson, CEO of the Royal Flying Doctors Service – Western Operations, attending the Avalon Air Show near Geelong (VIC), where the brand new Swiss made Pilatus PC-24 ambulance jet was on display.



A PC-24 destined for the Australian Royal Flying Doctor Service being assembled in Stans.

At a cost of \$26 million, the Australian Royal Flying Doctor Service has acquired two brand new Swiss made Pilatus PC-24 jets to add to its fleet. Pilatus and the RFDS have re-purposed the Pilatus PC-24 jet with state-of-the-art aero medical fit-out that serves as an in-flight emergency ward that can accommodate

three stretchered patients and two medical teams. The PC-24 can fly distances of up to 3,275km, can reach top speeds of 815km/h and has capability for short landings and take-offs on unsealed airstrips!

The PC-24, branded as a 'super versatile jet' by Pilatus, is fully produced and assembled in Stans, canton of Nidwalden.

RFDS pilots and engineers have undertaken advanced training for the operation and maintenance of the aircraft in Switzerland and the United States and RFDS doctors and nurses have taken part in aero medical in-flight training.