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REGIONAL NEWS

OCEANIA



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

Editorial:

The 'Council of the Swiss Abroad' met in St Gallen on Friday 18 August, ahead of the 2-day Congress which was themed *Swiss culture: an export product?* A photo gallery can be found on the SwissCommunity website ➔ <https://bit.ly/48tGWBM>

Australian delegates Katja Wallimann Gates and Carmen Trochsler were there to represent our part of the world.

The 100th Congress of the Swiss Abroad 2024 will be held in Lucerne from Thursday 11 July to Saturday 13 July 2024. This centenary anniversary congress with the theme *Together across borders* promises to be a very special event.



A detailed congress report written by Carmen Trochsler can be found on the website of the Swiss Alliance Australia ➔ <http://bit.ly/3rvpVGE>



Language assistantships in Switzerland

Movetia places young students and graduates from universities abroad as language assistants at Swiss host schools. As native English speakers, they enrich language lessons and can offer an insight into the culture of their home countries.

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Application closing date for the school year 2024/25 is **28 February 2024**.

Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi 2023

Congratulations to Swiss-born artist **Andre Braun**, who has been selected as an exhibitor at the *Sculpture by the Sea* event. Andre hails from Geneva, has been studying Architecture and moved to Sydney in 1995.

Staged on the spectacular Bondi to Tamarama coastal walk, *Sculpture by the Sea* is one of Sydney's most popular events, with 500,000 visitors viewing over 100 sculptures by artists from around the world. Held since 1997, this free to the public exhibition captures the imagination of Sydney and its visitors for three weeks each spring and is the largest annual sculpture exhibition in the world! It will run from 20 October to 6 November 2023.

➔ <https://sculpturebythesea.com/about/>



Addiction – The rise of social media. Influenced by his architectural and photography skills, Andre Braun explores our obsession with touchscreen devices, and exploring our growing addiction towards technology. Mobile phones have become an extension of ourselves, and hard to live without.

A familiar voice gone quiet(er)

Christian Froelicher in Melbourne has been the Executive Producer and well-known voice of the German Language Program of SBS Radio Australia for 29 years. Now, at the tender age of 57 he has decided to retire. Christian's announcement was received with surprise and quite some disbelief by many. What is the program going to be like without the presence of Christian behind and in front of the microphone? What is he going to do now that he has retired?

Swiss Review (Ed): Two interesting questions that many are eager to have answered. But first, tell us a little about you! Where did you grow up and when and what brought you to Australia?

Christian Froelicher: I was born in Italy but grew up in Lucerne, Switzerland. My upbringing was quite multicultural. I would speak Swiss-German with my four siblings and Swiss/US-American father, but Italian and later English with my Italian/US mother. We had relatives in Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Ireland, Chile and the United States. As a result, our family gatherings were

rather noisy and chaotic! I guess that made me the perfect candidate (laughs) for multicultural and multilingual SBS when I came to Australia in 1994, aged 27. I applied from Switzerland and arrived with a one-way ticket. I immediately fell in love with Australia, its people and amazing nature. By 1996, I had an Australian passport.

SR: To be a radio producer and presenter is somewhat unusual and perhaps even a bit glamorous. How did you get into this?

CF: After obtaining my Matura in Lucerne in 1986, I went to Berne to study History, Journalism and Political Science. I also studied in Geneva and visited summer school at San Diego State University, USA. The seed to become a journalist was planted from an early age. I remember my primary teacher in Year 6, Herr Liechti, telling me he liked my essays! Aged 16, I started writing articles ('Wald-und-Wiesen-Journalismus') for my local newspaper, the gloriously named 'Vaterland' which later merged with its rival LNN to become today's Luzerner Zeitung. Aged 20, I switched to radio journalism, first with Radio Extra Bern, then for five years with DRS 1 and its youth network DRS 3. That was a lot of fun, especially DRS 1 where I hosted the Nachtclub from 12am to 6am, 1-3 times a week. I also worked for a news wire service, Schweizerische Politische Korrespondenz. In hindsight, I must have gotten very little sleep! No wonder it took me 7.5 years to finish my degree.

SR: What is the most fascinating and satisfying aspect of the job?

CF: The best thing about being a radio producer is going on air. There's something magical that happens when you talk to an invisible audience. It's very intimate and somewhat surreal – there's very little room for error. I was quite frightened when I calculated how many interviews I conducted in my 29 years at SBS German: Roughly 6,000! But it was never about the host



– it was always about the content: There are so many amazing stories in our community and beyond. My aim was to treat each interview or topic with the respect it deserved, be it an encounter with Roger Federer at 'Switzerland meets Federation Square' or an in-depth series in 2005 about the war recollections of our elderly listeners ('Wo waren Sie am 8. Mai 1945?'). I always saw myself as a public servant, not a preacher. My role was to offer others a platform to share their stories and voice their opinions.

SR: Coming back to the first question above, what is the future of the German Language Program without you, and particularly also if one considers that migration from German-speaking countries is decreasing compared with other languages?

CF: There are 68 languages at SBS Radio and every five years, SBS adjusts the programs to reflect the current language composition of Australia. The allocation of programs is based, among other factors, on the results of the census, namely the question 'which languages other than English do you speak at home'. Unfortunately, the number of German speakers in Australia has dropped every five years since I joined SBS German in 1994. To give an example: SBS German once

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had 12 one-hour programs per week, then nine, seven and today there are five. They run Monday to Friday from 7-8pm. The entire show and some of the highlights are uploaded to sbs.com.au/german and the team remains heavily invested in Social Media. My successor as Executive Producer is German-born Benjamin Kanthak in Sydney. I'm sure our audience are as excited about Benjamin as I am. In other words: The program is in excellent hands and the future continues to look bright!

SR: There is a saying that busy people will always be busy, even in retirement. What does the future for you look like?

CF: There's a beautiful pun in German, Unruhestand, which suffers a bit when translated. It combines Unruhe (inner unrest or turmoil) with Ruhestand (state of stillness or relaxation). In English, the practical translation might be active retirement. In my case, it will be a mix of travelling, volunteering, spending time with family and pursuing the odd hobby such as going back to playing the piano! Soccer is a big part of my life too. I play in Victoria's Over 45 division and lately started refereeing junior and adult matches in my suburb. However, an immediate project is to reconnect with my old stomping ground: My wife and I secured a four-month 'Gast-Aufenthalt' for our daughter (16) at my old secondary school. Our daughter will be taught in German and learn about her second homeland and its customs and habits. As for myself, I will be in Lucerne for two of the four months and have equipped myself with a 'SBB-Generalabonnement'. Without wanting to sound like an advert for Switzerland's amazing Public Transport System: What better way is there to explore the stunning hills, lakes and mountains of beautiful Zentralschweiz, than hopping on a 'free' bus, train, boat or mountain cable car?

SR: Thank you Christian, your voice on the air waves will be missed but we wish you all the best for the next exciting chapter in your life.

In August 2023, over 150 Honorary Consuls from all over the world were invited to Bern to attend the 2023 Honorary Consular Conference. The Honorary Consuls of Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia as well as New Zealand attended the 3-day conference of intense meetings, information gathering and networking to assist them in their work.



Adrian Blaser (NZ), Daniel Gschwind (QLD), Margaret Ottowski (TAS), Manuela Erb (VIC), Marc Montandon (WA), Patrick Wille (SA)

VIP visit at National Day festivities in QLD



The Swiss community in Queensland celebrated the Swiss National Day in August at the Samford Showgrounds – and what a wonderful event it was! We had an amazing turn out of more than 400 people attending! It was great to welcome new faces coming along and to see our regulars celebrating the Swiss culture. Most impressive and pleasing was the large number of children that attended.

I also had the honour of welcoming **Mr Laurent Wehrli** who is a member of the Swiss Federal Parliament and also the Vice-President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. It was a pleasure hosting Mr Wehrli and his wife Myriam who travelled from Switzerland to Brisbane to be part of the festivities. We were thrilled to have them attend our Swiss National Day and to listen to some of the exciting updates and initiatives by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad for all Swiss living abroad.

PHILIPPE COQUERAND, PRESIDENT – SWISS SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

Community News and Events

NZ: Taranaki Swiss Club



We held our Swiss National Day celebrations on 29 July with a good crowd, some great entertainment and a fabulous supper. The Swiss Society Sports Competition certificates, beautifully designed by our amazing Amanda Sherman, were awarded to participants together with their prizes. The Len and Molly Chamberlain Memorial Trophy was awarded to



Amanda for her creativity, commitment and hard work with the Helvetia magazine and also the Swiss Clubs' calendar of events and newsletter ... thanks so much Amanda! The new Jassen Cup was awarded to Anna Dombroski and Heidi Seifert who were joint winners! Congratulations ladies!! Many thanks to all the helpers, and of course, grateful thanks to everyone who came along!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

2 & 16/11: Kegeln from 7.30pm. Always great fun!!

19/11: Ted Napflin Memorial Shield and Championship Shoot at 1pm.

26/11: Christmas Shoot / Kegeln – competition starts at 10am. Children's activities, pot-luck lunch and Father Christmas will make an appearance.

NZ: Swiss Society of New Zealand

The Swiss Society of New Zealand held their Annual General Meeting on 4 June with a good attendance from all the Swiss Clubs, and even some 'Society Only' members. We were really pleased to have our Ambassador Viktor Vavricka and our Council of the Swiss Abroad delegate, Peter Ehrler, attend and they both gave interesting and informative addresses. All clubs gave an overview of their Club year and it was interesting to hear what works well and what improvements could be made. We really appreciated Esther Gilbert coming all the way from Dunedin to attend the weekends' activities, and we hope that she enjoyed meeting so many new Kiwi-Swiss!!

Sadly, Peter Ehrler and Peter Canziani have tendered their resignation from their roles as delegates to the Organisation of

the Swiss Abroad effective from 2025 when their terms are up. We have very much appreciated their efforts and hope they will continue to participate in Club and Swiss Society events.

NZ: Otago & Southland

Dunedin was humming for three weeks in July during the FIFA Women's Football World Cup, when the Swiss team stayed in the city, and six elimination round games were held in our stadium. The local Swiss community was given plenty of opportunities to take part.

First up was the civic welcome for the team. We were welcomed by a local kapa haka group which seemed to leave quite an impression! Speeches were made by Dunedin's Deputy Mayor Sophie Barker, the Vice Consul from the Embassy of Switzerland Nicole Kamasa, mana whenua* representative Mauraka Edwards and director of women's football Marion Daube. A group of around 30 from our community attended as well and appreciated the opportunity to meet with the players and management at the morning tea that followed.

A few days later I was invited to a Swiss training session – together with around 200 kids from the intermediate school across the road from the training grounds. I managed to teach them 'Hopp Schwiiz' which they deployed with gusto for the rest of the morning!

Some of us attended the first game against the Philippines. I was lucky enough to be in the VIP lounge and was able to catch up with Ambassador Viktor Vavricka. I also caught sight of FIFA boss Gianni Infantino, who visited with quite an entourage.

On 29 July our National Day dinner was held with around 50 people attending. We were honoured to host a contingent from the Swiss Football Association, including the president Dominique Blanc, and relatives of player Geraldine Reuteler. Zopf, Cervelat, Vol-Au-Vent and Zuger Kirschtorte gave the menu a distinctive Swiss feel.

*The right of a Maori tribe to manage a particular area of land





The next day was a busy one! First we were hosted by the Embassy at an event to commemorate 60 years of CH/NZ bilateral relations. The event was a veritable who's who: Viktor, Bernadette, Sandra and others from the Embassy, Dunedin's Mayor Jules Radich, Minister of Finance Grant Robertson, and a number of local MPs were all there, as were about 50 of the Swiss community, some of whom were visiting from up north.

Then we were off to the game against New Zealand. A full stadium and enthusiastic crowd made for a memorable evening and while we didn't win the game, we did still qualify for the round of 16. The Swiss team were certainly in a very upbeat mood when they returned to the hotel afterwards.

Happy days! A few of us gathered at the hotel as the team left the city – they had stayed four days longer than originally planned as they liked being here so much (the standard of the training ground apparently was excellent!).

We here in the deep south haven't traditionally been very engaged with our heritage – our 1 of August event is pretty much all we've organised in recent years – however these few weeks gave us a great opportunity to bring out our inner Swiss!

A week or so later I travelled to Wellington, where I had been invited to another event commemorating 60 years of CH/NZ bilateral relations. This was a great chance to catch up with a few northern compatriots I had met earlier in the year, and I was also able to have a brief chat with Federal Councillor Iganio Cassis.

ESTHER GILBERT

SA: Swiss Club of South Australia

Looking back on 2023, the Swiss Club of South Australia have held two classic club events; the Fondue night and the 1st of August celebration.

In early September, the annual general meeting was held at the Austrian Club. Following a delicious meal of 'Züri



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Gschnätzlets' cooked by Claudia Price, a new committee was successfully elected.

The committee spent some time in their first planning meeting reflecting on what they valued about the club and clarifying what they wanted to focus on for the following year. Key themes emerged around;

- Connecting with Swiss culture by keeping Swiss traditions alive through food and language, creating a feeling of community and belonging,
- Rejuvenating our events and the way that we reach our members,
- Keeping fun at the center of all we do!

Going forward for the rest of 2023, we are excited to be getting out into nature this October to hold our traditional Würstli Brötli event at a new picnic area within the beautiful Kuitpo Forest. Of course, the 'silly season' wouldn't be complete without a visit from Samichlaus, but this year we are starting the celebrations with a Buurezmorge held at the Montacute Institute Hall. Make sure you check out our website www.swissclubsa.org.au for dates and further event information.

So, if you live in South Australia, or you are passing through and you would like to connect with a slice of Switzerland, come and join us! We hope to see you at a Swiss Club event soon.

QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

Our group is growing as more Swiss are moving up North to our area with perfect beaches and weather all year round.

Swiss National Day was celebrated at Nikki and Matthias place and the lunches on the 15th of every month in different restaurants are much appreciated. Some are also interested in 'Jasse', hoping we can have regular evenings. Soon 'Samichlaus' is on again with Grittibänz competition at a private property.

Come and join us, we love to meet you!! Contact the organiser: Cecile 0409 286 326.



QLD: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS QLD)

Caring for the Community

Our Activities are many:

- Assisting the aged

- Helping and visiting the sick and convalescent
- Counselling newly arrived migrants
- Supporting our compatriots in loneliness and bereavement
- Providing financial aid etc.

The society's main sources of support are derived from membership fees, fundraising activities, donations and sponsorships, and active voluntary help from our community members. Therefore, your support is vital. We depend on it and thank you for it.

UPCOMING EVENT:

25/11: Christmas Lunch and AGM. Anglican Church Hall, 56 Race Course Rd, Hamilton. Parking is available on church grounds. Doors open at 10.30am

Contact care@swissclubqld.org

Rita von Rotz: 0431 707 144

Anita Bickel: 0457 457 211

NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS NSW)

As in previous years SCCS had an information stall at the National Day Picnic in Castle Hill. This time we were honoured with the visit of Federal Councillor Cassis and his entourage from Switzerland. I was able to tell him what the idea of SCCS is, and that, apart from giving assistance to Swiss people who experience hardship, our aim is to foster social interactions, especially for the elderly Swiss in Sydney and surrounds.

If you look up our website www.swissccs.org.au you can find out anytime what is planned, be it an outing, a luncheon or going



SWISS ALPINE FESTIVAL

ALP ALP AND AWAY...

25.11. & 26.11.2023
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to a concert. There is also information about our Casual Lunch which takes place every third Friday of the month at the German Club in Tempe. Why don't you give it a try and meet some other Swiss at this monthly get-together? We always like to see new faces. You don't need to be an SCCS member to join us there. A small group of Jassers have started to meet on the first Friday, also at lunchtime in Tempe. They could do with some more players! If interested, please contact Felix on jasstempe@gmail.com

For a contact list of the NSW SCCS committee members and Rural Coordinators go to swissccs.org.au/contact-us or ring Regula Scheidegger, president, 0432 031 085.



NSW: Port Macquarie Region Swiss Group

We were very lucky to celebrate our Swiss National Day at the local Abundance Nursery Cafe, where Swiss Chef Daniel spoiled us with a delicious Zürcher Geschnetzeltes and a yummy Caramelköppli. Over 30 people attended and it was wonderful to see many familiar faces but also make new acquaintances. It was a wonderful celebration enjoyed by all!

Our next get-together will be in November / December so keep an eye on your inbox for date and venue. If you have not already been in touch and would like to join in, please send an email to SwissHastings@yahoo.com

VIC: Swiss Club of Victoria

■ Senior Christmas Afternoon Tea

Swiss Nationals and Partners are invited to celebrate this year's Christmas on **Saturday, 2. December 2023, 2pm**, at the Swiss Club premises, second floor.

For information, please contact the organisers:

Sylvia Hochuli OAM – 0409 968 624, hochuli@tpg.com.au

Rita Schwaerzler – 0409 025 760, ritaherbert@bigpond.com



The Swiss Society of Victoria's purpose is to assist fellow Swiss in Victoria, old and young, who need financial or personal support. If you are experiencing difficulties, or you know a Swiss who does, please contact us. We are here to help.

Registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ABN 41 419 264 390)

<https://swissocietyvic.org/>
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■ Kaffeeklatsch

The group invited seniors for afternoon tea at the Swiss Club. Beautiful flowers decorated the tables. Spring was in the air.

The most luscious buffet with cakes and savouries was set up by the ladies. Luckily all the calories escaped as the cakes were cut! We made sure that we could spoil everyone.

The happy sing-along organised by the Companion Singers brought a lot of joy to the attendees.

Some of the guests were lucky enough to take home a door prize consisting of the famous Swiss chocolates sponsored by our Honorary Consul of Switzerland, Manuela Erb. Thank you all for the contribution and extra effort.

S. HOCHULI OAM, PRESIDENT



175th anniversary of the Swiss Constitution

On 12 September 1848, Switzerland stepped into a new federal era with the adoption of a Constitution, which laid down the principles of how the country would be run.

Switzerland's initial birth date is given as 1 August 1291, but it wasn't until 1848 that the country started to bear a resemblance with the nation it is today.

High visit from Bern at Sydney 1 August celebration

For many years, Castle Hill Showground has been the venue for the traditional 1 of August Swiss National Day Picnic, organised by the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney and the Swiss Folkdance Group Alpegruess. An ideal place to invite friends, families, and members of the Swiss Community to celebrate a fantastic day with lots of attractions and a real Swiss fest atmosphere. It's easily accessible by car and only a two-minute walk from the nearest public transport, so enjoying a beer, some wine or a 'Kaffi Schnaps' does not harm.

This year, we not only had Ambassador Caroline Bichet-Anthamatten and Deputy Consul General Jérôme Charbonnet as our guests of honour, we were very fortunate to also welcome a very special guest from Switzerland – Federal Councillor and Foreign Minister **Mr Ignazio Cassis** (pictured)! The entourage of black limousines bearing the Swiss flag arrived right on time at 2.15pm.

Mr Cassis thoroughly enjoyed being greeted in his native language Italian by Martin Scarpino, and after acknowledging the local VIPs, a warm welcome was also extended to the two accompanying Members of the National Council of Switzerland, Thomas Aeschi (SVP) and Yvonne Feri (SP). The team of the Consulate General welcomed the visitors, and everyone assembled for the obligatory group photo.

The entourage then proceeded to pay a visit to all the stalls of the different organisations. Mr Cassis showed great interest and spent some considerable time with the Cercle Romand, the Swiss Club of NSW, and many other stalls.

Some beautiful flower girls then guided Mr Cassis onto the stage, where his speech was eagerly awaited. His charming and skilful address in all four national languages was well received. Mr Cassis spoke of the importance and the strength of the Swiss-Australian relationships and the values both Nations share. He also highlighted the impact the Swiss have made in Australia and the contribution we make. He was delighted to see over 1000 people attending a day where Swiss values had priority. After acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, past, present and future, the tunes of the Swiss and Australian National Anthems stirred many hearts.



With the official part over, a well-deserved Bratwurst, Rivella and Nussgipfel awaited our guests. A special table was set up with the best view to enjoy the performance of the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney, who sang 'Am Jodlertisch' and 'Bärgarve', and two lovely dances presented by the Folkdance Group Alpegruess. And all too soon, it was time for the VIPs to depart for their next official appointment.

Meanwhile, the raffle sold over 6000 tickets, and the 'Streichelzoo' and kids rides were very popular with the younger generation. Swiss goodies were also in high demand including Rivella, Raclette, Swiss cheeses, Landjäger, Nussgipfel, Biberli and of course Bratwurst, Cervelats and Fleischkäse. By 4pm, everything was sold out!

The weather gods were smiling upon us which added to the success of the event. Everyone had an entertaining and memorable day enjoying Swiss traditions and of course the very special visit by Mr Cassis.

A big thank-you goes to all the people who helped setting up the event, run the stalls, and provide the time and effort to achieve such a great outcome. A very special thank-you to the teams from the Embassy and Consulate General for their excellent support, and of course, to all our sponsors. With their generous support and the hard work of the tombola team led by Bronwyn Kretz, the raffle/tombola, silent auction and the lucky door prize were again one of the key draw cards.

MARTIN SCARPINO

REGIONAL NEWS OCEANIA

These Regional News Oceania pages have a circulation of 22,000 – 8,300 of which are printed copies. They are distributed to all Swiss Abroad households registered with the relevant Swiss representation in Canberra and Wellington.

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3-May	Tue, 18.04.23	Fri, 12.05.23
4-August	no regional news	Fri, 11.08.23
5-October	Tue, 26.09.23	Fri, 20.10.23
6-December	no regional news	Fri, 08.12.23

Visit the umbrella organisations in Australia and New Zealand for community news and information, as well as links to Swiss Clubs, community groups, professional organisations and consular representations in Oceania:

www.swissallianceaustralia.org
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