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REGIONAL NEWS

OCEANIA



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

Editorial:

We have seen many catastrophic natural events in recent years in our region: heatwaves, bushfires, droughts, tropical cyclones, and floods. Such events seem to appear much more frequent due to climate change. Global warming causes the sea level to rise due to loss of sea ice, melting glaciers and ice sheets. This has a devastating impact on coastal regions and particularly on the small island nations in Oceania.

2024 so far has continued to be very challenging. Almost every day we learn in the news of some part of our region being impacted by a disaster, either natural or man-made. I hope that you, your family and friends stay safe and are not directly affected.

On a brighter note, isn't it amazing what some of our young Swiss are up to? Read the adventures of Lisa and Lena; and Claudia's connection with other young Swiss around the world. Truly inspiring! Love to publish more stories like that.



Happy Easter!

We certainly prefer koalas over bunnies in Australia ☺. Thank-you Lindt!

For every Lindt KOALA sold, \$1 will be donated to the Australian Koala Foundation.

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SWISS BUSINESS AWARDS 2023

SwissAward

The Annual Swiss Gala Dinner Awards Night 2024, held on 29 February in the majestic Great Hall of the University of Sydney, was a dazzling affair that seamlessly blended sophistication, culture, and celebration. As the members stepped into the grand hall, they were enveloped by an atmosphere charged with anticipation and elegance.

SwissCham, with Glencore, Swiss Airlines, MSC Cruises and The University of Sydney as the main sponsor, orchestrated an evening that left an indelible mark.

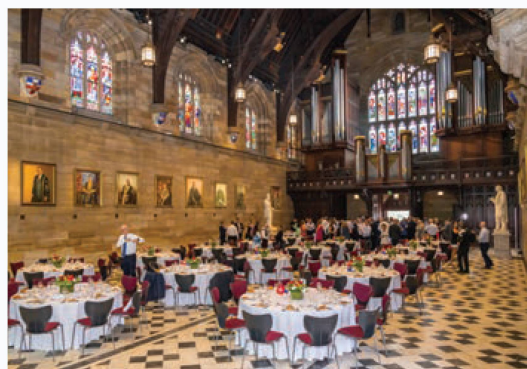
Our key VIP guests included HE Caroline Bichet-Anthamatten (Ambassador of Switzerland) as well the Consul General of Switzerland Rolf Frei. The Ambassador addressed the members and highlighted the importance of celebrating the success of Swiss business in Australia.

What truly set this gala apart were the two outstanding winners: Curaprox Australia (Raising Star) ➔ <https://curaprox.com.au/> and Metrohm Australia (Established Business) ➔ <https://www.metrohm.com> – two Swiss businesses that had made remarkable strides in Australia. Their achievements were celebrated with fervour, highlighting the synergy between Swiss ingenuity and Australian opportunities. These winners embodied excellence, high quality, innovation, and vision.

The entertainment segment was equally captivating. A fantastic raffle with prizes valued over \$20K was given away in a funny competition of an unexpected fusion of tradition and modernity and left the audience spellbound. And just as all walked out to go home, the lucky door prizes were given away starting with a Jura coffee machine, a Victorinox suite case and a giant bottle of wine.

In the heart of Sydney, within the hallowed halls of the University of Sydney, we had witnessed excellence, camaraderie, and the magic of a Swiss-inspired evening. Until next year, when the stars align once more, we raise our glasses to the Swiss Business Award 2024 and the indelible mark they've left on our hearts.

MARTIN SCARPINO – CEO SWISSCHAM



Curaprox Australia
Winner Raising Star 2023



Metrohm Australia
Winner Established Business 2023

SwissCham
AUSTRALIA

Across Australia on two wheels

Some would say cycling from one end of Australia to the other is a crazy idea, but for Lisa and Lena, two 19-year-old twins from the canton of Bern, it was the adventure of a lifetime. For three months, from November last year to January, they rode their bikes, affectionately known as Kay and Ravi, along the coast from Perth through the Nullarbor to Adelaide, then on to Melbourne and finally to Sydney – a distance of 5,730km!

Swiss Review (Ed): Lisa and Lena, what an incredible achievement! For most people, driving or even flying from Perth to Sydney would be hard enough, but you did it through your own strength and perseverance. A proud achievement, congratulations!

Lisa and Lena: In a way, we are full of new energy and yet we are both tired, physically and mentally, and still need to be able to work through what we have experienced.

SR: What motivated you to undertake such an enormous tour, and what was the reason why you chose Australia?

L&L: The trigger for this are Hansen and Paul Hoepner – twins from Germany. They travelled together from Berlin to Shanghai by bicycle. After we saw their book and movie, we got this burning desire and went on to discover travelling by bike together with our parents. Three family tours through Europe and reading numerous adventure books and movies later, it was our time for a big adventure. We don't really know why we chose Australia; it was a gut feeling. We didn't want to do the usual tour eastwards, like most bicycle world travellers do, we wanted something different, unknown, just for us.

SR: Preparing for such an adventure must have taken a lot of time and planning. Provisions and accommodation, to name just two things, how did you organise that? How did you physically prepare for it?

L&L: It might sound a bit daring, but the preparation was

rather simple. We knew the start and destination, took care of the flight, visa, equipment, read a little about the Nullarbor and for the rest we let ourselves be surprised. An adventure also consists of dealing with the unforeseeable; a plan never works out exactly the way you imagine it anyway. In hindsight we know that we did the right thing. Nowadays we can find out everything about a country via the internet, even check out the entire route via Google Maps, but it wouldn't have been such a great adventure if we had already known what to expect behind every corner.

Using our iPhones we planned about 2 to 5 daily stages in advance during the tour to assess how remote the route was and for how many days we needed to buy groceries. We mostly slept in our tent, at campsites, but when the weather was very bad, or we needed some creature comfort, like sleeping in a real bed, we treated ourselves to a motel.

Since we are both very sporty, we did not physically prepare for the tour. That doesn't mean you have to be sporty to go on a bike tour lasting several months, fitness comes naturally over time.

SR: Completing a distance of over 1,000km by bike through the Nullarbor – one of the most inhospitable regions in Australia – is an odyssey of self-discovery and a physical challenge that only a few can master. Were there moments of doubt as to whether you could do it?

L&L: There were indeed some minor crises during the Nullarbor crossing because of the monotony of riding on a straight road for days, with nothing around us but bush. So we had a lot of time for some deep thinking, about the rest of the tour, about life and ourselves. It resulted in a few answers but created many more questions! Quitting was generally never an option throughout the tour, Sydney was always our destination no matter what.



SR: You were in the saddle most of the time in Australia. Were there still opportunities to get to know the local population a little bit, perhaps even meet Swiss who live in Australia?

L&L: We were able to make contact with Swiss emigrants through a Swiss friend while we were still in Switzerland. Regina and Stefan, who live near Perth, met us at the airport. Arriving on a continent on the other side of the world definitely was made easier for us, thanks to them. In Melbourne we were able to spend a few nights with Doris, also a Swiss emigrant, and her family.

We met an incredible number of wonderful Australians via the 'Warmshower' platform (*SR: community for touring cyclists and hosts in Australia*). The people here are simply amazing. Everyone has time, laughs a lot and welcomes you with open arms. In Sydney we were invited to stay overnight with the lovely Australian lady Tanya. We got the contact from our aunt. Tanya let us sleep in her bed and even took us to dinner with her friends. We have super positive memories of getting to know people, whether they are emigrants or locals.

SR: Not only did you have to overcome the hardships, your bikes also had to withstand a lot. Did everything go smoothly?

L&L: In fact, we only had one flat tire during the entire three months; and it happened on the second last day! Luckily, we didn't have any other breakdowns. We consciously decided to invest a little more money in our equipment and are very satisfied with our 'Arios' bikes.

SR: Speaking of bikes ... do the names Kay and Ravi have a deeper meaning?

L&L: Yes they do. Kay means Ocean and Ravi means Sun. When we thought of the Australian continent, these two names seemed very appropriate.

SR: What were you most excited about on the tour? Were there any disappointments?

L&L: We were probably most pleased that things worked out so well between us on the tour. We are twins, so arguments and disagreements are inevitable. But truth be known, we didn't have a single notable argument during the entire tour. We were a well-rehearsed team. This tour definitely brought us even closer together, which is incredibly valuable.

We didn't actually have any big expectations about Australia and the tour, we just went with it and took it day by day. So we couldn't be disappointed at all – on the contrary, we remember Australia as a wonderful country. The open, uncomplicated, relaxed Australians, the beautiful nature and animals. Speaking of animals, many people warned us in advance that there were a lot of snakes in Australia. However, we didn't see a single one, so in retrospect that might be a bit of a disappointment.

SR: Now that you have achieved this goal, what are your future plans?

L&L: Lisa: I'm drawn back home to Switzerland. I miss my family and everyday life. In March I will be working in a seasonal position in a garden centre.

Lena: I'm going to add a solo trip to New Zealand and cycle there for another six weeks before I start a seasonal job in a restaurant in May.

This trip to Australia was definitely not the last. Traveling has really taken hold of us now. Further tours, mainly in Europe, perhaps also in Asia, are already on our minds. Our goal is to live as consciously as possible, to have a lot of time for ourselves and those around us, to take life a little easier, but mostly, all we want is to be grateful for every moment that we have experienced.

We want to be adventurers.

SR: Thank you both, and may there be many more big adventures waiting for you!

Consular Information

AUS: Mobile Passport Station
in Hobart and Melbourne – October 2024

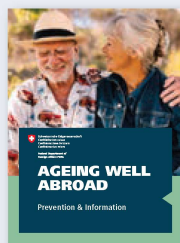


Ensure your civil status information is up-to-date

Do you plan to take advantage of the opportunity to renew your passport in Hobart or Melbourne? Make sure your civil status is updated with the Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney in order for the representation to inform the competent civil status authority in Switzerland. Please note that registering a civil status change can take up to three months. Passport applications can only be processed once the registration has been completed in Switzerland. Furthermore, please ensure that your email address is up-to-date in the records of the representation in Sydney.

Registered citizens of the respective areas will be contacted by email 2-3 months prior to the visit with detailed information regarding dates, procedure and venues.

Brochure 'Ageing well abroad'



Even if old age seems a long way off, it is important to ensure you are well-prepared for it. Living abroad may mean that governmental support, along with familial and social networks, may not be as readily available as they are in Switzerland. It is crucial to consider potential situations where you might require assistance and to arrange the necessary precautions in case your independence is compromised. This brochure, as well as the short video, can help you with your planning. ➔ <https://bit.ly/3TeImZL>

Community News and Events

NZ: Taranaki Swiss Club

On 11 of February we held our annual picnic which is the biggest and most popular event of our Club calendar. We appreciated the many Swiss tourists who attended, together with people from Wellington, Auckland and the Waikato and most of all our Ambassador Viktor Vavricka with two of his children, Valentin and Estella, as well as many of our own members and friends!!

There were many activities for the children – pony rides, face painting, bottle fishing, grass skis and our small playground. However the highlight for many is the Schwingen with both the senior and junior sections being keenly contested. A Swiss tourist, Michi Frick, won the seniors, with Sean Frieslaar taking out the juniors.



We were fortunate to have many talented musicians whose sounds were greatly appreciated by many people. From having one alphorn player not so long ago, we were lucky to have six players entertain us with their tunes ... well done guys, we really appreciate the time you put in and all the practices you attend!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

4&8/04: Kegeln from 7.30pm. This is proving to be very popular again, so come along and have some fun.

14&21/04: Jassen at the earlier time of 1.00pm.

21/04: Society and Championship Shoots at 1.00pm, with Juniors from 11.00am.

1/05: Senior's Social Day. After two successful events last year, the committee has decided to continue these lunches with entertainment. Please do come along to enjoy some camaraderie with fellow Kiwi-Swiss.

2&16/05: Kegeln again from 7.30pm.

18/05: Our fabulous Fondue Evening with Cervelats and salads too will be served from 6.00pm – 8.00pm.

19/05: The Swiss Society Sports Competitions will be held from 11.00am. Disciplines are kegel, shot put, shooting and

jassen with a separate section for under 16s. The Championship Shoot starts at 1.00pm.

26/05: Jassen from 1.00pm.

NZ: Hamilton Swiss Club

50 metre shooting competition was held on 24 February at Epp's farm in Karapiro. On this beautiful Saturday morning we met again at Manuela and Bruno's farm for our annual 50 metre shooting competition. 21 participants took part in the competition: 6 Women, 13 Men and 2 Juniors. Thanks to all the helpers and especially to Hans Vetsch and Walter Zuber for their professional support. Thanks to our hosts Manuela and Bruno, and to George for the organisation.

Annual Family Picnic was held on Sunday 25th February at Newstead School. Most of January and February we had enjoyed beautiful summer weather, but our luck ran out for the picnic with the day starting with heavy downpours. Luckily, we found a bit of shelter to set up and gradually the weather improved, and people started turning up. As usual, the grilled Cervelats and Bratwurst were very popular. Around lunchtime it also looked as if the rain might stay away so the bowling alley was set up and the Swiss Society competitions got underway. Obviously for many, food is the highlight of the day and why not? Many thanks to all the helpers on the day.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

5/05: Cowbell semi-final competition Auckland versus Hamilton commencing 10am at Swisscraft premises, 37 Colombo St, Hamilton. Annual General Meeting will follow the cowbell competition commencing approx. 3pm with afternoon tea followed by the meeting. After the meeting a light dinner will be served.

10/05: First card evening to be held at the Union Parish Church, Queen Street, Cambridge commencing 7pm.

25&26/05: Shooting weekend in Auckland. This weekend is specially for Hamilton members to shoot at the Auckland Swiss Club Farm.

1-3/06: King's Birthday Weekend, Swiss Society Annual General Meeting. The weekend will this year be hosted by the Auckland Club.

We are now on Facebook! Check out our recently established Hamilton Swiss Club Facebook page to find information of upcoming events and to view photos of past events ... all you have to do is go to the page to sign up as a member.

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email please contact Beatrice on 07 843 7971 or email: bea.leun@xtra.co.nz

NZ: Swiss Society of New Zealand

The Swiss Society of New Zealand will be holding the final of the Cowbell Competition and Annual General Meeting on 2 June in Auckland. Further details can be found in the Helvetia magazine. We look forward to a good attendance, with the reins of the Society being transferred from the Taranaki Swiss Club to the Wellington Swiss Club for a four year term.

ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

UPCOMING EVENTS:

6/04: Bushwalk

28/06: Fondue Night

Visit <https://swissclubact.com> for updated information.



ACT: National Multicultural Festival, Canberra

From 16 to 18 February – and now in its 26th year, the festival is an iconic 3-day event that brings together more than 170 multicultural communities to share their culture, history and heritage through food, art, song and dance.

Switzerland too was represented and the team of the Embassy of Switzerland, together with the Canberra Swiss Club, had a lot of fun in providing festival-goers a glimpse into Swiss culture, cuisine, and more!

QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

Lots of activities in our small group: we had a Mini Golf morning, went on a sailing day with Sydney holiday-makers, back in December celebrated Samichlaus in the lovely decorated big shed of Urs and Maggie, where 24 of us had to judge the beautiful Grittibänze.



The Jasser meet Saturdays and every second Thursday also with board games for partners.

We are a friendly group also helping each other with daily tasks some can't do themselves anymore.

Any Swiss moving to our area is most welcome. Come and join us, we love to meet you!! Contact the organisers: Cecile on 0409 286 326 or Urs on 0412 908 456.

VIC: Matterhorn Yodel Choir

The Choir enjoyed performing at the Swiss Club in Melbourne in early December where there was a full house in attendance. There is a strong commitment from the performers who come regularly to as many practice sessions as possible working around family, health and work needs. Performances such as the one above are a joy for both the audience and the choir as the positive feedback generates more enthusiasm within the group, not to mention the conductor Chris.

UPCOMING EVENT / SAVE THE DATE:

28/07: Swiss National Day Celebration at Kings Park, Upper Ferntree Gully. Last year was the first time at the new venue so this year will be better than ever!

We have a small membership base which has a very low membership cost (\$20) which assists us in mainly uniform costs. If you feel you don't want to sing with us but would like to become a member please give us a call on the number below.

At present practice sessions are weekly and are held on Wednesday evenings.

If you are interested, or would like to have further information please call Chris on 0428 427 434.

Maybe you would like to come along and just see how things work, no pressure! Chris will be happy to talk to you and invite to come along to meet the singers. By the way you don't have to be Swiss.

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Lending a hand
since 1879

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
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<https://swissocietyvic.org/>
Susan Brealey – M: 0401 170 036
E: admin@swissocietyvic.org



SWISS EVENTS

Got an event to advertise?

Want to know what's up in Australia?

Go to the Swiss Community calendar on the SAA website:

swissallianceaustralia.org/

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.

UPCOMING EVENT:

24/03: pétanque / picnic afternoon at Jells Park, Wheelers Hill.

New members, new ideas and new talent are always welcome. Contactez-nous! T: 9583 2860 M: 0408 299 660 secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com

PATRICIA CALLEGARI-MEDCALF, PRÉSIDENTE

NSW: Cercle Romand

Our first event of the year, the 'Brunch and Pétanque tournament' was opened to members of the Swiss community of Sydney and it was our pleasure to welcome members of the Swiss Club of NSW and the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney.

We tested a new venue at Parramatta Park, which offered ample parking and a comfortable shelter. Even though the

NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS NSW)

When and how to ask the Care Society for help

Shortly before Christmas a Swiss woman wrote to me, telling me of her and her family's presently dangerous situation and asking, though very hesitantly, whether SCCS would be able to help. The committee members discussed the case via email, and we agreed to assist this family immediately with the payment of urgent maintenance work to their property. They simply did not have the means to pay for it themselves at that moment.

You may ask, when and how does the Swiss Community Care Society assist? If you, or people you know, have a serious problem, you can contact any of the committee members. You can find our details on the website www.swissccs.org.au. Initially you may prefer to talk to one of us. Then, send us an email, explaining the situation and how you think we could assist (we need this in writing). The committee will then discuss what we could do and decide whether our help is justified.

Of course, assistance is not always financial. For instance, I have also had calls of people, recently of an Australian lady, who asked whether a German speaking or a French speaking Swiss person could occasionally visit a friend of hers who now lives in a Nursing Home. That friend has dementia and is starting to forget the second language, reversing to the mother tongue. We then try our best to find such a new friend or even several visitors.

If you live in country NSW you may know your nearest Rural Coordinator and prefer to talk to him/her first. The list had to be slightly changed again, since Gerhard Moser from the Central Coast has moved away in December. Thank you, Gerhard, for the role you played over some years! We wish you all the best up in warm Queensland. If anybody at the Central Coast would like to step into those empty shoes, please give me a call.

REGULA SCHEIDEGGER - 0432 031 085

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SCCS CONTACTS IN RURAL NSW:			
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Ballina:	Hans Schaffner	0448 308 146	hschaffner@bigpond.com

attendance was lower than expected, all participants appreciated the day and congratulated the committee of the Cercle Romand for organising such event. And now the result of the Pétanque competition and congratulations to our winning teams: 1st: Anne R. and Daniel F.; 2nd: Maria F. and Marcel D; 3rd: Catherine S. and André S.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

24/03: As part of the Sydney French Film Festival, the Cercle Romand is inviting our members to see a French speaking movie and share a meal after the screening.

19/05: Our 'Raclette at the Park' event will be held at Fagan Park, Galston.



Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Teams 'Swiss Community Australia'

SOME THINGS ARE BETTER TOGETHER.
LIKE SAVING LIVES.

Are you donating blood or considering doing so? Join the lifeblood team of the Swiss Alliance Australia (SAA). To give back something truly special, we have set up a team 'Swiss Community Australia'. When you donate blood, let them know you are part of our team – or if you have an account with the Australian Red Cross already, login, search for 'Swiss Community Australia' and join the team. Every donation you make goes towards our team's tally.

WHY DID THE SWISS ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA CREATE THE TEAM?

To give back to the Australian Community and continue the legacy of Swiss Humanitarian Henri Dunant, founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In 1859, the suffering of thousands of men on both sides of the Battle of Solferino led Henri Dunant to push for the creation of a neutral and impartial organisation to protect and assist the war wounded. He also proposed creating national relief societies, made up of volunteers, trained in peacetime to provide neutral and impartial help to relieve suffering in times of war.

His humanitarian vision materialised in 1863 when he, along with Gustave Moynier and other like-minded individuals, established the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva.

New donors can register here:



➡ <https://bit.ly/49vSkxc>

Can I donate blood? Check here:



➡ <https://bit.ly/49qagZP>

If you have any questions regarding joining the Swiss team feel free to contact Carmen on communications@swissallianceaustralia.org



A new blood donor is needed every 4 minutes in Australia. That could be you.

Join the **Swiss Community Australia** Lifeblood Team to make a life-giving donation for a life-changing outcome.

Scan to join our team, find your nearest donor centre or book a donation

Give life. Give blood.

 lifeblood teams



Today, the Red Cross blood donation program is an integral part of the humanitarian services offered by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The blood donation initiative, rooted in the notion of voluntary service, exemplifies the commitment to saving lives and alleviating human suffering. With blood being a lifeline for countless medical treatments and emergency interventions, the Red Cross plays a crucial role in ensuring a steady and safe blood supply.

Henry Dunant was awarded the first-ever Nobel Peace Prize in

1901 for what was described as the "supreme humanitarian achievement of the 19th century". Now, 150 years later, his legacy lives on in the tens of thousands of staff and volunteers who continue to help others around the world each day.

CARMEN TROCHSLER
SAA COMMITTEE MEMBER / CSA DELEGATE

Let's continue with his legacy. Your blood can save lives. Let's do it together.

New Oceania representation in the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA)



"The main objective of the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA) is to network young Swiss Abroad and to strengthen their connection to Switzerland and Swiss associations abroad. YPSA is not a parliament in the conventional sense but a platform for committed and active young people who represent the interests of young people in their clubs or countries of residence, and who develop and realise projects."



Elections were held last month to reconstitute the committee of YPSA for the term 2024-2026. Claudia Birrer from Brisbane QLD has been elected to represent Oceania.

Swiss Review (Ed): Claudia, warmest congratulations on your election success. Was it a hard-fought election campaign?

Claudia Birrer: Thank you! The election itself wasn't too complicated – there are 13 seats on the committee, and I was one of 17 applicants. We each had to answer a couple of questions about why we wanted to apply and mention any relevant experience we had.

SR: Who is Claudia Birrer? Can you tell us a little about you?

CB: I was born and raised in Brisbane and am currently studying at the University of Queensland. My Dad is Swiss, and I grew up speaking a mix of Swiss German, high German, and English – 'Swinglish' as my family likes to call it. I lived in Switzerland for a year when I was younger and have had the opportunity to visit family there a few times as well.

SR: What motivated you to get involved with YPSA?

CB: I was interested in joining YPSA because I wanted to connect with other young Swiss abroad and get more involved with the Swiss community. I also thought it would be a great opportunity to develop skills such as leadership, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving.

SR: ..., and who develop and realise projects. What sort of projects is, or has YPSA undertaken?

CB: YPSA has undertaken a variety of projects that have helped foster a sense of community within young Swiss around the globe. As a multi-national committee, YPSA has run several online events such as Swiss carols and trivia, movie nights, and baking competitions. However, YPSA's main project is to set up regional groups for young Swiss to connect with their heritage and each other – most recently YPSA Chile.

SR: Do you have a message to other young Swiss in Oceania?

CB: YPSA is a great chance to meet and connect with people around the world via a common interest. You can learn more about both Swiss culture and the cultures of members from other countries. If you have any Swiss heritage, or are interested in Swiss culture, I'd say YPSA is a great community to get involved in!

SR: How can interested people find out more about YPSA?

CB: Check out our website: <https://ypsa.ch/> or social media:



Youth Parliament Swiss Abroad (YPSA)



@ypsa_switzerland

SR: Thank you, Claudia. I hope you will find representing the young Swiss in Oceania to be a fulfilling and rewarding experience.

REGIONAL NEWS OCEANIA

These Regional News Oceania pages have a circulation of 16,800 – 7,850 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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2-March	Tue, 27.02.24	Fri, 22.03.24
3-May	Tue, 16.04.24	Fri, 10.05.24
4-July	no regional news	Fri, 26.07.24
5-October	Tue, 10.09.24	Fri, 04.10.24
6-December	no regional news	Fri, 06.12.24

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www.swissallianceaustralia.org
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