

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 51 (2024)  
**Heft:** 5: Cycling through Jura, the rebellious canton  
  
**Anhang:** Regional news : Oceania

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# REGIONAL NEWS

## OCEANIA

### 100th anniversary Congress of the Swiss Abroad

The 2024 Congress of the Swiss Abroad was a singular event: it was the 100th edition. While the Congress has evolved over the years, its core mission remains the same: to unite the Swiss Abroad and raise awareness of their specific needs. The Congress of the Swiss Abroad that took place from 11-13 July in Lucerne, marked the 100th time that Swiss citizens living abroad met in Switzerland.

The idea of fostering closer ties between the Swiss Abroad and their homeland emerged in the context of the First World War through the initiative of the New Helvetic Society, which still exists today. The first meeting took place in April 1918. The centenary edition is being celebrated in 2024, rather than 2018, due to interruptions caused by the Second World War and, more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. The event's enduring spirit remains a testament to its historical significance.

The Congress serves dual purposes. It's a social gathering for Swiss expatriates to share experiences and maintain connections; and it's a political platform for addressing the interests of the Swiss Abroad. This political dimension is managed by the Council of the Swiss Abroad, which traditionally holds one of its two annual sessions during the Congress. Australian delegates Carmen Trochsler, Beat Knoblauch and Roland Isler were there to represent our part of the world.

This 100th edition is also an opportunity to look to the future. In just over a century, the very face of the Swiss diaspora has changed. At the time of the first Congress, people who emigrated were seen as people who would never return to Switzerland again. But now, many of them are much more mobile. They sometimes go abroad for professional reasons and regularly commute between Switzerland and their country of residence. They are no longer people who have left Switzerland for good, but people who can return. Modern means of communication have also changed the situation. Even when living on the other side of the world, it is possible to have instant contact with loved ones in



A meeting report written by Beat Knoblauch can be found on the website of the Swiss Alliance Australia  
➔ <https://bit.ly/3MJpVcZ>

Switzerland or to keep up-to-date on what is happening in their home country. This raises the question of whether a large annual meeting such as the Congress is still useful.

Humans are by definition social beings. People who take part in the Congress enjoy seeing each other and talking to each other. The pandemic has shown that the new communication tools cannot completely replace face-to-face meetings. Attending conferences can also be an opportunity to get immersed in the Swiss atmosphere. One can

follow what's going on in Switzerland from a distance, but there will always be added value to experience the Swiss reality in Switzerland.

The fact remains, however, that attendance is down. Importantly also, it is an increasingly expensive undertaking to stage an event of that size and financial support from sponsors has declined. This has resulted in the OSA Board announcing at the Council meeting that the Congress will no longer take place every year. What shape the event will be in the future and its frequency is yet to be determined.

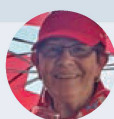
*Source: SwissInfo*

See photo gallery here: ➔ <https://bit.ly/4gn1yis>



From left to right: Beat Knoblauch, Carmen Trochsler, former Consul General to Australia Ernst Steinmann, Roland Isler

#### 50 years of Swiss Review



«Very much appreciated to receive this bountiful magazine with info which connects us to our 'Heimat'.»

**CECILE SCHERRER, QUEENSLAND/AUSTRALIA**



«I thoroughly enjoy the Oceania section of the Swiss Review and finding out what is happening at Swiss Clubs in our Oceania region.»

**MARIANNE DRUMMOND, TARANAKI/NEW ZEALAND**



# Election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in 2025

To the registered Swiss living in Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

## The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA)

The CSA consists of a network of 140 delegates, 20 from within Switzerland and 120 from abroad. It is a key institution for the Swiss diaspora, playing a crucial role in connecting Switzerland and its citizens around the world, and in advocating for your interests, rights, and welfare.

The CSA's work extends beyond political advocacy to issues such as ensuring that the Swiss Abroad are supported by providing relevant information and advice, fostering a connected Swiss community, or in times of emergency. Its lobbying efforts aim to elevate the voice of the diaspora within Swiss federal politics, ensuring that your concerns are addressed and contributions recognised.

As a Swiss residing in any of the above-mentioned countries, you are part of a global community that the members of CSA work tirelessly to connect and defend. It's through the Council's efforts that the unique challenges and opportunities facing Swiss expatriates are brought to the forefront of the Swiss national discourse. The CSA's commitment to your representation and welfare exemplifies the strength and unity of the Swiss community across borders and strengthens the bond between Switzerland and its citizens abroad.

The CSA's dedication to increasing political participation among the Swiss Abroad is demonstrated through its advocacy for the introduction of e-voting. Initiatives such as the direct democratic election of its delegates further underscores its commitment to inclusiveness and representation.

To find out more about the CSA go to:

[www.swissallianceaustralia.org/council-of-the-swiss-abroad-csa](http://www.swissallianceaustralia.org/council-of-the-swiss-abroad-csa)

## Election of delegates (and deputy) representing Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

Based on the number of registered Swiss living in our region – about 26,550 – Australia\* holds four seats on the Council. Delegates are elected for a term of four years; the current term will expire in August 2025.

The four candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected as full members of the CSA. Provided the mandate is accepted, the candidate with the fifth highest number of votes will be elected deputy. If the mandate is refused, it shall go to the candidate next in line. The deputy has full voting rights at Council meetings when deputising for a CSA delegate. The deputy is also encouraged to cooperate in CSA tasks as required. Should a seat become vacant mid-term, the deputy can assume the position of elected delegate for the remainder of the term.

## Direct election via e-voting

The election next year will be carried out entirely by electronic means (e-voting), using a Swiss e-voting system. This will ensure that every eligible Swiss citizen will have the possibility to choose their representatives.

The election will be conducted by the **Swiss Alliance Australia Inc (SAA)** on behalf of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), with the assistance of the Swiss Federal Government and the Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney. The election coordinator is Claude Alain Staub, member of the SAA committee.

## Who can vote?

To be eligible to vote you must:

- be a Swiss citizen residing in Australia\*
- be 18 years and over
- be registered with the Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney
- have a current email address

**Ensure the Consulate General has your up-to-date details!**

## Call for candidates to stand for election

To be an elected delegate or deputy delegate to the Council of the Swiss Abroad is a rewarding and important voluntary role serving your community. Anyone that fulfils the following eligibility criteria is strongly encouraged to apply standing for election.



To be eligible to stand for election, candidates must:

- be a Swiss citizen (or dual citizen) living in Australia\*
- be 18 years and over
- be registered with the Consulate General of Switzerland in Sydney
- demonstrate an interest and commitment to the Swiss community in Australia\*
- be prepared to serve for the term 2025–2029
- have an interest in the Swiss political process, i.e. be enrolled to vote in Switzerland
- in addition to English, be fluent in either German or French (spoken and written)
- be willing to travel to Switzerland for Council meetings once or twice a year (at own travel and accommodation expenses), and attend other online meetings as required
- be prepared to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of a Council member as stated in the OSA Duty List (Pflichtenheft/Cahier des charges) – a copy of which is available on [www.swissallianceaustralia.org](http://www.swissallianceaustralia.org)
- be prepared to be a non-executive committee member of the Swiss Alliance Australia Inc

## How to apply to stand as a candidate

If you meet the above qualifications and would like to apply to stand for election, please go to the SAA website [www.swissallianceaustralia.org](http://www.swissallianceaustralia.org) and download an application form. The completed application must be received by the election coordinator, Claude Alain Staub, on [president@swissallianceaustralia.org](mailto:president@swissallianceaustralia.org) by **no later than COB 31 January 2025**.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 31 JANUARY 2025**

## Further information

Further information is available on the SAA website [www.swissallianceaustralia.org](http://www.swissallianceaustralia.org) or from the election coordinator, Claude Alain Staub, on [president@swissallianceaustralia.org](mailto:president@swissallianceaustralia.org)

*\* Includes Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*

## Passing away of Sandra Gantenbein

Dear Swiss Citizens and Friends of Switzerland,

As many of you have come to know, it is with deep sadness that we inform you of the sudden passing of Sandra Gantenbein, our esteemed Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Operations at our Embassy in Wellington, on 25 July 2024, while on her annual leave in Germany.

Sandra was a cherished colleague, and her loss is felt profoundly by her family, friends, and all of us who had the privilege to work alongside her. We have been deeply moved by the outpouring of sympathy and support from members of the Swiss community, as well as from political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural leaders in New Zealand and the Pacific Region. We are particularly grateful for the kind words and condolences from Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis and colleagues from our headquarters and embassies around the world.

Sandra's distinguished career with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs began in 1996, and throughout her journey, she brought dedication and warmth to every post. She served as a consular officer at our embassies in New Delhi, Abu Dhabi, and Singapore, before leading operations in Hong Kong and Munich. In 2021, she joined our team in Wellington as Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Operations, where she made an indelible impact through her leadership, professionalism, and kindness.

Sandra leaves behind an immense void in the hearts of all who knew her. We will hold her in our thoughts, remembering her with the deepest respect and gratitude. Our heartfelt condolences go out to her family and loved ones during this difficult time. We wish them strength and courage as they navigate their grief.

With sincere regards,

Viktor Vavricka, Ambassador of Switzerland, and the team of the Embassy in Wellington





## Community News and Events

### NZ: Taranaki Swiss Club

Our Anniversary Shoot was held on 13 July with a good attendance. During the afternoon all members could participate in either the small bore shooting or kegeln, with everyone receiving a small prize. This was a great, social evening with musical entertainment enjoyed by everyone.

On 27 July we held our Swiss National Day celebrations with a fabulous crowd enjoying the entertainment, a great Swiss tombola and a delicious Swiss supper. The Swiss Society Sports Competition certificates with prizes were awarded to worthy recipients.

On 28 July we packed our last Helvetia issue of our four year term, handing over the reins to members of the Wellington Swiss Club. Our grateful thanks to Amanda Sherman (designer) and Terese Orchard (editor) for their amazing commitment and dedication to creating the Helvetia magazine.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**03&17/10:** Kegeln at the Swiss Club, Grace Avenue, Kaponga from 7.30pm

**30/10:** The Trudi Ott Belt and Championship Shoots will be contested from 1pm.

**06/11:** Our amazing Senior Social Days have been a hit, and we will be holding

another one today! Please come along to the Swiss Club from 11.30am to enjoy a lunch followed by entertainment and afternoon tea.

**07&21/11:** Kegeln again ... come and enjoy a fun-loving crowd, a game of 9-pin bowling and a lovely supper.

**17/11:** The Ted Napflin Memorial Shield and Championship Shoots will be held today, from 1pm.

**24/11:** The Christmas Shoot / Kegeln will be held today. For children there will be some Christmas activities organised and Father Christmas will be making an appearance. This is a great social day, so please come along!

### NZ: Hamilton Swiss Club

National Day Celebrations were held on Sunday, 28 July at the Matangi Hall. The function was well attended by just over 100 people. We all enjoyed a traditional meal. On the day of the function, we were also offered a very special raffle prize – a hot air balloon ride for two, resulting in a very successful sale of raffle tickets. This wonderful prize was eventually won by Willetta Staheli. We wish her and a companion 'bon voyage'.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**03/11:** Meet at the Hamilton Gardens Café at 10.30am to then walk or bike across the newly opened Te Ara Peka

### 3rd New Zealand and 14th Australian Jass Tournament 2025

**SATURDAY February 15, 2025**

9am start : Hamilton Working Men's Club, Commerce St, Frankton, Hamilton

*Jass, lunch, Swiss entertainment and dinner – it doesn't get better than that!*

**REGISTRATIONS OPEN IN OCTOBER.**

For more information, please contact:

**Willetta Staheli, team@swisscraft.co.nz**

\*\*\*\*\*

**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN COMPETITORS:**

*The Heblers are organising a fun*

*Central North Island bus tour from*

*Taranaki the week before the competition.*

*For full information, get in touch with*

**Othmar and Marlies: heblers@xtra.co.nz**

Bridge. Bring along a picnic lunch or purchase something from the café. Please ring Anita Zuber for more information.

**08/12:** Family Christmas function at Newstead School. Further details in last newsletter and in December issue of Helvetia.

### NZ: Swiss Society of New Zealand

The Swiss Society has about 660 members. This year our AGM was hosted by the Auckland Club and about 70 people from around the country gathered at the club's Kaukapakapa property north of Auckland City to battle for the Cowbell prize. It was won, only by a small margin, by the Taranaki Club. Beside the 4 officially affiliated clubs from Hamilton, Auckland, Taranaki and Wellington, the South Island



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was well represented this year with delegates from Dunedin, Christchurch and Nelson, who reported great interest in their activities, mainly the card and fondue gatherings.

The Committee of the Society and the duty of publishing our 6 yearly issues of the magazine *Helvetia* has now been transferred from Taranaki to Wellington for the next 4 years. Bernie Napp is our editor, doing a fine job.

TRUDI FILL-WEIDMANN, PRESIDENT, SWISS SOCIETY OF NZ INC.

## ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**20/10: Spring Picnic.** More details will be available on [www.swissclubact.com](http://www.swissclubact.com) and in the Newsletter closer to the event.

**29/11: AGM.** Ainslie Football Club, 52 Wakefield Avenue, Ainslie

**08/12: Samichlaus** at Swiss Embassy. Come and join us!

## SA: Swiss Club of South Australia

Here in South Australia, we've been fortunate to have many opportunities to connect with the Sw-aussie community over the last six months.

For the Swiss National Day celebration on 3 August, over 100 people joined us at the Montacute Community Hall in celebration of the vibrant cultural heritage of Switzerland as well as the unity, diversity, and inclusivity of the Swiss community here in South Australia

Thanks go to our friends at the Adelaide Hills Council for supporting the event, representatives from the SA Multicultural Commission and to Carmen Trochsler representing the Swiss Alliance Australia for a touching speech, reminding us of what we love most about Switzerland. I would like to take a moment to recognise the Swiss Club SA committee – the team who make our community events possible. Also, to our helpers on the evening.

On the long weekend in June, a small group took to the Adelaide Hills for a gorgeous hike led by Ruth Bloch. We walked a 3-hour circuit from Mylor to Aldgate and back, some of which is

part of the Heysen Trail. Afterwards, we sat in the winter sun for some well-deserved tea and Swiss style snacks.

In late April, we hosted our sold-out Fondue night. Thanks go to our friends at the Austrian Club for once again opening their clubhouse and bar to us, and the Jägermeister Trio for providing the tunes (to burn off some of those cheesy calories)! Like last year, we played our traditional Kirsch game and our chefs were Patrick and Rolf Faeh, who impressed us once again with a tasty fondue. A special guest appearance from the Bund der Bayern with a Glockenspiel wow'd the crowd, who sung along to our Sound of Music favourite, Edelweiss.

With our AGM just around the corner, we are looking forward to welcoming some new committee members onboard, as we continue to connect the SA-Swiss community with a slice of Switzerland. Make sure you check out our website ([swissclubsau.org.au](http://swissclubsau.org.au)) for dates and further event information.

So, if you live in South Australia, or just passing through, we hope to see you at a Swiss Club event soon!

## QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

The 733rd birthday of Switzerland was celebrated by 21 of us at a private property south of Maryborough with a huge Bonfire for our cervelats on a sticks with beautiful warm weather. The men baked bread and a chocolate cake with white cross on read marzipan and a yummy 'Zibele-Chäs-waie' and salads prepared by the wives.

On the program are our monthly lunches on the 15th, men's breakfast and Jass gatherings with now about 10 regular participants. All behaving well as Samichlaus is soon arriving again.

Come and visit us when in Hervey Bay area.

The organisers: Cecile 0409 286 326, Urs 0412 908 456

## WA: Swiss Club of WA

Thank you to everyone who supported the Farmers Breakfast on 16 June. We were pleased to have over 60 people come along. The day was very successful, and we hope it will be a fixed date in your events calendar for the coming years.

A big shout-out to Paul, who baked his homemade Zopf, which was delicious. The buffet looked fabulous and the Gruyère, Fleischkäse and Bündnerfleisch made it very Swiss.

Thank you to everyone for joining the Swiss National Day celebration on 3 August at the Swiss Club property in Gidgegannup. It was a huge success with over 100 people joining the celebration, enjoying, a fantastic meal and a gigantic bonfire – this is always a treat for all.

The sounds of the Alphorns were very heart-warming and the great meal of Fleischkäse and Beinschinken with a salad



buffet was enjoyed by all. The dessert buffet was huge with all the contributions of everyone.

We all enjoyed staying warm around the bonfire while being entertained by the sound of Swiss folksongs.

If you would like more information on any events, look out for our emails or go to [swissclubwa.org.au](http://swissclubwa.org.au) or join us on Facebook @ Swiss Club of Western Australia. Non-members are always welcome at our events.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

10/11: AGM. Location to be determined.

01/12: Samichlaus/Père Noël. Perry Lakes.

### NSW: Port Macquarie Region

We were very lucky to again celebrate our Swiss National Day at the local Abundance Nursery Cafe, where Swiss Chef Daniel spoiled us once more. Nearly 40 people attended and it was wonderful to see many familiar faces but also to make new acquaintances. Singing, a quiz and even some chocolate added to a most enjoyable celebration.

Our next get-together will be on Saturday 30 November at 12 noon at the Pub in Kew. Please keep an eye on your inbox for the invite. If you have not already been in touch with me and would like to join in, please send me an email to [SwissHastings@yahoo.com](mailto:SwissHastings@yahoo.com)

I look forward hearing from you.

ANITA FOSTER

### NSW: Cercle Romand

With our raclette stall, the Cercle Romand contributed to the celebration of the Swiss National Day at Castle Hill showground, organised by the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney. A big thank you goes to the event organising committee and to our club volunteers.

The Cercle Romand AGM will be held on 29 September.

A Camping week-end away is scheduled for 25/26/27 October in Mudgee NSW. We know that not everyone

is keen to go camping and for this reason, we have chosen to go to Mudgee. This charming little town offers a variety of accommodation that would suit anybody's need. We are planning for a relaxing week-end.

The end of year dinner is scheduled on 7 December with a venue still to be confirmed.

More information of our scheduled events can be found on our website: [www.cercleromand.com.au](http://www.cercleromand.com.au)

### VIC: Matterhorn Yodel Choir



The Swiss National Day Picnic was a great success with many people enjoying the food and entertainment. The blustery weather kept numbers down a bit, but we all enjoyed ourselves none the less and it is always worth the effort.

The Matterhorn Yodel Club has been running this community event for as long as I can remember. In the early days at the Gembrook football ground Lui Bloechlinger used to gather timber and fallen trees to build this immense bonfire which took him days to prepare. At dusk everyone would encircle the bonfire as he lit it, and just like that woosh! Children and adults holding colourful lanterns would run around in the cold air having the best time ever. The crowds were larger. There were more children and there was much less grey hair lining up for the sausages! I'm sure many of the Melbourne Swiss community will remember those days well. From 2025 The Swiss Festival Committee will be running the Swiss National Day Picnic.

We wish them all the best and look forward to participating in their program.

Our choir has practice sessions bi-weekly and we always welcome new members. We are a friendly group who enjoy practicing and performing traditional Swiss Yodel songs.

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

### VIC: Swiss Club of Victoria

Concluding extensive refurbishment, the Swiss Club of Victoria is reopening its restaurant under new management. Experience Swiss hospitality, food and ambience at the Edelwyss Bistro and Bar in the heart of Melbourne. We are looking forward to welcoming you from the beginning of November. Bookings can be made by calling 03 9650 1196 or on [edelwyss.au](http://edelwyss.au). The Edelwyss will be open Tuesday lunch to Saturday dinner. Club nights continue as usual on Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6pm. Wednesday nights, we play a friendly, relaxed game of Jass, welcoming players of all levels to have fun and a good time together. Come along, hone your skills and forge new friendships. Our interest groups, the Dance Group Alpenrose, the Companion Singers, Le Groupe Romand with Les Bavards have continued meeting regularly at the club for their activities and are keen to welcome new members. Samichlaus and Schmutzli are planning a trip downunder late November. For this family event and any other functions, visit [swissclubvictoria.au/events](http://swissclubvictoria.au/events)

Contact: [info@swissclubvic.com.au](mailto:info@swissclubvic.com.au) or [swissclubvictoria.au](http://swissclubvictoria.au) or via FB, Instagram and X. Be part of the vibrant Swiss community and participate in Swiss cultural activities. The committee is looking forward to seeing you at the Swiss Club of Victoria; bis bald, à bientôt and ci verdiamo!



## New Heads at the Helm of 'Team Switzerland' at the Swiss Embassy in Canberra and the Swiss Consulate General in Sydney



From left to right: Tristan Piguet, Kathrin Zwahlen, Magdalena Lottenbach, Natasha Fröjd, Caitlin Johnstone, Michaela Donaldson, Daina Larsen, Daniel Peter, Sarah Futalan, Beat Ettlin, Brendan Hogan, Barbara Gonzenbach, Nikolas Stürchler



From left to right: Delphine Quack, Andrea Köppel Nko'o, Pia Ryser, Daniela Hayoz, Elisabeth Bösch Malinen, Jürg Bettschen, Sangeetha Wickramasingam, Tonia Tschanz, Mascia Buzzolini, Cinzia Colagiuri, Jérôme Charbonnet  
Absent: Andrea Shepherd

The past months have brought several changes in the leadership of both the Swiss Embassy and the Swiss Consulate General. In Canberra, Ambassador Caroline Bichet-Anthamatten and her deputy Fabian Grass returned to Switzerland with their families in July. Their successors arrived in July and September, respectively: Ambassadors Nikolas Stürchler Gonzenbach and Barbara Gonzenbach head the embassy as a job-sharing couple, returning to a model that was spearheaded by Pedro Zwahlen and Yasmine Chatila Zwahlen between 2016 to 2021.

Nikolas is the ambassador to Australia. Barbara is Switzerland's Special Envoy for the Pacific region and designated ambassador to Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Fabian's successor, Natasha Fröjd, joined the embassy team in September. The new leadership at the embassy combines a wealth of foreign affairs experience, having served in multiple posts such as New York, Singapore, Brazil, Kosovo and of course Bern. Since January 2024, Tristan Piguet reinforced the embassy as its new Science Councillor.

In Sydney, Consul General Rolf Frei completed his temporary assignment and left for his new mandate in Cape Town, South Africa. He passed the baton to Consul General Elisabeth Bösch Malinen, who arrived in September. It is her third assignment as Consul General after having led the representations in Montreal and in Munich. Elisabeth is an experienced colleague who has served in many countries, including one term in Canberra (2003-2006). We are also happy to welcoming Delphine Quack, Daniela Hayoz and Sangeetha Wickramasingam to the consular team in Sydney.


"We are delighted to launch this fresh start of 'Team Switzerland' here in Australia," Nikolas and Barbara stated.

"Together with a dedicated embassy crew in Canberra, an experienced consulate team in Sydney and seven honorary consuls to count on, our partners from Switzerland Tourism, SwissCham Australia, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and of course the many Swiss Clubs under the umbrella of the Swiss Alliance Australia, we are well positioned to make a difference for Swiss interests and our Swiss community."

Switzerland and Australia are longtime, like-minded partners, with close ties in a wide range of fields such as diplomacy, science, education, trade and culture. "We are committed to maintaining and deepening this important relationship", the couple added. "In the Pacific, we cooperate with the countries in the region through a number of projects in areas such as climate change, environment, education, health, water security, migration, promotion of human rights and international humanitarian law. We also support the presence of Pacific Island States in Geneva so that they can make their voices heard and participate in the decisions that affect them."

Ever since the first Swiss gold prospectors and winegrowers arrived in Australia, it has been a home to Swiss expatriates, visitors and adventurers. The Pacific Islands as well have become the home of Swiss abroad. "We are proud to be a part of this community that currently numbers over 26,000, and we look forward to meeting many of them in the years to come," Barbara and Nikolas remarked.

The Embassy and the Consulate General are present on social media and on [www.swissintouch.ch](http://www.swissintouch.ch), a new App-based communication channel dedicated to reaching Swiss living abroad. Follow their activities on:

 [www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyCanberra](https://www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyCanberra)

 <https://x.com/SwissEmbassyAUS>

# Swiss Australian collaboration in forensic science – a longstanding success story

Forensic science is often portrayed in popular culture, but few realize Australia and Switzerland are leaders in the field, with a close collaboration driving their success. A key event highlighting this was the 23rd International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS) meeting in Sydney last November, where over 1,700 delegates from 70 countries, including many Swiss experts, gathered. The event showcased Australia and New Zealand's forensic expertise and marked the presidency of Professor Claude Roux from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), reflecting the strong Swiss influence.

Claude Roux, originally from Lausanne, Switzerland, studied forensic science at the University of Lausanne (UNIL), which established the first forensic science school in 1909. Moving to Australia 28 years ago, he developed the country's first undergraduate and PhD forensic science programs and became a leader in the field, founding the UTS Centre for Forensic Science, an internationally recognised centre of excellence in this field. His students now work across various sectors in Australia and overseas.

Roux's mentor, Professor Pierre Margot, also made significant contributions to forensic science in Australia. After joining the Australian National University in 1983, he led the development of the widely used Polilight lamp with the Australian Federal Police. Margot returned to Switzerland in 1986 to lead the Institut de Police Scientifique et Criminologie, bringing his PhD student, Chris Lennard, who later became a key figure in Australia's forensic science community. Lennard and Roux have collaborated throughout their careers, with Lennard serving as Chair of the Scientific Committee at the recent IAFS meeting.

The partnership between UTS and UNIL adopts a holistic approach, treating forensic science as a distinct, science-based discipline focused on the study of remnants (traces) of past events. Their collaboration has led to many joint projects, student exchanges, and advances in areas like forensic intelligence, fingerprints, evidence evaluation, and drug detection. This cooperation extends beyond academia, involving law enforcement in both countries. Swiss graduates now work in Australian law enforcement, and some Australians have continued their careers in Switzerland.

As crime evolves, forensic science must adapt. To support this, Australian and Swiss scientists co-developed the Sydney Declaration, a framework defining forensic science and its fundamental tenets. This declaration provides a scientific foundation for the field, helping shape its modern ecosystem.

Looking ahead, the collaboration between Australia and Switzerland is set to grow. UTS and UNIL recently renewed their partnership, with new universities from the UK, Canada, and the USA joining the effort. This global alliance aims to further advance forensic science worldwide.



Sydney Declaration Forum at IAFS 2023 – LR Dr Simon Walsh (AFP), Nicholas Cowdery AO KC (former NSW Director of Public Prosecutions), Dr Jennifer Raymond (NSW Police Force), Prof. Noel Woodford (Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine), Prof. Claude Roux (UTS), Prof. Keith Inman (California State University East Bay, USA), Dr Rebecca Bucht (National Bureau of Investigation, Finland), Dr Sheila Willis (former Director of Forensic Science Ireland) and Prof. Pierre Margot (UNIL)

## The Sydney Declaration

The Sydney Declaration is a key framework developed to establish a comprehensive and modern foundation for forensic science. It emerged from collaborative efforts among Australian and Swiss forensic scientists, alongside other international experts, in the lead up to the 23rd triennial meeting of the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS) in Sydney.

The main aim of the Sydney Declaration is to define forensic science across all sub-disciplines (a transversal approach) and to articulate its foundational principles. This is significant because forensic science is a diverse field encompassing many specialised areas, such as DNA analysis, toxicology, digital forensics, and fingerprinting, each with its own methodologies and challenges. The Declaration provides a cohesive, science-based framework to unify these areas through their foundational basis and allows forensic science to be more relevant, effective and reliable in a rapidly changing world.

Sydney Declaration paper: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2022.111182>

Sydney Declaration launch: <https://vimeo.com/557933148/34fb079498>

## 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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## Publishing Information 2024

Issue	Editorial deadline	Publishing date
1-January	Mon, 04.12.23	Fri, 19.01.24
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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