

# REGIONAL NEWS

## OCEANIA

Please note:  
Next Editorial Deadline  
2 January 2020



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

### Editorial:

Dear readers, dear compatriots,

■ The Congress of the Swiss Abroad and the assembly of the Council were held in Montreux on 16-18 August. Oceania was well represented by two CSA delegates from Australia and two from New Zealand. The decision by the Federal Government to reverse its earlier plan of introducing electronic voting as a regular voting channel – spelling the end of e-voting for the near future – caused great disappointment and incomprehension among the delegates. **It means there will be no e-voting option available for the upcoming federal elections in October.** An interview with OSA



From left to right: CSA delegates from Australia, Katja Wallimann Gates and Beat Knoblauch, with their New Zealand counterparts, Peter Ehrler and Peter Canziani

President Remo Gysin summarises the issue: <https://tinyurl.com/y3nsrg4x>. A report of the Council meeting as well as an update on e-voting can be found on the CSA Oceania website: [www.csa-oceania.org](http://www.csa-oceania.org)

■ The next edition of the «Swiss Review» will not contain regional pages. This edition is therefore the last one this year to include the «Regional News Oceania». Please note, the editorial deadline for the first issue for 2020 is **Thursday, 2 January 2020**. Publication date online is **23/01/2020** and print **30/01/2020**.

Please send your submissions by the above deadline to [risler@csa-oceania.org](mailto:risler@csa-oceania.org). I look forward to hearing from you! Contact: +61 (0)412 935 565.

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 33,000+ registered Swiss living in Oceania, defending their interests as Swiss citizens living in this region.

Visit their website [www.csa-oceania.org](http://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 (OSA)** 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](mailto:info@csa-oceania.org)

## Federal elections 2019

The National Council elections and the first round of elections for the Council of States will take place on **20 October 2019**. A quarter, or 195,000 of the 775,000 Swiss Abroad are registered on an electoral roll and are entitled to elect their National Councillors, and also their members for the Council of States in the following 12 cantons BE, BL, BS, FR, GE, GR, JU, NE, SO, SZ, TI and ZH.

In Oceania less than 15%, or 4,800 of the 33,000 registered Swiss are on an electoral roll. Oceania lags behind the average quite significantly. It is up to us; an increased Swiss Abroad vote, and considering parties and candidates that are sympathetic to the Swiss Abroad, will increase our chances to be heard in Bern!

If you are a Swiss Abroad who is not registered on the voting and electoral roll you must complete a registration form to be able to participate in elections and voting in Switzerland. It can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/yynx2452>

The completed form must be submitted to either the Swiss Embassy of Switzerland in Wellington or to the Consulate General

in Sydney, depending on where you are domiciled/registered. More information about voting and electoral rights can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxvgnalw>

To learn more about the National Council elections, please visit the official website 'Elections 2019' (<https://www.ch.ch/en/elections2019>) or go to this website <https://tinyurl.com/y5l24k89> to find out which of the major political parties in parliament were the most friendly to the Swiss Abroad over the past four years.

On their website <https://tinyurl.com/y4v4g5ds> the OSA publishes election information that is of specific interest to Swiss Abroad. There you can find the election manifesto that the Council of the Swiss Abroad has approved (in German or French), links to the election programs of political parties – and importantly – a list of Swiss Abroad candidates that are standing for election, including eight candidates that are members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. *Editor*

## Switzerland elsewhere

A few months ago, I visited the exhibition 'Switzerland elsewhere' (Die Schweiz anderswo), which opened in April at the Forum Schweizer Geschichte in Schwyz ([www.forumschwyz.ch](http://www.forumschwyz.ch)) and will run until 29 September. The exhibition tells the history of emigration primarily through stories of individual women and men and with striking original objects. The exhibition layout resembles a labyrinth, each branch leads to a different biography or puts family histories and genealogical research in the foreground. It is designed to educate but also leaves



many questions purposely unanswered so to awaken curiosity. I had the privilege to meet the curator, Pia Schubiger, for a guided tour and I took the opportunity to ask her a few questions.

*Editor*

*Editor: Whose idea was it to create this exhibition?*

**Pia Schubiger:** The input came from my side because I find the topic of the Swiss Abroad and their stories so incredibly fascinating. I thought that would be the perfect exhibition theme! With that idea I approached the exhibition planning committee of the Swiss National Museum which consist of the directors of the museum and a pool of curators which I am a member of. A range of proposals were discussed, and the decision to realise my idea was based on a number of criteria, such as the likely interest the topic would create.

*What was the driving force to create this exhibition?*

What drove me to create the exhibition "Switzerland elsewhere" was to give Swiss Abroad of today and those of the past a face, and to create a platform that enables the viewer to experience history through their biographies and stories. One is almost transposed into their lives and time, and I find this most interesting.



*How did you go about collecting the biographies, stories and objects?*

Generally, it is not an easy task to collect objects simply because the emigrants took them with them, and only in rare cases did these objects find their way back to Switzerland. Some objects were loaned to us from other museums or were sent to us from current Swiss Abroad. Furthermore, the 19th century, being the time frame during which most of the emigration occurred, is the century of the photography and that means we have a lot of historical photographs in our collection dating from the 1840s onwards. Apart from that, appropriate and supporting scenography, such as installations, graphics, maps and so forth also forms part of the exhibition. Once it was in the news that we wanted to realise this exhibition, it was amazing how many people came forward with interesting stories about family members that had emigrated, and some of them have indeed become part of the exhibition

*Are you happy with the success of the exhibition, i.e. with the number of visitors?*

Yes, we are very happy not only with the number of visitors but also with the responses we get from the public. Many have after visiting the exhibition approached us with their own stories or have actually come to see the exhibition because they have an emigrant story in their own family and would like to know more about genealogical research. We also have school classes visiting to learn more about immigration history. There are various supporting events where visitors can learn more about immigration and family research. So yes, I think we have achieved what we have set out to do.

*Would you be interested in taking on other project on the topic of emigration and the Swiss Abroad?*

The topic is huge and an incredible fascinating one, and maybe in the future I might revisit it if the opportunity arises. For now, however, it will continue in as much as I have invited the 'Office of Immigration History' (Musée Imaginaire des Migrations, <https://www.mimsuisse.ch>) to record stories of Swiss Abroad and I will hand over to one of my curator colleagues when the exhibition travels to Zürich (Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum) next year (9 July–18 October 2020).

P.S. to find out more about the exhibition read also 'From Switzerland out into the great wide world' in the previous July edition of the «Swiss Review».

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## Community News and Events

### PNG: Valuable Contribution by Swiss Embassy to PNG Schools

Thanks to the generous donation by the Swiss Embassy in Australia, in cooperation with the independent charity 'Buk bilong Pikinini' in Port Moresby, 16 EBC Primary Schools across Papua New Guinea were privileged to receive more than 200 boxes of high quality books. This donation will reach approximately 4,000 pupils mostly in remote areas and will be a boost to the still highly illiterate youth of this nation. It is very much appreciated!

JOHN ALT | ADVISOR EBC EDUCATION SERVICES PNG



### NZ: Taranaki Swiss Club

On Queen's Birthday Weekend (1-3 June) 30 members travelled to Wellington to attend the AGM of the Swiss Society of NZ and the final of the Cowbell Competition. We were competing against our fellow Swiss rivals from Hamilton in the Cowbell final, and were happy to have already won the shooting. However, sadly, from there it was all

downhill as Hamilton won the Jassen, Keglen and Shot put! Congratulations to the Hamiltonians on a well-deserved win. The meeting followed where Othmar was elected Vice-President as Taranaki will take over the reins of the Swiss Society next year. During the whole weekend our friends from the Wellington Swiss Club provided fine cuisine and great hospitality. Many thanks to the Wellingtonians for their generous welcome and friendliness.

On 13 July we held our Anniversary Shoot together with a farewell function for our departing Ambassador, David Vogelsanger, and an event for the 18 year old. The various Swiss Clubs Presidents, the President of the Swiss Society and our local National MP, Barbara Kuriger, all thanked David, in his role as the official representative of Switzerland in New Zealand, for his great contribution to the Swiss Clubs, his skill in diplomatic relations between our two countries, and also how well he represented Swiss interests in the areas of political, economic and financial affairs. David, you were passionate about the welfare of the Swiss living in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands and we thank you very much for your involvement and dedication. Everyone enjoyed the company of fellow-Swiss, the music and finally supper and coffee schnaps!!

On 27 August we held our National Day celebrations with a smaller crowd, however, all those who came enjoyed the social atmosphere, music and singing.

#### Upcoming Events:

**3&17/10:** Keglen recommences at 7.30pm. Great social nights.

**20/10:** Trudi Ott Belt and Championship Shoots from 1.00pm.

**7&21/11:** Keglen again...come along and enjoy a wonderful night.

**17/11:** Ted Napflin Memorial Shield and Championship Shoots from 1.00pm.

**24/11:** Christmas Shoot / Keglen from 10.00am.

### NSW: Swiss Yodlers of Sydney

The efforts of the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney to organise the recent

traditional Swiss National Day Family Picnic' at Castle Hill Showground were again rewarded with perfect weather and a large number of visitors, some of them using the convenience of making the trip via the newly opened rail link to the nearby railway station. We are most grateful to the members and friends of our Choir and the Dance Group, the volunteers and sponsors for their support and dedication.

On the following Saturday we performed at the Swiss Seniors' 1st August Luncheon at the German Club in Tempe, where our Ilona, Heike and Karin, ably accompanied by George Bolliger on his Accordion, sang "S'chunt ä Zyt". Our Choir Master, Sepp Engesser, secretly arranged for this much applauded surprise. We look forward to participate again at the Seniors' X-mas/ End of Year Celebration – always a great opportunity to catch up with some old friends.



The Club's Annual General Meeting towards the end of 2019 will again serve to ensure that the Club is navigating a steady course and that Singing and Camaraderie are equally enjoyed among all members.

We prepare now and in the early months of next year for our trip to the 'Eidgenössische Jodelfest' in Basel (26-28 June, 2020). Some members of the 'Matterhorn Yodel Choir' will join us whereas we have confirmed our visit to their 50 years celebrations in Melbourne mid-November this year. The Yodlers' Harbour Cruise is scheduled for 2021. We very much look forward to these forthcoming events.

Please view our website [www.swissyodlersofsydney.org](http://www.swissyodlersofsydney.org) or contact our President, Alois Kretz, Tel 02/ 9419 7277, should you be interested in coming along as a Member of the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney, or as a 'Friend of the Yodlers', to these future activities and travels to Melbourne and Basel.



L to r: Hans Vetsch (President, Swiss Society of NZ), Othmar Hebler (President, Taranaki Swiss Club), David Vogelsanger (departing Ambassador of Switzerland), Barbara Kuriger (National MP), Herbert Staehli (President, Hamilton Swiss Club), Adrian Blaser (Consulate of Switzerland in Auckland), Roland Schuetz (Past President, Wellington Swiss Club), and Peter Ehrler (Council of the Swiss Abroad delegate) admire the canvas print of Mt Taranaki / Egmont given to David as a farewell gift from our Club.

## NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS)

At the Yodlers Festival to celebrate the Swiss National Day the SCCS was again manning a stall. We invited people to have a snack from our cheese platter and offered them a glass of wine. The goodies certainly did their trick, as many people stopped for a chat and be informed about our society and its activities.

We always pointed out that we are not just a club for oldies. Yes, we are organising events and doing good things for elderly Swiss to prevent loneliness, but we would also try to help any Swiss, or anyone with a Swiss connection, who is in difficulty, independent of the person's age.

Our Casual Lunch at the Concordia Club in Tempe is getting popular. On the third Friday of the month the table in front of William Tell has sometimes been full, which means we were about 20 people.

The Seniors Luncheon to celebrate 1st of August was enjoyed by over 100 guests. They were entertained by the Yodlers, the Dance Group and for the first time by the 'Rösti Clique' (read more about them on this page). It was a great afternoon!

### Upcoming Events:

**20/11:** Volunteer's Night at Balgowlah Golf Club.

**7/12:** Christmas Luncheon at Concordia Club in Tempe.

To find out more visit our new website [www.swissccs.org.au](http://www.swissccs.org.au) and don't forget to give us your email address if you have one. Please call Regula Scheidegger, President on 9743 5323 or 0432 031 085.

Come to the Concordia Club in Tempe for the  
**CASUAL FRIDAY LUNCH**

We meet around 12.30pm every third Friday of the month and enjoy a tasty meal in the company of some compatriots. No need to book, just turn up at the table in front of William Tell. You order and pay individually for your food and drinks.

The Club is across the road from Tempe Railway Station! You may want to use your Opal card!

For enquiries call Regula on 9743 5323  
or 0432 031 085

## NSW: Swiss Rösti Clique

The Swiss Rösti Clique of Sydney is looking for drummers and pipers (piccolo players). All ages welcome. We practise once a month in Centennial Park.

For more information, please contact Armin Umhang on 0431 891 454 or [arem@outlook.com](mailto:arem@outlook.com) or Peter Scheidegger on 0431 062 431 or [pscheide@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pscheide@bigpond.net.au)

## NSW: Cercle Romand

Our first event for 2019 was our traditional 'Brunch and Pétanque' tournament. What a gorgeous day spent at the new venue, Ballast Point Park, Birchgrove.

Kangaroo Valley was our destination for our camping weekend in March. It was a very relaxing weekend for some of us and more energetic for others who went bike riding or kayaking down the Kangaroo River.

In May we enjoyed a raclette meal at Bobbin Head. A fantastic day by the water and the Swiss raclette was delicious. For dessert, we shared a birthday cake with our member Claude Middleton who turned 90 a few weeks earlier.

On the first weekend in July we returned to Kangaroo Valley for a 'Christmas in July' celebration. We travelled through some of the superb Southern Highlands landscape to reach the old village of Berrima for a visit and lunch. Everyone enjoyed the experience and agreed to repeat this outing next year.

Again this year, the Cercle Romand was present with its 'Raclette Stall' at the Swiss National Day Celebration held

on 28 July at the Castle Hill Showground. It is always a fun day and it is a great opportunity to mix with the whole Swiss community of Sydney.

### Upcoming Event:

**7/12:** Traditional Christmas Dinner.

Details of all events, location and booking can be found on our website: [www.cercleromand.com.au](http://www.cercleromand.com.au)

**Le Cercle Romand...que du bon temps**

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

We are presently concentrating on the **Membership Recruitment**.

We would like new members to join the choir to give us more volume, more flexibility and most importantly, to make new friends!

We already have two Swiss, who approached us at the Swiss National Day. We'd love to see some more joining. There is no need to be able to read music. A good mood and enthusiasm are all we are looking for; the rest will follow. If you play an instrument (alphorn, accordion or other) we'd love to display your talent.

This year we have two more performances planned: Foco Nuevo at West End and a Bribie Island workshop with the Gleeman Group. It will be fun, please come and join us as a new member. Our teacher Elspeth does magic with us.

Contact Gabriel on 0435 570 241, [yodel@swissclubqld.org.au](mailto:yodel@swissclubqld.org.au)

## QLD: Swiss Society of Queensland

Over 400 members and friends made their way to Samford to celebrate the 1st of August **Swiss National Day**. Highlights of the day were the yodel duo

## NOMINATIONS FOR THE SWISS BUSINESS AWARD 2019

As a Swiss Company or Swiss Citizen you are encouraged to enrol for our highly sought and very popular Swiss Business Award! No award in this part of the world compares with a win of the Swiss Business Award. The committee is looking for somebody special and YOU may have exactly this edge to be a successful contender of the **Swiss Business Award 2019!**

Follow successful winners like Prof Dr Robin Gasser, Dr Alexander Strasser, Mageba, Southpole, or the famous Medela brand.

How to enrol? Follow this link: [www.cognitofirms.com/Swisscham/SwissBusinessAward2019](http://www.cognitofirms.com/Swisscham/SwissBusinessAward2019)

Nomination closes 31 October 2019.

Priska and Jakob Meier and the beautiful performances by the Baerg-Roeseli yodel choir. Amongst a big variety of performances and things take part of, there was also a lot of different Swiss goodies and yummy food, which were all eaten by the time the bonfire was lit.

#### Upcoming Events:

**5-7/10: Camping Weekend** – Camp Cooroora, on the Sunshine Coast, nestled between Noosa And Cooroy. More Information is available from Rita von Rotz 0431 707 144 or on our website [swissclubqld.org.au](http://swissclubqld.org.au)

**26/10: AGM** – Members please come along to our AGM, which is held at the St. Anglicans Church Hall in Hamilton. The meeting starts at 11 am followed by lunch. A proxy form can be sent in if members can't attend but still want their vote to be counted. Please RSVP to Anita Meier on 0401 957 309 or [anita@qbrg.com.au](mailto:anita@qbrg.com.au) by 21 October.

**10/11: Sunday Brunch** – Enjoy a scrumptious brunch buffet and 'gmüttelechs zämesi' at our Sunday Brunch. RSVP by 1 November to Rita von Rotz at 0431 707 144 or [vonrotz@optusnet.com.au](mailto:vonrotz@optusnet.com.au). For costs and other information please go to our website [swissclubqld.com.au](http://swissclubqld.com.au)

**8/12: Santa** – Member families are welcome to come and visit Santa. He will be at the Bayside Sea Scouts Hall in Manly. There is BBQ facilities if you want to bring your picnic along. RSVP by 1 December, 2019 to Anita Meier [anita@qbrg.com.au](mailto:anita@qbrg.com.au) or 0401 957

309. The event is free for member families.

For more information about any of our events visit our website [www.swissclubqld.org.au](http://www.swissclubqld.org.au)

### QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

We welcomed beautiful Swiss-Aboriginal baby boy Liam to our community. He shares his Swiss heritage with the culture of the Butchulla people, the indigenous people of Fraser Island.

We were also joined by six new arrivals from the South at our monthly lunches on the 15th of each month at Beach Restaurant.

At Swiss National Day 33 people shared a good time together, sitting around the fire with a cervelat on a stick or the BBQ, salads and desserts buffet.

Santa will be visiting on a private property in Maryborough where Mary Poppins author, Pamela Lyndon Travers, was born. Looking forward to choosing the cutest Grittibänz from the baking competition.

We love to see you at our events. For details contact [cecile.scherrer@bigpond.com](mailto:cecile.scherrer@bigpond.com) or 0409 286 326 or visit [www.swissclubqld.org.au/fraser-coast](http://www.swissclubqld.org.au/fraser-coast).

#### Regular Event:

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

The image is a composite advertisement for Victorinox. On the left, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white blazer and a watch, sits at a wooden table with a white coffee cup. On the right, a red Victorinox Swiss Card classic is shown, which is a multi-tool card. Above the card is a map with the Victorinox logo and the text 'VICTORINOX'. Below the card is a blue suitcase with a white cable plugged into it. The background is a bright, outdoor setting.

FUNCTIONALITY IS  
PART OF OUR FAMILY

## QLD: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS)

As in NSW the aim of our SCCS is to keep in touch and promote contact among Swiss people living in or near Brisbane.

We would be happy to hear from any Swiss people interested to join our Society either as a member or as a volunteer.

### Upcoming Event:

**23/11:** Christmas Lunch at the Anglican Church Hall, Hamilton.

For bookings and info about the above Christmas Lunch please contact: Franz Braun 0421 384 060 or Anita Bickel 0457 457 211.

## VIC: Swiss Club of Victoria

### Upcoming Events:

**2/10 & 6/11 & 4/12: Ladies Luncheon** – Meet up with friends and make new ones. Club Members: \$27/person, Non-member Guests: \$30/person.

**3/10 & 7/11 & 5/12: Kapelle Grüezi 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.

**5/10 & 2/11: SwissKids** – SwissKids is a platform to bring together interested families and their children to experience Swiss traditions and culture, play and have fun together.

**23/10 & 27/11: Social Jass** – For all who enjoy the game but want to play for enjoyment only. No competition! Inexperienced players welcome (basic knowledge of rules and card values needed). Enjoy dinner before the game. Call 9650 1196 to make a booking.

**7/12: Seniors Christmas Afternoon Tea** – Christmas afternoon tea for Seniors of the Swiss Community, Swiss Nationals and Partners aged 70 or older.

**8/12: Samichlaus** – Swiss Kids Samichlaus Event.

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

## VIC: The Matterhorn Yodel Choir

Swiss Yodel Choir Matterhorn has celebrated Switzerland's birthday by hosting the Swiss Picnic held at the Hungarian Club grounds in West Heidelberg. There was good attendance and the sausages and cakes were sold out soon. The Choir sang their best, with the chatterabang proving very popular. Irma and Chris entertained the crowds with their beautiful alphorn sounds.

### ■ 50th Anniversary Celebration

The Choir is going to celebrate a tremendous milestone on 16 November – the 50th anniversary of the Matterhorn Choir! It will be an evening of dancing, entertainment and good food. Bookings are open now on <https://www.trybooking.com/BEKIU> – be early to avoid disappointment! Raffle tickets are also available online <https://www.rafflelink.com.au/50yearsmatterhorn>. Sale of these tickets will help fund the evening and provide an opportunity to win great prizes.

For more details on the event please go to our website <http://matterhornchoir.org/> or contact Erwin Weinmann on 0400 850 816 or [ozrondol@gmail.com](mailto:ozrondol@gmail.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.

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 Patricia Callegari-Medcalf on 9583 2860, M: 0408 299 660 or [secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com](mailto:secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com)

## VIC: Les Bavards – The 'Chatterboxes'

This group started a few years ago on the request of a few German-speaking compatriots wishing to keep or improve their French and is convened by members of the Groupe Romand.

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, they meet at the Swiss Club, where they converse in French for an hour before enjoying a meal (optional).

For further details, please contact: Rémy Favre, T: 9571 2835, M: 0412 135 095, E: [remy@favrecranage.com](mailto:remy@favrecranage.com)  
Annelise Kavadas, T: 9489 0274, M: 0409 509 343, E: [annelise.kavadas@gmail.com](mailto:annelise.kavadas@gmail.com)

## VIC: Trachtengruppe Schwyzerguess A.S.C.C.

### Upcoming Event:

**13/11: Fahrt Ins Blaue** – we would like to invite the retired community (over 65) to our mysterious and exiting **Mystery Trip**.

Cost is \$40 per person, which includes a three course lunch. Pleased send your cheque to Sylvia Hochuli, 92 Addison Street, ELWOOD Vic 3184 or ring 9531 6575.

## VIC: Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpenrose

The National Volkstanzfest was held in Brisbane over Easter.

We performed with numerous German and Austrian groups from across the nation. Together with 200 participants, we felt privileged to be so warmly embraced by all, especially by the Swiss community of Queensland who attended the performance. Thank you Willy Felder for playing the alphorn for us.

In May, we celebrated the 70th Birthday of our group. Many happy stories were exchanged with past members, friends and all the guests. Everybody contributed to a very special night.



**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 of someone who does, please contact us. We are here to help.**

Patrick Albert – M: 0449 999 645 – E: [patalbertaus@gmail.com](mailto:patalbertaus@gmail.com)  
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# The Swiss Freedom Fighter

by Eve Kelly

I first met Swiss-born Hans Brunner, a biological scientist and author at a community meeting at a local wildlife sanctuary. Brunner was refreshingly passionate about wildlife, in particular, the southern brown bandicoot—a small ground-dwelling marsupial that had become extinct on the Mornington Peninsula. He loudly lobbied government for decades for the establishment of predator-proof sanctuaries for the species. I was impressed. After the meeting, we chit chatted and discovered our mutual love of singing. At nearly 90 years of age, he was still a fabulous yodeller. He proudly handed over a CD he had stashed in his car. It was a recording of him leading a Swiss choir. A friendship began and what I learned about Hans and his life's work, including the most famous miscarriage of justice in Australian history, was intriguing, to say the least.

I travelled to the seaside suburb of Frankston to talk to Hans about the long and complicated case of two-month-old Azaria Chamberlain who disappeared from a tent in Alice Springs in August 1980. In October 1982 Azaria's mother Lindy was wrongly convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for Azaria's murder. Azaria's father Michael was given an 18-month suspended sentence as an accessory after the fact. An incredible injustice had taken place. Hans' forensic evidence about the animal hairs found on Azaria's clothing had been a vital key for Lindy's eventual exoneration.

Hans shuffles to his locked screen door to greet me into his home, a large detached house in a quiet leafy street. We tour his garden adoringly curated with long-stemmed roses, hanging cactus, potted orchids and the most impressive sunflowers I have ever seen! He likens the sunflowers' faces to massive showerheads that he pretends to shower under on a sunny day. Like his sunflowers, Hans stands lean with a bright, happy face and is more than willing to share his wares with the locals. He later gives me a plastic bag full of sunflower heads filled with seeds for my pet parrots.

We settle in his spacious lounge room. The passing years haven't reduced his passion for the Chamberlain case. He prepared for the interview laying out documents, books and paper clippings on the sofa. In 1980, Brunner was working as an ecological scientist at the state government funded Keith Turnbull Research Institute. The institute was lucky to have him work on their feral species eradication program. His development of mammalian hair analysis had made him a world leader in the field. In 1974, he authored a textbook of his findings *The Identification of Mammalian Hair*. Environmentalist author Eric Rolls described Brunner's work in Norman Young's book *Innocence Regained: The fight to free Lindy Chamberlain* as 'the world authority on identification of mammals by hair' and 'singularly brilliant'. Young himself thought him 'highly relevant' to the Chamberlain case due to 'the fact that in the course of his career he has examined hundreds of dingo hairs...when it comes to animal hair, he is quietly unapologetic about the superiority of his knowledge'.

When baby Azaria went missing, Hans wondered what the police were doing with the baby's bloodied singlet and jumpsuit found near Uluru one week after her disappearance. Expecting that there would be hairs found on the jumpsuit he called the Northern Territory police and asked if he could examine the clothing. The policeman's reply caught Hans off guard "ah no it can't be done...she's done it anyhow" and he hung up the phone. "He never even said goodbye!" Hans exclaims in his thick Swiss accent. "That policeman didn't want me to find out anything that would have linked the dingo with the disappearance of Azaria". He recounted how he hung his head for a bit before he tried, in vain, to contact them again, unbeknownst to Hans that was not the end of his involvement in Lindy's bid for justice.

After the Chamberlain's convictions in 1982, their solicitor Stuart Tipple continued gathering evidence for an appeal. There had been animal hairs found on Azaria's clothing. Young outlined in his book 'at the trial the Crown had claimed these hairs were probably cat hairs' and when pressed by the judge the forensic scientist working for the prosecution Dr Harry Harding concluded the hairs 'were not dingo hairs'. The Crown pushed this conclusion in the final address to the jury. The defence was keen to have the hairs tested again by an independent scientist and set out to find one. They were elated to discover that such a world expert not only lived in Australia but also had answered the phone as soon as they called.

In September 1984, Brunner attended the High Court in Canberra to examine the jumpsuit. He brought his Olympus microscope with him. Brunner remembers:

"They took me down to the 'dungeon'. It was a storage room under the court where they held evidence." The room contained boxes of items including Azaria's jumpsuit, singlet and the Chamberlain's camera bag. He held the jumpsuit and remembered how profoundly moving the moment was.

"Here was the thing that the poor baby was in when she died, it still gives me a feeling of sadness."

The hairs, already removed from the clothing, were mounted between two glass slides. Within seconds he exclaimed they were not feline hairs after all. Within the hour he concluded that both slides contained canid (dog) guard hairs. Young noted 'Brunner had no doubt about the accuracy of his conclusions'. Dr Harding had got it wrong! Brunner assured Tipple that the identification was unequivocal. Brunner remembers his feelings toward Harding "I didn't want to attack him personally. I could have, but I didn't. I just exposed it, and they could make up their own mind that he was wrong. Whether he was honest or dishonest was not my question to ask."

The website [lindychamberlain.com](http://lindychamberlain.com) carefully time-lined the case including Lindy's eventual release in 1986 after they found Azaria's jacket during a search for the remains of a man who had fallen at Uluru. Brunner's evidence was presented to the Morley Royal Commission into the case in 1986-87. The commission cleared the Chamberlains of any involvement in Azaria's disappearance. However, it took 32 years for Azaria's death certificate to be officially changed, in 2012, as 'death by dingo'.

Hans met the Chamberlains at one of their many court appearances. They shook his hand and sincerely thanked him for his efforts with the case. When the Northern Territory Supreme Court exonerated the Chamberlains, in 1988, Hans was "totally relieved for her and for justice to be done. I was very sad that she had to go to jail for three years and that I could have possibly helped her avoid that". He lives with some guilt that he didn't insist on the police taking his advice but admitted:

"I always learned in my life that if I wasn't wanted, I wasn't going to push myself on anyone."

It was only when the defence found Brunner during Lindy's imprisonment that he was able to give his expert opinion. "They didn't give me any credit for my opinion; it didn't suit their story that she was guilty." The prosecution "would have never called me back anytime."

As we say our goodbyes in his front garden and rejoice to the beautiful song of local magpies, Hans breaks out into a high-pitched and exquisitely clear yodel. Indeed these intelligent birds have no hesitation in responding to the beckon of a master—if only all humans were the same.

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# Diplomatic & Consular Information



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

## Pacific Islands Forum

The 50th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Summit took place in Tuvalu from 13 to 16 August, 2019.

Leaders from across the Pacific gathered to discuss issues vital to the region's future, and the planet as a whole. They were joined by Associate Members, Observers, Dialogue Partners and other delegations.

Invited by the host of the conference, The Rt Hon Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Special Envoy of Switzerland for the Pacific Islands Region, Ambassador Yasmine Chatila Zwahlen, used the opportunity to meet many of Switzerland's partners in the Pacific to discuss on-going cooperation and bilateral relations. "The event bears a high degree of symbolism, being hosted in one of the world's smallest and most climate-vulnerable nations" and "I am humbled by the generosity, resilience and acute political and cultural awareness of our hosts", said Ambassador Chatila.

Switzerland has diplomatic relations with all the sovereign states in the Pacific Islands Region and is an important contributor to the Multilateral Development Financing Institutions and International Organisations, particularly in the fields of Disaster Risk Reduction and rapid response, climate change adaptation, human rights and migration. Switzerland supports the Pacific Islands States to "increase their visibility and influence in the global fora, especially at the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva", added Ambassador Chatila.



Ambassador and Special Envoy of Switzerland for the Pacific Islands Region Yasmine Chatila Zwahlen (left) discussing with The Rt Hon Enele Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu (right).

## AVIS28 – Foreign policy vision for Switzerland 2028

STEFANO VESCOVI | DEPUTY HEAD OF MISSION, EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND IN AUSTRALIA



Switzerland is a success story, but it will have to evolve under fast changing international conditions. Therefore, foreign policy will become more important for Switzerland's prosperity and security.

Starting from these reflections, Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis established the AVIS28 working group in 2018 with the aim to define a coherent and adaptive foreign policy vision for Switzerland for 2028. AVIS28 is a source of inspiration and new ideas, and at the same time, it should initiate a broad discussion on the future of Swiss foreign policy. Switzerland needs the courage to change. Its foreign policy must become more focused, networked and agile. Switzerland should also work more closely with like-minded states, like Australia and New Zealand, towards their common goals.

A six-point vision is shaping tomorrow's Swiss foreign policy:

1. Swiss foreign policy is strategic and focuses on clearly defined interests and values – also towards the major world powers.
2. Foreign and domestic policy are closely intertwined. Foreign policy is broadly supported domestically – more over because its priorities correspond to the expectations of the population and the cantons.
3. Citizen services, both from within and outside Switzerland's borders, and cooperation with the Swiss economy are recognised as assets.
4. Switzerland is firmly dedicated to a more peaceful and stable world. It strengthens the rule-based order through successful initiatives and is committed – offline and online – to better compliance with international law and human rights.
5. New technologies are established as foreign policy topics. This is supported by International Geneva, standing as one of the world's leading governance locations of the digital transformation.
6. Switzerland is committed to the bilateral path and is also shaping Europe in a closed partnership as a non-member of the European Union.

The debate is open.

Share your opinion on the future of Switzerland's consular services for the Swiss Abroad:

### THE CONSULAR DIRECTORATE IS GEARING UP FOR THE FUTURE

As part of AVIS28, the Consular Directorate wishes to develop its services according to the world of tomorrow. What will be the expectations and needs of the Swiss Abroad in 2028? What administrative services will Switzerland need to put in place to respond appropriately? In order to find answers to these questions, the Swiss Abroad are invited to contribute and share their insights through a survey.

Please tell us your needs and expectations as a Swiss national living abroad. Start the questionnaire now: <https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/PMPN5YX>