COMMONWEALTH NEWS
MARCH 2016

A history in common, a future in progress
The Royal Commonwealth Society founded in 1868, is constituted by Royal Charter. A self funded, Not for Profit Society bound by a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the Royal Commonwealth Society promotes the value and the values of the Commonwealth.
We champion human rights, democracy and sustainable development across the 53 member states which are intrinsically linked through their common history and shared values.

Worldwide Patron: HM the Queen.
Victoria Patron: Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria

DINNER: Thursday 10\textsuperscript{th} March

THEME: Commonwealth Day
SPEAKER: W.G.S. Prasanna – Consul General of Sri Lanka
ATTIRE: Lounge Suit – Evening wear,
TALK: The Role of Commonwealth and Other International Organisations

Bookings are to be made email or by leaving a message on the office PHONE: 9571 5688:
NO later than 2pm Wednesday 2nd March 2016

DINNER CONTRIBUTION:
Members $50 Guests $60
630pm - Pre Dinner drinks
Please note that ALL Bookings made AFTER 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 2\textsuperscript{nd} March may incur a $5 surcharge, due to catering.

LUNCHEON
Next: Thursday 26\textsuperscript{th} May 2016
Time: 12.00hr for 12.30hr
Speaker: TBC
Topic: TBC
RSVP: by Wednesday 18\textsuperscript{th} May.
Cost: $40.00 members $50.00 Guests

All members and guests are most welcome:
If members or guests have dietary requirements, please advise when making your booking.

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE A BOOKING UNLESS YOU ARE SURE YOU AND YOUR GUESTS WILL BE ATTENDING.
A fee may apply for cancellation and no show bookings advised after 0900Hr on the Monday
THE PAST AND THE FUTURE:

DINNER FEBRUARY:

The first function of the New Year. A great start with a good turnout of Members and Guests. Our Speaker Mr. Barrie Hunt was articulate and knowledgeable on the subject of Climate. We were given a very good understanding of what is happening now and in the future.

GUEST SPEAKER MARCH 10TH DINNER:

W.G.S. Prasanna joined the Sri Lanka Foreign Service in 1998. He has served in Sri Lanka High Commissions in Singapore and London previously. Mr. Prasanna has served in the Political Affairs of West, Protocol, Economic Affairs, Overseas Administration and South Asia and SAARC Divisions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Mr. Prasanna has represented Sri Lanka at BIMSTEC, SAARC, NAM, UNGA and Commonwealth meetings. Mr. Prasanna holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Agriculture with specialization in Agricultural Economics and Extension from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

LUNCHEON:

The first luncheon for 2016 was held on Thursday 18th February. Helen Botham gave a most interesting illustrated presentation about Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe. It included an insight to what life was like in Melbourne during his time here, of his cottage and garden at Jolimont.

It was a pleasure to welcome Rob Furlan, President of the ESU, and two other members of the ESU. ESU members will be joining RCS members at the luncheons for at least this year while they find a new home; their South Yarra property is in the process of being sold.

WOMEN’S GROUP NEWS:

The A.G.M. was held immediately prior to the lunch on 18th Feb. It was disappointing that there were not more members present. The following persons were elected to the committee: Elisabeth Newman Convenor, Jan Prassas Treasurer, with Merridy Gee, Loretta Simmons and Elisabeth Bettoni as Committee Members. June Eglington was thanked for her work, over the past 9 years, as the Women’s Group Treasurer.

With the RCS now in a position to expand its philanthropy, the Council has asked if the Women’s Group will be responsible for organising the fundraising at social events for the Society. This was agreed to at the A.G.M. Over this coming year the Society, in accordance with the Constitution, will be looking for appropriate entities to support both within Australia and the Pacific area. Primary Education in Tonga will continue to be funded. It is hoped that all members will support the fundraising. “Lucky” completions will continue to be held at lunches and it is planned to run a stall at a dinner later in the year, details later, but please start giving thought to putting aside small attractive gifts suitable for sale.

From next month, charitable activities will be reported on under a separate heading.

At the February luncheon, the Women’s Group organised the “lucky” competition raising $75 and sale of chocolate Easter eggs raising $145.

Elisabeth Bettoni’s generosity for making and giving the beautiful eggs is much appreciated.

For further information about charitable activities, also for queries about the Women’s Group, please contact Elisabeth Newman; ph: 9699 9170.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE 95TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [Victorian branch] will be held at “The Gables”, 15 Finch Street, East Malvern on Thursday the 14th of APRIL 2016, commencing at 5.30 PM, punctually, for the purpose of:

1. To receive and adopt the Councils Annual Report for the year 2015
2. To receive and consider the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31st December 2015
3. To elect the following Office Bearers for the year 2015/2016
   - President
   - Vice President
   - Honorary Treasurer
   - 2 Branch Councillors
   As per the constitution, the above Office Bearers retire and can stand for re-election.
4. To raise any business other than that would not normally be conducted at a General Meeting. 21 days notice shall be given and must be received at the administrative office 14 days prior to the meeting.

BY ORDER OF THE BRANCH COUNCIL

DATED 21st February 2016

John Colston
Secretary

Please note that a Fellow may cast a vote in person at the A.G.M. meeting or by PROXY.

Fellows must be current financial members.

************************************
NOMINATION FOR COUNCIL A.G.M. April 14th 2016

I, ................................................... AND I ......................................................

Being Fellows of THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY [Victorian branch],

Hereby nominate, Mr., Mrs., Miss. ............................................................

For the position of: Circle position: President,
- Vice President
- Honorary Treasurer,
- Branch Councillor

I, ...........................................................[signature of Nominee]
Do accept nomination for the position of :

............................................................

Signed [proposer]..........................Signed [Seconder]..........................

NOTE: Nominee, Proposer and Seconder must be financial members.

Nominations are required to be lodged at the RCS administration office no later than the 12th March 2016. If there is more than 1 nominee for a position, Nominees will have the opportunity to outline their background and bona fides for the position, so that details can be distributed to Members for their information prior to the AGM Vote.

Proxy vote cards will be sent in next months Newsletter.
MEMBERSHIP 2016 - now really Overdue:
We have maintained the same yearly subscription fee.
Annual Member subscription fees were due 01 January 2016:
Single: $50  Dual: $80.00
Country: $30.00  Country Dual: $45.00
Youth / Companion Under 25 Years: $0.00 per Year

Royal Commonwealth Society Membership 2016
Names: ........................................ Postal Address: ........................
Contact Telephone: ............................ E-mail address: ........................
RCS Membership:
Single/dual/country/other: .......................... RCS Number: ........................

If you wish to consider a donation to assist with repairs and maintenance, the day to day running and charitable projects, your Society would be appreciative.
AMOUNT: Subs $ ...................... Donation: $ ...................... TOTAL: ........................

Make the cheque payable to – Royal Commonwealth Society and send to:
“the Gables, 15 Finch Street, East Malvern  Victoria 3145
Or Pay by Direct Debit: Bank Details: BSB 013 326 Account: 4992 04087
Description: Subs 2016 – “Your Name”

COMMONWEALTH VOICES - DECEMBER EDITION
Containing observations, reports and guest contributions on Commonwealth-wide news, developments and .........................

Read the magazine online or download a copy

The Commonwealth, Education & Youth
The following articles have been lifted from the RCS Website. If you receive this by Email you can Ctrl + Click on the Coloured / Blue hyperlink to read more

Queen's Young Leaders Programme
This life-changing programme has been established by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust and runs in partnership with Comic Relief and the Royal Commonwealth Society in honour of The Queen’s 60-year contribution to the Commonwealth.
Find out more

The Commonwealth in 2016

Posted by The Royal Commonwealth Society
7th January 2016  Click on link above for full web story.

Below we look at the themes and events that will shape 2016.
A New Commonwealth Secretary General will take office

One of the biggest events of 2015 was the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Malta. A highlight was the election of a new Secretary General, Baroness Scotland, nominated by Dominica. Baroness Scotland brings international, legislative, legal and government experience to the running of the Commonwealth. She was the first ever woman to be made Attorney General in the UK and has a career that spans the UK and the Caribbean. She is due to take office in the spring of this year and has stated that she wants to support member states to build development and democracy. A challenge will be to keep members unified while making sure the Commonwealth continues to be relevant to governments and people alike in a crowded international arena.

Commonwealth Day 2016

This year the annual celebration of the Commonwealth, Commonwealth Day, will fall on Monday 14th March and will be celebrated around the Commonwealth. In London the Royal Commonwealth Society will once again co-ordinate a special multi-faith celebration at Westminster Abbey to be attended by Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, High Commissioners, dignitaries from around the Commonwealth and specially invited guests, as well as 1,000 young people.

Press Releases

22/01/2016 | Restricting skilled worker visas will hit the economy and harm UK-Commonwealth relations

UK skilled visas changes directly harm Commonwealth relations Lord Howell of Guildford, President of the Royal Commonwealth Society and Tim Hewish, Director of Policy and Research, the Royal Commonwealth Society The government risks further alienating skilled Commonwealth nationals who work in the UK with proposed changes to the Tier 2 skilled worker visa regime, which, if put into practice, will undermine Britain’s future economic prosperity. Currently, it is policy to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands; however, under EU law, the UK is unable to cut the number of EU nationals entering the country................

Blogs

Getting more Women into Science

11th February 2016 is the first ‘International Day of Women and Girls in Science’. It is in response to the persistent underrepresentation of women in science disciplines and careers. For example, a 2013 study found that in most countries, women published significantly fewer than half of all research papers. Read more...
Africa Question Time: Agency, Power, Past and Future

Across international politics, narratives and understandings of contemporary situations are constantly shifting and contested. In many ways, discussions of Africa exemplify this trend more than any other region. Read more...

What does Australia Day mean to you?

To me, Australia Day mainly means a day off at the beach with mates, probably enjoying a beer, a barbecue and having Triple J’s ‘Hottest 100’ playing on the radio in the background. In one sense, that’s about it - and that’s what I think is brilliant about it. Read on...

The Queen’s Commonwealth Essay Competition 2016 »

The theme for 2016 is ‘An Inclusive Commonwealth’, which is also the 2016 Commonwealth Year theme, and a topical theme for today’s youth. Both Senior and Junior topics give young people the opportunity to think about aspects of the theme such as: the significance of community; the importance of diversity and difference; the question of belonging; the values of tolerance, respect and understanding; and the sense of shared responsibility that exists within the Commonwealth today. The topics are a chance to develop critical thinking and to express views in a creative manner. Essays can be submitted until 1st May 2016.

27/11/2015 | Commonwealth honours Her Majesty the Queen with a 'Commonwealth Canopy'

The Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy, a Commonwealth-wide forestry conservation initiative is announced

*****************************************************

Our thoughts are with the people of Fiji who are suffering the aftermath of the terrible Cat. 5 tropical cyclone Winston which made landfall in Fiji on Saturday, killing at least 29 people and leaving more than 13,000 homeless. Strong winds and flooding from Winston have caused severe damage across the island nation. A month-long state of disaster has also been declared.

*****************************************************