



# THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

## Victoria Branch

### Commonwealth News

*We will take a leading role in achieving a fairer world for Commonwealth citizens by connecting, convening and equipping people to advance the values of the Commonwealth.*



Welcome to the March 2020 edition of the RCS Victoria Commonwealth News. Our branch has been fortunate to have already a number of successful events this year. Our Essay Awards Night and Luncheon were well attended; please see the reports in this edition.

The Council have been busy planning a range of activities and events for this year. We have started lining up a great list of speakers who will talk to various topics that address the 16 core values that underpin the Commonwealth of Nations.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

#### Patrons

Worldwide: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
Victoria: Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AC Governor of Victoria

### MARCH 2020

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*We want to improve the lives and prospects of all Commonwealth citizens*

### A history in common, a future in progress

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and high-level advocacy, the Society champions the importance of literacy, equality and inclusion, the environment and connected communities across the Commonwealth's 53 member nations. The

Society's unique position within the Commonwealth family allows it to play a pivotal role in convening and connecting the Commonwealth's political and diplomatic representatives, as well as industry, civil society, academic and business leaders, on a wide range of issues. Founded in 1868, the RCS is non-partisan, independent of governments and relies on public generosity to achieve its mission.

## Future Events

### Dinner 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020

#### Commonwealth Day Dinner.

The RCS Victoria Branch in partnership with the CBCS will be hosting the Annual Commonwealth Day Dinner at the Gables

Speaker: Catroina Boyd

**TIME:** 6:30pm – Drinks & Canapés on arrival, Dinner & Dessert

**RSVP:** by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**COST:** \$65 Members \$75 non members

### Dinner 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020

#### ANZAC Dinner.

The RCS Victoria Branch will be remembering and celebrating the lives lost in WWI and WWII.

Speaker to be advised

**TIME:** 6:30pm – Drinks & Canapés on arrival, Dinner & Dessert

**RSVP:** by 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

**COST:** \$65 Members \$75 non members



### Membership Reminder

*Membership subscriptions were due on the 1st of January 2020. Payments can be made by cheque or by direct transfer. Please see details on final page.*

*Thank you to those who have paid already.*

## Guest Profile: Catriona Boyd



The RCS Victoria Branch in partnership with the CBCS are delighted to welcome Cartiona Boyd to the Commonwealth Day Dinner.

Catriona Boyd is the newly-appointed Deputy Consul-General at the British Consulate General in Melbourne. Catriona is focused on ensuring the maximum benefit is realised from the UK industrial strategy in Australia across industry, civil society and government.

Prior to her posting in Melbourne, Catriona led a team working on citizens' rights policy in the Department for Exiting the European Union and was responsible for engaging with UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK about their rights post-brexite.

Catriona started her civil service career in the Department of Health and Social Care, working as a Private Secretary to the Minister for Public Health and Primary Care and covered a portfolio spanning primary care, international health and NHS England sponsorship. Prior to the civil service and with a background in legal studies, Catriona led the expansion of youth engagement for JUSTICE, a human rights and legal reform background.

## Women's Group News for March 2020

### LUNCHEON:

At the first luncheon of the year, held Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February, we welcomed Mr Brian Williams, Regional Officer at Consumer Affairs Victoria Department of Justice Box Hill Service Centre. Brian gave a most interesting and enlightening presentation about various scams and tricks that fake tradies come up with.

Over \$400 million is lost due to scams in one year with about \$1.3 million going to Nigeria. The biggest losses are caused by financial scams followed closely by dating or romantic scams. Identity theft is under reported; never give away any personal data such as date of birth and never say "yes" to anything if speaking on the phone; if have a suspected scammer on the phone, put the phone down. Scammers looking for financial gain tend to focus on older citizens as they are likely to have money but tend to be not so familiar with the use of IT, though that is changing with older citizens become more adapt with IT.

Common among the fake tradies are the roof "repairers" who also tend to target the older citizen who cannot inspect their roofs. Beware of the tradie who wants payment up front and who offers to take one to an ATM to get cash. Scammers and fake tradies are continuously changing tactics. Being aware these people exist and forever being cautious one ought to be able to stay safe.

The Councillors and Members of the Women's Group Committee were pleased to welcome a good number of members and guests at the lunch and look forward to welcoming you to the next luncheon in May. Other luncheons for the year are 27<sup>th</sup> Aug. and 26<sup>th</sup> Nov.



### WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group Committee thanks members for supporting the luncheons. A certain amount of work goes into finding interesting speakers and then being in contact with them.

Thanks also for supporting the raffles, which we hold at all luncheons, and selected dinners. The raffle at the February luncheon raised over \$100.00.

I, Elisabeth, would like to thank members for the congratulations acknowledging the honour I received in the 2020 Australia Day Honours List. I look on it as an honour to all who have supported and helped me over many years mostly advocating for the improvement in the status and general wellbeing of women = Equality.

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## Queen's Essay Competition Award Night



On the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, The RCS Victoria Branch were delighted to hold the annual Queen's Essay Competition Awards night at the Gables.

We had over 20 students, their parents and teachers attend the event to hear the winners of our local competition. All students received a certificate and a RCS Victoria Gift Card.

Council members spent time listening to the students about the stories they submitted and what a Connected Commonwealth meant for them as young people and our future leaders.

The new theme was announced by our President and was received with excitement by the students and teachers

Education remains one of the key values of the Commonwealth of Nations and a key goal of the RCS Victoria Branch. This was further highlighted on the night through the attendance of our RMIT Scholarship recipient. Our branch welcomes ideas from our members on how we can further promote and support education in our local communities

## News from around the Commonwealth

### 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council

The Commonwealth of 54 countries, 32 of which are small, are facing a climate change emergency that is costing lives and presenting an “undeniable human rights challenge” to the world.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland today addressed the High Level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council’s 43rd Regular Session in Geneva.

She said: “The stark reality for many states is that their people are losing lives, facing malnutrition, unable to find clean water and their homes are disappearing right before our eyes.

“From the devastation of hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas last year to the wrath of bushfires in Australia, from severe drought in Namibia to islands inundated with king tides in Kiribati, climate change is a threat to the world and an emergency for small states.”

The Secretary-General said the Commonwealth advocates for changes in policies, modification of behaviour and curbs in pollution to reverse damage to our environment and ensure climate justice, especially for small states.

She spoke of the barriers to advancing human rights and inclusive development still faced by



many victims of discrimination around the Commonwealth. This includes women, LGBTI persons and indigenous peoples.

“This year’s Commonwealth theme is ‘Delivering a Common Future’. This future cannot be ‘common’ without being inherently inclusive. Simply put, we have to respect the dignity and equality of all citizens in the Commonwealth family,” she said.

The Secretary-General added: “We remain steadfast in our commitment to support member states improve access to justice through strengthening national human rights institutions, ensuring independent judiciaries, improving capacity of officials to apply human rights standards, and reducing financial and bureaucratic barriers for people to access police, administrative offices and courts.”

<https://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/climate-crisis-global-human-rights-challenge>

## CONTACT DETAILS



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### Banking details

General and function  
banking

CBA, BSB no: 063 -301 Acc  
no: 10483586

Donations and charitable  
giving

CBA, BSB no: 063 -301 Acc  
no: 10486533

EFTPOS is now available at  
all functions