



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 July 2020 edition of the RCS Victoria Commonwealth News. As we continue in to our fourth month of restrictions, we are remain conscious of the impacts this has had on many of our members.

Planning for our events this year has continued. This includes our 100 year Celebration and the International Meeting.

Unfortunately, due to the tightening of restrictions we have been required to cancel our July dinner. We are hoping the August luncheon is able to go ahead. Please see details in the announcement page.

Please stay safe and 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

JULY 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 54 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.

The Commonwealth in Profile

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal sovereign states encompassing many ethnicities and faiths. Each is committed to upholding shared values and principles to promote and protect Democracy, Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Equality for all citizens in accordance with the **Commonwealth Charter**.

The modern Commonwealth spans the six regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific. Thirty-one members are small states, many of which are island nations. The total population is assessed at 2.4 billion people, approximately one third of the world, of which 1.5 billion are under 30 years of age.

The Commonwealth welcomed its 54th family member after Maldives' application for re-admission was approved. The small island nation officially re-joined the Commonwealth at 00:01 today (Saturday, February 1 2020)

The relevance and strength of the modern Commonwealth lies in its network of diaspora, cultural and sporting links, the widespread use of a common

language and a strong shared legal heritage. These values, characteristics, and interests have endangered a common interest and trust between the peoples and communities of this unique and widely diverse association of independent countries.

Outside of the core of inter-governmental agencies, the Commonwealth benefits from a number of civil society and professional bodies that represent the evolution of the modern Commonwealth and the many links between peoples, communities and interests upon which it is built. The Royal Commonwealth Society is a leading body within this group of independent organisations.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

JULY DINNER – CANCELLED

This dinner has been cancelled due to restrictions.

AUGUST LUNCHEON - TBC

When: 27th August 2020

Time: 12:00pm

Cost: \$45 members - \$55 non-members

Theme: TBA

RSVP: 20th August 2020

Please note this luncheon is still pending restrictions and may be limited to a smaller number of attendees.

RCS Victoria Centenary and International Meeting

Preparations are underway for one of the biggest years in the history of our branch. This will be an amazing milestone and having the International Meeting we will be able to show case all the great work done by our members over the years. There are opportunities available for

members to assist in bringing these events to fruition.

If you would like to offer your assistance, please contact the RCS Victoria Branch office.



Women's Group News for June 2020

The Women's Group Committee Members, Elisabeth Newman, Jan Prassas, Loretta Simmons and Elisabeth Bettoni send greetings to all members hoping you are well and are not finding it too difficult managing the restrictions.

If any of you are feeling cut off and would like somebody to talk to, please contact me, ph. 9699 9170, if no answer please leave your phone no. I, or one of the Committee Members, will ring you.

It did look hopeful that we would be able to hold the luncheon planned for August but since the increase in the cases of the corona virus this may not be possible. If we can hold the

luncheon it is proposed we do not have a speaker; we will celebrate being together and catch up on one another's news. Keep Thursday 27th August free in case we can meet.- You will be notified.

It is still impossible to plan anything, with any certainty, more than a day ahead.

Elisabeth Newman AM
Women's Group Convener

RCS APPOINTS NEW AMBASSADORS

To mark the Society's 152nd anniversary, Geri Horner, David Walliams, Alexandra Burke and Gyles Brandreth have been appointed as inaugural Ambassadors.

Dr Linda Yueh, Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society, said: 'Throughout our long history, the Society has worked tirelessly to promote both the value, and the values, of the Commonwealth and to improve the lives of citizens across its 54 countries. Today, through youth empowerment, education and high-level advocacy, the Society champions the importance of connected communities, literacy, equality, and the environment. We look forward to working with Geri, David, Alexandra and Gyles to help us engage with a broader audience of individuals and organisations that share our vision of a better world.'

Brit Award-winning singer-songwriter and best-selling author Geri Horner (née Halliwell) has long used her voice to uplift and empower others through her charity and humanitarian work. As an advocate for connected and harmonious communities, Geri will bring her considerable experience, gained through her appointments as a UN Goodwill Ambassador and Ambassador of The Prince's Trust, to the Society, promoting the importance of communities coming together to break down barriers and listen and learn from each other.

Comedian, actor, best-selling children's author and devoted supporter of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, David Walliams, will use his appointment to encourage the Commonwealth's young people to use their imagination and creativity to consider how the Commonwealth's values, including tolerance, respect and understanding, and protection for the environment, impact not only on their lives but also the lives of citizens from all across the 54 countries of the Commonwealth.

Having delivered a truly memorable performance at the 2020 Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey, Brit Nominee Alexandra Burke will seek to promote meaningful and impactful education opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth through her appointment. As an Ambassador of the Notting Hill

Carnival and The Prince's Trust, Alexandra strongly believes in the power and need for equal and inclusive communities in today's society.

Writer, broadcaster, actor and former MP, Gyles Brandreth, is also a long-term supporter of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition, having been the master of ceremonies at the annual awards ceremony at Buckingham Palace for the past few years. Having visited Commonwealth countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean, Gyles wishes to use his appointment to encourage young people to engage with current affairs and express their views and opinions on critical matters such as climate action.

"I am delighted to have become an inaugural Ambassador of the Royal Commonwealth Society. Throughout my life, I have been a big believer in the power of coming together and breaking down barriers. In such uncertain times, it is more important than ever that we, as a global community, continue to listen and learn from each other and stay united on our shared values as we take positive steps in climate action, and achieving racial and gender equality." Geri Horner



News from around the Commonwealth



Commonwealth calls for governments to intensify action on land use to meet climate targets

The Commonwealth Secretariat is calling on member countries to consider the impact of agriculture, forestry and land use on climate change as they update their climate targets.

Nationally Determined Contributions

A review of existing targets, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), submitted by Commonwealth countries has shown that biodiversity, soil and water and climate resilient agriculture should be areas of focus for both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

As it stands, countries are missing substantial opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce climate vulnerability in cost-effective ways by not maximising the potential of sustainable land management practices.

Climate emergency

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said:

“There is still time to avert the climate emergency, but that window is closing fast. To keep the global temperature increase to below 2°C, countries must take bold action to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050.

“On World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, we are reminded of the importance of judiciously managing our land resources to reduce emissions and increase resilience. Land based climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies are essential to help countries achieve their targets.”

Sustainable land management

Agriculture, forestry and other land use represents around 24% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable land management practices such as:

- reforestation
- improved water management
- conservation agriculture
- integrated soil fertility management
- agroforestry

These practices can reduce climate vulnerability, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide carbon sinks to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The Commonwealth Secretariat, through the [Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub](#), is working with the NDC Partnership to design climate finance strategies and support member countries to revise and implement their NDCs.

Source: <https://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-calls-governments-intensify-action-land-use-meet-climate-targets>

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