



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.*



Summer has sadly come to an end for 2021 but the RCSVIC Branch is gearing up to give its members the warmest centenary celebrations of all time. Our Vice President James McCarthy has provided us with the second tasteful instalment of our historical journey of the 100 years of RCS Victoria Branch, this month focusing on the 1930's.

The Queens Essay Competition has been launched in London with this 2021 subject being *Community in the Commonwealth*.

### Patrons

Worldwide: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Victoria: Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AC Governor of Victoria

## MARCH 2021

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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.

# Presidents Report

Dear Fellows, members and Friends,  
You will all be aware that on 8th February, RCS, Victoria became 100 years young. At our first function for 2021 we unfurled a new Banner in celebration of our historic centenary. One of our younger Fellows Dominic La Rocca assisted Elisabeth Newman and myself to display the new Banner.

Our next Function on the 11th March, Commonwealth Day Dinner, where we will also unfurl the new Banner to continue celebrations. We are endeavouring to have a 1920's theme, to the room and guests are invited to wear 1920 clothes, although this is not mandatory as we understand that it will not be practical for some, however we do expect Guests to wear Black Tie for the evening. For details check Announcements. There have been recent developments across the Commonwealth and the RCS that we are currently working. We have joined in an open letter to the London office where we are seeking a collaborative approach to ensure our Branch and others are able to work together to meet the values

of the Commonwealth of Nations. If you would like to see this letter or have further information, please contact James McCarthy who is working on this project.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Commonwealth Day dinner.

Lloyd Byrne  
President  
RCS Victoria



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2021 INTERNATIONAL MEETING

RCSVic Branch won the right to host the International Meeting which was scheduled for October 2021.

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions into Australia, we have postponed conference by 6 months in the hope our fellow Commonwealth Members can travel more freely to Melbourne.

We will keep you posted on the new dates for March-April 2022

**RCSVIC has new email addresses:**

Lloyd Byrne - [president@rcsvic.org](mailto:president@rcsvic.org)

James McCarthy - [secretary@rcsvic.org](mailto:secretary@rcsvic.org)

Administration - [admin@rcsvic.org](mailto:admin@rcsvic.org)

### MARCH DINNER

Commonwealth Day Celebration

DATE: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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

COST: \$65 Members \$75 Guests

THEME: 1920'S dress code or Black Tie

RSVP: is essential by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to avoid disappointment on the night. Please email Simon on [admin@rcsvic.org](mailto:admin@rcsvic.org) or phone 03 9571 5688

### 2021 EVENTS CALANDAR

#### 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Dinner

ANZAC Day 1940's War Theme with guest speaker

#### 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Luncheon

1950's theme including The Queen's Coronation & Royal Visit

# Women's Group Message

It was lovely to see so many members – 28 including a few guests, at the luncheon on 11<sup>th</sup> February which was very well received. Not only was it a celebration of being able to have lunch together once again after a year's break, but a celebration of 100 years of the Royal Commonwealth Society Victoria Branch.

The Women's Group was honoured to host the first of many celebrations for this year. There was much chatter with members catching up with each other's news of the past year. We chose not to have a guest speaker, our President Lloyd Byrne gave a brief outline of the early years of the Society in Victoria and of its first true home in Queen's Street which soon became too small, hence the move to bigger premises in Queens Road; Elisabeth was the only member present who remembers the two houses and the move to the Gables.

Our new RCS banner was unveiled by Dominic La Rocca, a young member of the Society, with assistance from Elisabeth. No celebration is complete without a celebratory cake which was cut by Lloyd and Elisabeth & celebratory biscuits to take home. Loretta Simmons

organised a lucky prize for each of the three tables & the raffle which raised \$137.50 for the Charitable Fund.

I thank all who attended and assisted to make the luncheon a great success. We do apologise for some inconvenience caused to bookings due to email problems during the month.

The Women's Group Committee Members look forward to welcoming you all to the next luncheon on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 12:30pm for 1 o'clock start.

Elisabeth Newman  
Women's Group Convener



## Royal Commonwealth Society Victoria Branch Historical Highlights – 1930's

### Australian Book Exhibition

The Royal Empire Society collaborated to host the Australian Book Exhibition in London at Australia House. This was to highlight the talents of authors from Australia. The exhibition was such a success that it was extended from 1 week to 3 weeks. About 2,000 volumes of work were displayed and over 300 lent by the Society

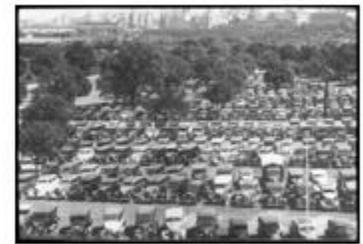


1931

1933-5

### Victoria and a new King

On December 11 1936, King George VI ascended the throne. The Branch set its focus on engaging youth in the Empire through creating a Junior Section of the Branch. The branch hosted lecture, on Rhodesia, South Africa, and The New Palestine. Almost 2,000 entries were received in the School Essay Competition, many from Victoria.



1936-7

1939

### Melbourne Celebrates

The Victorian Government purchased the cottage in Great Ayton previously owned by the Cook family. This would be re-erected in Melbourne as a memorial to Captain James Cook. In 1934, Melbourne commenced celebrating 100 years of settlement with all the pomp and pageantry that fits such an occasion. Empire Day was celebrated by the Society at the Hotel Windsor.



### Resilient Victoria

1939 saw the end of the Great Depression that had lasted almost a decade. Increased productivity in wheat and gold from across Victoria aided the recovery. 70 lives were lost in the Black Friday bush fires, the Melbourne Branch assisted with raising funds. Australia declare war on Germany.



# News from around the Commonwealth



## Webinar: The Road to CHOGM

In June 2021 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali, the UK will hand over to Rwanda as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth.

CHOGM will be the first major summit since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which will enable governments, civil society and business to come together to help inform the priorities for Rwanda's Chair-in-Office period.

Commonwealth leaders will convene under the overarching theme: 'Delivering a Common Future: Connecting, Innovating, Transforming,' building on the CHOGM 2018 outcomes which were inspired by the theme 'Towards a Common Future'. Delivering achievable, comprehensive, meaningful, and powerful initiatives that effect change will be at the forefront of discussions.

This webinar will explore questions such as:

What are the UK's priorities on the road to CHOGM? And what does the UK view as its key achievements from last few years?

With Rwanda becoming Chair, what is on the agenda for the Commonwealth?

How will the Commonwealth collectively seek to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other shared challenges?

We are privileged to be joined by a distinguished group of panellists to discuss these questions:

Dr Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Government of Rwanda

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK Government

Moderator: Dr Linda Yueh, Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society

For webinar registration please go to

<https://www.royalcwsociety.org/Event/road-to-chogm>

## CONTACT DETAILS



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"The Gables"

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## Banking details

### General & function banking

Commonwealth Bank  
BSB: 063 -301  
A/C: 10483586

### Donations & charitable giving

Commonwealth Bank  
BSB: 063 -301  
A/C: 10486533

EFTPOS/Credit Cards is  
available at all functions.