



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 edition of RCS Victoria Branch Commonwealth News.

Once again restrictions forced our Queens Birthday June Black Tie Dinner to be postponed to now be incorporated to our double celebratory July Dinner. If you can attend, please do as this is sure to be an evening you do not want to miss.

Our timeline of the 100 years of RCS Victoria continues with the 1970's featured in this issue.

Please stay safe and look out for those who maybe needing extra care during these tough times.

Worldwide: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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

## July 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 and Members,

I expect you are all looking forward to lockdown finishing and getting back to some normality.

Our next Function on the 8th of July will be a double celebration, firstly, we will cover another decade of our Centenary Year, and more importantly launch of our new venture.

Our Society is commencing the operation of our new business venture within our magnificent building here in Malvern East. Plans are progressing well, and we hope to be fully operational within the next month. Having full control of the venue will provide Members and Fellows with more friendly atmosphere and control of our destiny. The new business will be called "Gables on Finch" and I look forward to announcing at our next function on 8th July further details & plans.

For those who cannot attend the July dinner I will forward relevant information in due course.

Lloyd Byrne  
President  
RCS Victoria



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2021 EVENTS CALANDAR

#### JULY DINNER

DATE: Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021

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

DRESS CODE: Black Tie with decorations & awards

THEME: 1960-70 Commonwealth of Nations & Australia

RSVP: Essential by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, please email Simon on [admin@rcsvic.org](mailto:admin@rcsvic.org)

#### AUGUST LUNCHEON

With guest speaker Mr John Barnes

DATE: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

TIME: 12:00pm

#### SEPTEMBER DINNER

DATE: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Webinar:** Small State & Investor-State Dispute Settlement

**Date:** 5 July 2021 9pm London GMT

This webinar will provide a practical introduction to investor-state dispute settlement with a focus on the Pacific region.

Follow this link to join:

<https://thecommonwealth.org/media/event/event-small-states-and-investor-state-dispute-settlement-webinar>

**Webinar:** Rule of Law Virtual Conversations

**Date:** 13 July 2021 to 15 July 2021

The Commonwealth Secretariat will be hosting the Rule of Law Virtual Conversations, a series of webinars addressing contemporary legal topics.

Follow this link for information:

<https://thecommonwealth.org/media/event/event-rule-law-virtual-conversations>



# Women's Group Message

We very much look forward to greeting many of you at the next luncheon on 12<sup>th</sup> August, at 12.00 hrs for 12.30 hrs, to welcome Mr John Barns the guest speaker. John has been a Rotarian for over forty-three years and, additionally, is a committed volunteer with Interplast Australia, the not-for-profit organisation founded by Rotarians and the Royal Australian College of Surgeons in 1983, which does some amazing work in the Asia-Pacific region. We very much look forward to welcoming John to the RCS and hearing a most interesting presentation about his work with Rotary, titled "Service above Self - a 43 year journey".

With 2021 being the 100th anniversary of the RCS in Victoria, the celebrations continue. In August you are encourage to dressed in 70's clothes. I am sure you will be able find some article(s) of clothing and/or accessories hidden at the back of the wardrobe dating from the 1970s. Get them out, give them a dust over and wear them on 12<sup>th</sup> August. There will be a small raffle and possibly a few other items of interest. Further detail in the August newsletter.

The Women's Group members were saddened to learn of the death of Charles Hulson. Charles had been a long-term supporter of the Women's Group and the luncheons. He, with his cheerful manner, was always willing to help with the raffle and setting up the room. He will be greatly missed. I was able to be "present", virtually, at the funeral. May Charles rest in peace.

On June 12<sup>th</sup> I joined the interesting online forum called "Safeguarding Oceans and our Well Being." organised by the Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Environmental Working Group for the Royal Commonwealth Society. Lloyd Byrne also took part, and I was joined by a colleague from the International Council of Women, Wendy Rainbird. The two of us drafted the attached report for your information. The forum focused on the Pacific Ocean and the detrimental effects man and climate change are causing.

Elisabeth Newman  
Women's Group Convenor

## Royal Commonwealth Society Victoria Branch Historical Highlights – 1970's

### Continued Growth

Membership of the Victorian Branch enjoyed a great sense of stability. This enabled the purchase of and expansion in to 20 Queens Road Melbourne. The Branch established a purpose built hall to cater for a range of events and gatherings including movie nights.



### Our New Home

Following the sale of our premises on Queens Road, in 1976 the Melbourne Branch purchased The Gables in East Malvern. The building was officially opened by Sir Henry Winneke KCMG OBE KStJ QC in March 1977. This purchase represented the future security of the organisation and its place in Victoria.



1970-2

1973-4

1975-6

1977-9

### Freedom and Support

In 1973 Papua New Guinea was granted self government prior to its independence. The Melbourne Branch, along with the other Australian Branches, were supporters and advocates of this change. In the late hours of Christmas Eve 1974, the city of Darwin was devastated by Cyclone Tracey. The Melbourne Branch joined in the efforts to raise funds and resources to support the people of Darwin.



### Royal Celebration

To mark the Queens Silver Jubilee in 1977, Her Majesty visited 14 Commonwealth countries and travelled over 56,000 kms. In Melbourne, The Queen attended a Childrens Rally in Royal Park. The RCS commemorated the milestone with a vase made by Coalport and two medallions featuring all the Kings and Queens of England and the UK made by the Franklin Mint.

# News from around The Commonwealth



## The Commonwealth

### Working together the only viable way forward, says Secretary-General.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland has set out how an agile Secretariat has managed to support multilateral cooperation between member countries in the face of multiple challenges.

In a keynote address to the Middle Temple Inn of Courton Monday 14 June, Patricia Scotland revealed the strategies the Commonwealth Secretariat has employed to maintain the development and delivery of values to institutions and communities.

In her lecture "From vision to delivery; the Commonwealth fit for the 21st century" the Secretary-General explained how the Commonwealth had become a model for the thorough patterns and processes necessary for multilateral cooperation, how different approaches can be taken, & how the world can organise to enable the voices of all groups & nations to be heard. She said: "Indeed, the Commonwealth as it is now born after a time of awful conflict out of a collective investment in something new. It was established by a generation who, having spent blood and treasure in the global conflict of the Second World War, saw that equality and partnership could offer a new and more hopeful future.

"They understood that the old ways of domination by a few would only lead us to more conflict, and so in the foundation of the Commonwealth after the war invested in a new and more equal model.

"Our rootedness in equality, our insistence that all voices are listened to no matter their size has meant that we have been alive to the challenges we all face way before many larger and more encumbered international organisations are able to act."

Describing how climatic crisis and COVID-19 have impacted lives and livelihoods around the world, the Secretary-General said the crises have stripped away many of the world's pretences of independence and demonstrated our interdependence.

She said: "COVID-19 variants are far and away the biggest menace to our future prosperity and health - and a threat that can only be dealt with together."

Looking ahead to the day the world finally overcomes the pandemic, the Secretary-General said: "We must not fall back into the old patterns of the large dominating the small or the affluent ignoring the concerns of the poorer."

"Not just because we see the injustice in this, but because the last year has taught us that it is actually against the best interests of the strong to ignore the plight of the more vulnerable."

The Secretary-General also commended the Middle Temple in its support for equality and diversity:

She said: "Like the Commonwealth, Middle Temple has a proud history of supporting equality and diversity and I want to take a moment to commend the Masters for their ongoing commitment to uphold the values upon which the Inn was built."

Source: <https://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/working-together-only-viable-way-forward-says-secretary-general>

## Contact Details



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### 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.



# SAFEGUARDING OCEANS AND OUR WELL BEING

Report by Wendy Rainbird & Elisabeth Newman, June 2021.

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Elisabeth Newman and Wendy Rainbird, Environment Advisor for the International Council of Women (ICW-CIF) participated on an online forum called “Safeguarding Oceans and our Well Being.” organised by the Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Environmental Working Group for the Royal Commonwealth Society

Prior to the forum, at the suggestion of the organiser, Wendy sent the following for comment, which was based on her research into the state of the oceans:

Her question was: What are the plans of action that are needed for positive action about the following:”

1. Oceans are absorbing 90% of the excess heat in the global climate system. This results in marine heat waves affecting nurseries, coral reefs, kelp forests and exacerbates violent storms.
2. The excess carbon dioxide that oceans are absorbing is increasing ocean acidification and all its consequences.
3. Humans are polluting oceans with large amounts of plastic.
4. Humans are overfishing with about 33% of fish species over exploited.


The four speakers at the forum representing Pacific Island countries were:


- Sivendra Michael, Pacific Climate Warrior and University of Auckland Student
- Paul Kennerley, consultant, not-for-profit, and writer
- Kosi Latu, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environment Programme (SPREP).
- Peter Davies, Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Advisor, SPREP

For Pacific Islanders, the Pacific Ocean means a lot, so if anything is wrong with ocean it affects even basic beliefs. Kosi Latu spoke about the accelerating loss of biodiversity due to stressors like sea-bed mining, mining on land, coastal development and pollution.

The Panel called for global cooperation and collaboration and the need for policies and advocacy beyond the region while showing real action on the ground.

They spoke particularly about plastic pollution. Paul Kennerley told of the appalling amount of plastic pollution, estimated to be 37.7 million pieces that accumulate, due to currents and winds, on the very remote Pacific Island of Henderson Island in the Pitcairn group that is thousands of miles from any country. Plastics break down into micro-plastics, even nano-plastics that get into marine organisms, and into the human food chain. 40-50% of marine plastics come from Asian countries, or from Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Australia and New Zealand.





Plastic waste is a global problem that needs global cooperation.

They spoke about deep-sea mining and again, the need for global cooperation, and retrofitting the 1980s UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. There needs to be capacity for perpetrators to be held to account. Similarly with fleets of huge fishing vessels that are over-fishing leaving fish stocks depleted, and often dredging deeply and damaging the whole ecosystem.

The International Maritime Organisations needs to address such serious problems with cooperation from larger countries, including the USA, Australia and New Zealand, to help cover such large areas for a Sustainable Management codes that are monitored and that harsh enough penalties occur.

Peter Davies spoke about the value of eco systems in general and of the success of the Pitcairn Marine Protected Area, which is now showing recovery. By allowing some Marine Protected zones, fish and other marine species have places in which to recover and thrive.

The Panel then followed up on the question about actions to take concerning the oceans absorbing so much carbon dioxide that it is acidifying. They all saw this as a serious problem affecting coral reefs, marine organisms, and therefore livelihoods and well-being.

They called for a speeding up of the transition to clean energy to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

In ending, Silvendra Michael spoke about Fijian Youth being at the next COP (Conference of Parties) 26 that is to be held in Glasgow later in 2021. The Pacific voice is clear and strong. Youth are part of that voice.

