



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
Victoria Branch



COMMONWEALTH NEWS

DECEMBER 2016

A history in common, a future in progress

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 . Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the Royal Commonwealth Society promotes the value of fellowship and the values of the Commonwealth Charter

Worldwide Patron: HM the Queen.

Victoria Patron: Her Excellency The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria

NEXT DINNER MEETING: Thursday 08th December 2016
THEME: Christmas
SPEAKER: Everyone, including some music and some fun and some good cheer.
ATTIRE: Black Tie, Lounge Suit – Evening wear,
TALK: Everything and nothing - a reflection on 2016, gifts & life in general.

Bookings are to be made email or by leaving a message on the office PHONE: 9571 5688:

NO later than 2pm Wednesday 1st December 2016

DINNER CONTRIBUTION:

Members \$60 Guests \$70

630pm - Pre Dinner drinks

Please note that ALL Bookings made AFTER Wednesday, 1st December may incur a \$5 Administration surcharge, due to catering changes

LUNCHEON

Next luncheon: Thursday 24th November 2016

Time: 12.00hr for 12.30hr

Speaker: Mr. John Sutcliffe

Topic: Theatre Organ Society

RSVP by: Wednesday 17th November

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

DINNER MEETING in NOVEMBER : GUEST OF HONOUR AND SPEAKER

Mr. Des O'Keefe - General Manager, Victorian Jockey's Association.

What a speaker!, engaging, articulate, informative and a very worthy adjunct to our speaking list for 2016.

We learnt more about the real people behind Victoria's Jockey's and horse racing, than a lifetime of googling could ever achieve.

LUNCHEON:

The next luncheon on Thursday 24th November will be the last for the year so please attend.

We are pleased to have Mr John Sutcliffe, President of the Theatre Organ Society Australia (TOSA) as our guest speaker. Mr Sutcliffe will speak about TOSA, the work it does and no doubt give an insight to next year's programme.

As is customary, the Women's Group Committee will provide treats to make this a special occasion.

All members of the RCS and their guests are welcome to the luncheons, we thus look forward to seeing many/all of you in attendance to make this a truly festive occasion and to give a warm welcome to Mr John Sutcliffe.

The first luncheon for 2017 will be on Thursday 16th February. More details to come.

WOMEN'S GROUP NEWS:

The Women's Group Committee thanks all who supported the fund raising effort at the November dinner. Thanks to those who donated gifts for the trading table and the raffle and thanks to those who purchased gifts.

We are pleased to announce that a considerable amount was raised. As Members of the Society your contributions are much appreciated.

The Annual General Meeting of the Women's Group will be prior to the February luncheon on Thursday 16th commencing at 11.15 hrs.

All lady members of the RCS are eligible to stand for the committee and are urged to attend the meeting.

As the Festive season is just about upon us, the Women's Group Committee wishes to take this opportunity to wish all members a joyous Christmas and may 2017 bring you good health and happiness.

For queries about the Women's Group, and for information about fund-raising please contact Elisabeth Newman; ph: 9699 9170 or email: elisabeth_mn@hotmail.com

CHARITABLE GIVING

We have recently heard from Siu Cocker, our representative in Tonga who oversees your giving there, that the water tank we donated to Mou'nga'one Island for the school that was destroyed in the cyclone a year or so ago, is serving its purpose.

Since installation there has been enough rain to fill the tank so the children and other members of the small community have safe clean, fresh drinking water.

We believe this is the first time there has been such a tank on the island.

With this in mind, are looking to support such projects, and others, in keeping with the RCS objectives both in the Pacific region as well as in Victoria.

The Committee overseeing the giving is developing guide-lines and considering organisations/projects to support that fit into the RCS ideals.

It has been some time since we reviewed our meal contribution.

By necessity 2017 meal costs will increase:

Dinner contribution will be \$60 per person and Guests \$70

Luncheon Contribution will be \$45 per person and guests \$ 55

We were not going to justify this increase - however, just look at what we get, Pre meal drinks & (canapé's for Dinner) main and dessert, beverages - great Fellowship and Excellent Speakers who enlighten us, challenge us and entertain us.

What more is needed in this life, if it is not that which is filled with choices and/or dilemmas that enrich us all.

The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy

On 15 November, Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, hosted a Reception at Buckingham Palace to acknowledge the dedications from 20 countries across the Commonwealth to The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC).

The Reception was attended by high-profile guests including Sir David Attenborough, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, Boris Johnson, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Shawn Richards.



HM the Queen with Sir David Attenborough and Lalatiana Accouche, Principle Counsellor of the High Commission of the Seychelles, discussing the Seychelles QCC commitment to plant 20,000 trees on Mahe Island.

The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta, in 2015.

The QCC is a project designed to create a network of forest conservation initiatives throughout the 52 nations of the Commonwealth to mark Her Majesty The Queen's service and dedication as Head of the Commonwealth.



THE
**QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH
CANOPY**

Key Objectives

1. The QCC is committed to raising awareness within the Commonwealth of the value of indigenous forests and to saving them for future generations.
2. It will create a unique network of forest conservation projects that brings collective credibility and integrity to individual Commonwealth initiatives.
3. It will raise the profile of the Commonwealth, demonstrating the capacity of its 52 member countries to act together as one to ensure forest conservation.
4. It will use the Commonwealth network to facilitate a programme of knowledge exchange activities, to share best practice and to create new, collaborative initiatives that contribute to forest conservation across the globe.

For more information [Visit the Queens Commonwealth Canopy website](#) and [Download the leaflet](#)
Watch the video

Together our forests will thrive

Every Commonwealth country has the opportunity to participate in the QCC by nominating and dedicating existing or future conservation projects that meet with the broad objectives of the initiative.

Those countries with limited forest cover will also have the opportunity to participate through the planting of native trees, the conservation of other indigenous vegetation, or by supporting QCC partnerships with fellow Commonwealth members.

Cost-free commitment

A major advantage of the QCC is its utilisation of existing forestry resources and projects throughout the Commonwealth. Participation is free and comes without regulatory obligations for accredited projects. In fact, we believe helping to save the earth, shouldn't cost the earth.

Countries' Commitments - November 2016



LARGEST FOREST AREAS IN THE COMMONWEALTH
(in 1000ha)



The QCC is led by the RCS in partnership with [Cool Earth](#), an award winning UK-based charity that works alongside indigenous villages to halt rainforest destruction, and [The Commonwealth Forestry Association](#), which links foresters, scientists, students and policy-makers throughout the Commonwealth to seek ways of wise forest management.

The Royal Commonwealth Society has launched The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2017, focusing on the theme of A Commonwealth for Peace.

The launch coincides with the United Nations' International Day of Peace.



THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2017

Building upon the 2016 theme of An Inclusive Commonwealth, this year's topics ask young people to explore a deeper understanding of the meaning of peace and the role of the Commonwealth as a network of and for democracy, human rights and peace. The Director of The Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake CBE, said: Peace is at the heart of the Commonwealth as one of the core articles of the Commonwealth Charter.

This year's theme of 'A Commonwealth for Peace' asks young writers to explore peace at every level: from the personal to the political to the pan-Commonwealth. Sponsored by Cambridge University Press, this highly prestigious competition aims to challenge young people's thinking and the means by which they can express their views, using creative forms of writing such as essays, poems, stories or scripts. Judges described entries to the 2016 competition as 'imaginative', 'inspirational', 'ambitious' and 'profound'.

A similarly high calibre of writing is expected in 2017. The competition is open to all citizens and residents of the Commonwealth aged 18 and under and opens today until 1 May 2017. A Winner and Runner-up from both the Senior and Junior categories will win a trip to London for a weeklong series of educational and cultural events.

In recent years this week has included a special Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace in the presence of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. Rod Smith, Managing Director of Education at Cambridge University Press, said: The Royal Commonwealth Society shares our vision of empowerment through education, and we're thrilled to be sponsoring The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition once again.

We were astounded by the exceptional standard of entries in last year's competition and are looking forward to celebrating exciting new work and to finding new voices from across the Commonwealth in 2017.

The competition is open to all citizens and residents of the Commonwealth aged 18 and under and is open from 21 September until 1 May 2017. All entrants receive a Certificate of Participation and one Winner and Runner-up from the Senior and Junior categories will win a trip to London for a week-long series of educational and cultural events. For more information about the competition, [download the flyer](#) and please visit [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

The Victoria Essay 2016 Local awards night will again be held at "the Gables" in November. All Award winners will have a chance to win the Local Award. Judging has finished.

Youth & Education

Young people are an essential part of our international network.

Sixty percent of the Commonwealth is under 30 years of age and the skills, innovation and creativity of these young people represent an incredible opportunity in which we believe the Commonwealth must invest. At the Royal Commonwealth Society, we work with educationalists, students and youth leaders from across the 53 Commonwealth nations to try and help realise the potential of our growing youth population. [Home](#) » [News and Blogs](#) » Blogs

NEWS & Blogs

[Moving into the Commonwealth Hub](#)



It is often said that the Commonwealth and the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) within it must be continuously evolving to change with the times and to find new ways of working even more effectively to bring change to people's lives. [Read more...](#)

Posted on **14th Nov 2016** by **The Royal Commonwealth Society**

[Bringing the Family Together: Reflections on the RCS International Meeting](#)



As reported elsewhere on this website, the 2016 International Meeting of the RCS was held in London on 5-7 October (preceded by a two day youth programme on 3-4 October).

I offer here some personal reflections on this event. [Read more...](#)

Posted on **7th Nov 2016** by **Colin Milne**

Campaigns



LGBT Rights

In many Commonwealth countries LGBT citizens face persecution and discrimination on the basis of their sexuality and gender identity. The Royal Commonwealth Society seeks to build broad consensus within the Commonwealth for advancing the equal enjoyment of rights by all Commonwealth citizens.

[Read on..](#)



Child Marriage

Child, early and forced marriage affects every region of the Commonwealth, with the highest rates recorded across Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The practice affects girls' rights to health, education, equality, non-discrimination and a life free from violence and exploitation. The RCS has been working to end child marriage in the Commonwealth since 2010.