

REGIONAL NEWS

OCEANIA

Please note:
Next Editorial Deadline
23 August 2019



ROLAND ISLER
REGIONAL EDITOR | OCEANIA
COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD | AUSTRALIA

Editorial:

Dear readers, dear compatriots,

In this issue of the «Regional News Oceania» you find an extract of the summary compiled by three delegates from Australia that attended the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in Bern on Saturday, 23 March. Your elected team of delegates is working on your behalf and resolutely defends the interests of Swiss citizens in Oceania.

To see the full summary, please go to the CSA-Oceania website www.csa-oceania.org

Please take note that issue 4 and 6 of the «Swiss Review» do not have regional pages. Issue 5 therefore will be the last one this year to include the «Regional News Oceania».

Issue	Editorial deadline	Publication date
■ July 4/19	no regional edition	Thu, 18 July
■ September 5/19	Fri, 23 August	Thu, 26 September
■ November 6/19	no regional edition	Fri, 29 November

I look forward to receiving your contributions for issue 5 by the above editorial deadline. Please contact: risler@csa-oceania.org or +61 (0)412 935 565.

Summary of the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

Saturday, 23 March 2019, Bern Town Hall

The legislative body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA), met for its biannual meeting at the town hall in Bern on 23 March 2019. For the second time, the meeting followed on an exchange with Swiss parliamentarians for an update on political issues with relevance for the Swiss Abroad.

The CSA meeting on Saturday was chaired by OSA President Remo Gysin. Attending members of the Federal Parliament were Filippo Lombardi (CVP/TI, OSA Vice-President), Laurent Wehrli (FDP/VD, OSA board member), Carlo Zanetti (SVP/ZH, OSA board member) and Isabelle Moret (FDP/VD).

Attending as delegates from Australia were Carmen Trochsler (Adelaide), Beat Knoblauch (Sydney) and Katja Wallimann Gates (Brisbane).

Amongst the political issues discussed were the framework

agreement with the European Union, the increasing opposition against e-voting and the ongoing efforts to improve the Swiss bank situation. A presentation about the Swiss Old Age insurance by representatives from the 'Zentrale Ausgleichsstelle' (ZAS) provided helpful information about common AHV questions.

With a view to the upcoming federal parliament elections in October a draft election manifesto was approved. The Council decided for a questionnaire to be sent to members of parliament standing for re-election. They will be asked on their position to topics concerning the Swiss Abroad, notably the right to vote, international mobility, Switzerland's consular network and the policy of Swiss banks with expat clients.

YOUR AUSTRALIAN DELEGATES INTERVENED IN THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS:

■ Election of Council Delegates

There were critical voices from within the Council against the planned broadening of the electorate (ALL Swiss Abroad registered with a Consulate should be able to vote as opposed to only the Swiss Clubs having voting rights).

Continued overleaf



The **CSA Oceania** is your elected team of delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad – two from New Zealand and four from Australia. Together they work on behalf of the 32,000+ registered Swiss living in Oceania, defending their interests as Swiss citizens living in this region.

Visit their website www.csa-oceania.org

- for links to all **Swiss Community Groups**, Swiss Organisations and Swiss Consular Representations in Oceania
- for information about the **Organisation of the Swiss Abroad** and the **CSA Oceania** and the services they offer
- for **important information** about issues concerning Swiss Abroad

For any assistance or advice, contact the **CSA Oceania** on info@csa-oceania.org



From left to right: CSA Delegates Beat Knoblauch and Katja Wallimann Gates, with Delegate for Swiss Abroad Relations, FDFA, Bern Simone Flubacher, and CSA Delegate Carmen Trochsler

Katja Wallimann Gates spoke about her experience during the pilot project of all Swiss directly voting for the delegates in Australia in 2017. Carmen Trochsler followed up with facts and actual numbers and emphasised that representation of the Swiss Abroad is only possible if all Swiss can vote. Together it was one encouraging and positive statement for direct elections.

Franz Muheim (CSA from Scotland) presented results of a working group consisting of delegates from around the world, including Roland Isler, representing Australia. The group is investigating ways for the introduction of worldwide direct election of CSA delegates to take place in 2021, based on experience with pilot projects in Australia and Mexico in 2017. The electorate would be the country in general but could also be the consular district or regions.

What does online election of delegates mean: Start early with election preparation. Search for candidates, get them checked, inform Swiss Abroad via Swiss Review, social media, local newsletters, vote via e-voting.

Given the current resistance within Switzerland against e-voting in general the question remains what would be appropriate for the election of the delegates and what can be financed.

The topic will be further discussed at the meeting in Montreux in August.

■ Wealth Creation through the Swiss Abroad (positive contributions to Switzerland by Swiss Abroad)

This initiative by Beat Knoblauch, acknowledged by the CSA, will be passed on to 'Presence Suisse' in Bern. The CSA and the Secretariat have not sufficient funding in place for such an in-depth study: motion carried.

■ Cantonal Bank of Geneva

Difficulties of Swiss residents in Australia to establish a relationship with the Cantonal Bank of Geneva (BCGE), the new partner of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, had been addressed by Carmen Trochsler in the lead-up to the meeting. Discussions between the different parties helped to resolve the issues. Contact person for any request to open a bank account with the bank is StephanVayanos@bcge.ch

■ Budget of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

During the budget debate and setting the goals for the future, it became apparent that the CSA needs additional funding to meet the increasing demand and complexity of business in general. A motion by Beat Knoblauch was carried to put the need for additional funding on the agenda for 2019/2020.

■ Support of political parties

While meeting in a scheduled session in Bern with Swiss parliamentarians before the CSA session, discussions were held on the coming Federal Elections in October 2020. Your delegates mentioned that the Swiss Abroad take notice of the mood of the political parties and their stance in matters concerning the Swiss Abroad. The parties were urged to make a more concerted effort to get the votes from the Swiss Abroad.

■ Oceania Swiss Club President's Conference

Beat Knoblauch thanked the FDFA officially for delegating Mrs Simone Flubacher to the Oceania Swiss Club President's Conference, held in Sydney in September 2019. In his response (by video conference from Dubai), Mr Johannes Matyassy, Director of the Consular Directorate FDFA, congratulated the organisers and offered, wherever possible, to delegate someone from the department to attend such events. New Zealand was mentioned as the next venue to host the Oceania meeting in 2020.

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

(FDFA) presented by Simone Flubacher, Delegate for Swiss Abroad Relations:

- Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis will participate at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in August in Montreux.
- The 2018 Swiss Abroad statistic will be published on 28 March, available through use of an interactive database. www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/living-abroad/publications-statistics/statistics.html
- The new virtual desk (Online Desk) of the FDFA had 17,000 users in 2018. www.eda.admin.ch/countries/rwanda/en/home/services/online-desk.html
- Young Swiss Abroad are important to the FDFA.
 - A new website for young Swiss Abroad was created to provide helpful information including a short film. www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/living-abroad/fifth-switzerland/young-swiss-abroad.html
 - Successful 'Jungbürgerfeiern' have been held at clubs all over the world. The FDFA provides a welcome package for young Swiss Abroad on this occasion.
- Goals 2019 / What are the services provided in the future?
 - Improved digital offers (like Itineris app)
 - Website for young Swiss Abroad will be completed by webpage for young families abroad. Example: Consulate General in Nyon organised a 'Kinderfest'.

This is only a selection of topics that were on the agenda. To find the full summary, please visit the CSA-Oceania website: www.csa-oceania.org

CARMEN TROCHSLER, BEAT KNOBLAUCH, KATJA WALLIMANN GATES
COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD – AUSTRALIA

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Community News and Events

PNG: Swiss Embassy makes a difference in remote Highlands of PNG

14 February 2019 was a joyful day for the very remote community of Obura, Wonenara district. Thanks to the donation of the Swiss Embassy Australia a new double classroom, built by EBC carpentry team was opened by dozens of cheering girls. During the last ten years the church-run "Girls' Village School" had been operating in an open simple 'kunai-gras' hut. The two year vocational training program prepares young local ladies for their future!



NZ: Hamilton Swiss Club

Hamilton Club hiking and walking weekend was held on 29-31 March with about 16 attending. Apart from lots of socialising, drinking coffee schnapps and playing cards they managed to do a couple of walks. One group attempted to climb Mt Hauhungatahi but due to poor track markings and the weather not being so favourable the group turned back about an hour before the summit. The other group chose the Mangahui Track which was a well-formed track to a river where they had lunch and returned the same way. On Sunday



another walk was done to the Maungaokewa Reserve near Te Kuiti before the drive back to Hamilton and Auckland. They were treated to Swiss sausages and salad on Friday night and ham and sauerkraut on Saturday. Thanks to Herbert and Willetta for organising this weekend and to Vitus for making the sauerkraut.

Upcoming Events:

10/5: First Card Evening and Medal Jass to be held at the Union Parish Church, Queen St, Cambridge commencing 7.30pm promptly. This will be followed by a further four evenings at fortnightly intervals.

Please check the website for updates: www.swiss.org.nz/hamilton or email anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz

NZ: Swiss Society of New Zealand

Upcoming Event:

2/6: AGM held at Wellington Swiss Club, Wainuiomata, 2pm.

NSW: Swiss Club of NSW

On Sunday, 7th of April, the Swiss Club of NSW (SCNSW) and 35 of its keen members went on a wild mushroom foraging adventure through the Hampton State Forest. It was a clear and sunny day, perfect conditions for some outdoor fun. We found an abundance of wild mushrooms in the picturesque surroundings of the Hampton State Forest. We foraged two types of edible mushrooms: Saffron Milk Caps and Slippery Jacks. Everyone was able to take home a considerable bounty.



After an hour or two of foraging, we gathered together at the foot of the State Forest where we prepared lunch. We had fantastic volunteers who helped prepare the mushrooms we gathered for the delicious risotto that was cooked by our President Daniel Frutiger and Club Secretary Alois Simath.

After lunch, Daniel organised a Q&A and talked about how the bounty of mushrooms should be stored and cooked. We then headed back to Katoomba for a well-deserved 'Zvieri' at the unique Gingerbread House Katoomba.

Upcoming Events:

16/6: Swiss Club AGM at Louis' Fairway Bistro, Balgowlah Golf Course

14/7: Bushwalk with Glühwein and Heisse Maroni; more info TBA.

The SCNSW would like to thank all members and their friends for the continuous support and participation at our various events. The board of directors looks forward to meeting you at our upcoming events, in the meantime have a wonderful start to Spring.

For more information, please follow the link to our website www.swissclubnsw.com. You can follow us on our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube channel and can also subscribe to our free monthly emailed Newsflashes for all things Swiss in NSW.

Swiss National Day Celebration

SUNDAY, 28 JULY 2019

Castle Hill Show Ground, Education and Federation Pavilion, 131Z Showground Road, Castle Hill - Seating for 1000+ - All weather

Organised by the Swiss Yodlers of Sydney and the Swiss Folk Dance Group Alpegruess

Come along and meet old and new friends! BOOK EARLY BIRD ONLINE by 30th June.

Book and print your online tickets at <http://www.swissnationalday2019.floktu.com>

Live entertainment • Lampion Parade • Kids activities & rides • Swiss food and drinks

NOTE: NEW Hills Showground Railway Station – take the train!

BOOK NOW!

NSW: Swiss Community Care Society (SCCS)

“Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of eighty and gradually approach eighteen”

(Mark Twain)

First things first: We are a 'Care Society' not a 'Seniors Association'. Our aim is to help Swiss people of any age group in NSW and Queensland who need support. You are correct if you think that most immigrants from Switzerland have done well and rarely need help. However, there is strong evidence of isolation and loneliness among the older community. This is where we like to step in and that's why we concentrate our activities on organising events for seniors (outings and luncheons). We also send birthday cards and those who have reached 80 years, and more are being visited before Christmas by one of our volunteers who bring them a present of Swiss relevance. The problem is that fairly soon we will have to do all this to ourselves as we have almost no young members in our club to do the volunteer work. That's why we lament with Mark Twain (see above).

If you are younger than most of us, say in your thirties, forties or fifties, we would love to hear from you! We would like to add 'Young Blood' to our membership, or as one says in Swiss German: 'Mer bruuched Nachwuchs!' And you know what? Joining SCCS might be beneficial for you as well. I believe in what Theodor Roosevelt said, that **“Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young!”**

Please call Regula on 9743 5323 or 0432 031 085 or email swissccs@gmail.com if you, or perhaps your son or your daughter would like to find out more about membership and a little volunteering with SCCS.

NSW: SwissCham Australia

SwissCham or the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been growing fast in the last two years and is continuing to expand in SA and WA. With a record number of events back in 2018 and 2019 we start to be seen as a national organisation.

SwissCham is not only for the Multinationals of Switzerland, we cater for the smaller corporations as well as for the SME's who like to be involved with the Swiss and Australian business community. We network, connect and entertain. The “Swiss” brand is not only liked in Australia for sentimental reasons, the “Swiss” brand stands for Quality, Accountability and Trust.

We have also a new private members category.

Are you interested to join a highly versatile and dynamic membership? Call us on 0419 751 595 or visit our website at www.swisscham.com.au and sign up as a member.

VIC: Swiss Club of Victoria

Upcoming Events:

5/6: Ladies Luncheon - Meet up with friends and make new ones, enjoy a delicious 2-course meal including wine, soft drinks and coffee. Club members \$27 p.p. and non-member guests \$30 p.p. It is important to book with Roger and his team at the Swiss Club Restaurant on 9650 1196.

6/6: Kapelle Grüezi Mitenand - has been performing at the Swiss Club Restaurant in Melbourne for over 20 years. Call the Swiss Club Restaurant on (03) 9650 1196 to secure a table.

1/6: SwissKids - SwissKids 'Räbeliechtli' (turnip lanterns) parade and dinner.

1/6: Swiss Club Jass Night - All levels welcome. Cost \$25 p.p. including supper. Please contact Paul Eisenegger on (03) 9544 4681 for bookings.

To find out more about any of the above events or our interest groups, please go to our website <https://swissclubvictoria.com>

VIC: The Matterhorn Yodel Choir

■ **50th Anniversary Celebration**

Planning is in full swing for the 50th Celebration this year. A folkloric evening will be held on Saturday, 16 November at the Hungarian Community centre in Wantirna. Everyone is welcome, so **SAVE THE DAY**. If you or any friends would like to sponsor the evening, please contact Erwin Weinmann on 0400 850 816 or ozrondo1@gmail.com.

Choir practices are held every Wednesday evenings in Mount Waverley. We welcome new members. Even if you think you would like to come and see what we do, just come along! Contact Chris Hostettler on 0428 427 434 for any inquiries.

Upcoming Event:

10/8: Matterhorn Jass Night - Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill, start 7.30pm. All levels welcome. Cost \$25 p.p. including supper. Please contact Sepp Goldiger on (03) 9758 1586 or 0425 791 036 for bookings.

VIC: Groupe Romand du Victoria

The Groupe Romand was founded in 1990 as a social club for French-speaking Swiss and other Francophones to meet and enjoy each other's company in a relaxed and informal atmosphere.

The Group organises a number of recurring events like fondue or raclette evenings, picnics, pétanque afternoons, mini-golf days and the viewing of French movies. We are also active within the wider Swiss community for the celebration of the Swiss National



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Day as well as Swiss cultural events such as the Swiss Festival.
 New members, new ideas and new talent are always welcome.
 Contactez-nous!
 Patricia Callegari-Medcalf, T: 9583 2860, M: 0408 299 660,
 E: secretairegrouperomand@gmail.com

VIC: Les Bavards – The 'Chatterboxes'

This group started a few years ago on the request of a few German-speaking compatriots wishing to keep or improve their French and is convened by members of the Groupe Romand.

Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, they meet at the Swiss Club, where they converse in French for an hour before enjoying a meal (optional).

For further details, please contact:
 Rémy Favre, T: 9571 2835, M: 0412 135 095,
 E: remy@favrecranage.com
 Annelise Kavadas, T: 9489 0274, M: 0409 509 343,
 E: annelise.kavadas@gmail.com



The Swiss Society of Victoria's purpose is to assist fellow Swiss in Victoria, old and young, who need financial or personal support. If you are experiencing difficulties, or you know of someone who does, please contact us. We are here to help.

Patrick Albert – M: 0449 999 645 – E: patalbertaus@gmail.com

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Forum Schweizer Geschichte Schwyz.
 SCHWEIZERISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM. MUSÉE NATIONAL SUISSE. MUSEO NAZIONALE SVIZERO. NAZIONALE SVIZERO.



Switzerland elsewhere
 Die Schweiz anderswo
 13 April – 29 September 2019

www.nationalmuseum.ch/e/microsites/2019/Schwyz/DieSchweizAnderswo.php

An exhibition, developed in collaboration with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, that looks at the history of the Swiss Abroad with a special focus on the life histories of individual emigrants from the past and present day.

Oceania is also represented with exhibits. The book 'To Australia! Letters of an Emigrant' published by your editor, focuses on the gold rush experience of Johann Jakob Locher from Speicher. See <http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B01A0DKMW6>



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ACT: Canberra Swiss Club

Welcome! You all can now follow the Canberra Swiss Club – thanks to Heinz Büttikofer and Sam Sainsbury-Käser's great work – on the new website <http://swissclubact.com/> and on facebook/[Canberra-Swiss-Club](https://www.facebook.com/Canberra-Swiss-Club)

An old tradition has been revived. Peter Zimmermann hosted a wine bottling at his property. In a lush setting, members enjoyed wine, 'Älplermagrone' and bottling. This year's walk guided by Gaby Hoffmann led us through history. The Glenburn Heritage trail close to Canberra follows places where Aborigines travelled through from the coast to the mountains and settlers found a home in the 1800s.

The choir has become involved in even more concerts at nursing homes. The concerts are always a welcome and delightful event for both, the listeners and the singers. May 5th is a concert at Mirinjani Nursing home in Weston.

Upcoming Events:

- 28/6:** Fondue Night at Dickson Community center (6.30pm – 10pm).
- 3/8:** National Day celebration in Murrumbatema.
- 11/8:** Eisstock Fun Tournament.
- 26/9:** Go Karting.

QLD: Yodel Choir & Folklore Group 'Baerg-Roeseli'

Our rehearsals are in full swing at St Thomas Anglican Church.

We have just performed at Buderim for the annual Senior Citizens Lunch. Thank you for your interactive response.

The next Swiss performance is National Day at Samford Showgrounds on Saturday, 3 August where you'll discover our three new songs.

We are very grateful to our professional teacher Elspeth Sutherland who guides us patiently to our full potential. Elspeth has many educational engagements and performs herself too. Overall the Swiss Yodel is an energising activity for Elspeth, like the experience of the other members of the choir. If you have ever participated in a musical or theatrical rehearsal, you will recognise the feeling afterwards of tiredness and

re-invigoration. That's not a secret.

To join, contact Gabriel on 0435 570 241, yodel@swissclubqld.org.au

QLD: Fraser Coast Swiss Group

Good Friday gathering was lovely with a small group of 15 only as 20 families apologized being away travelling or having visitors. Fasnachtschüechli, Schinkegipfeli, Waie and salads etc was on the menu, and a bit sad to pop the decorated eggs.

Upcoming Events:

15th of each month: lunch at AquaVue, Esplanade Torquay-Hervey Bay or as advised.

August: Swiss National Day at a private property.

For details contact Cecile Scherrer on 0409 286 326 or cecile.scherrer@bigpond.com or go to www.swissclubqld.org.au/fraser-coast

QLD: Swiss Society of Queensland

■ Boat trip

The trip started in Hamilton where we hopped onto the *Lady Brisbane*. We enjoyed morning tea and lunch while cruising past some 300 islands. In the afternoon we arrived on the Gold Coast where the bus took us back to Brisbane.



■ Easter Bunny

The Simpson Falls, just beneath Mt Coo-tha, provided the perfect backdrop for our Easter hunt. It was a beautiful autumn morning for our bunch of eager youngsters to find the Easter eggs. Then some children tried their artistic talent on painting Easter eggs and make their own bunny ears.

Upcoming Events:

■ Raclette

We are looking forward to see many of you at this years Raclette night. It will be held at the same location as last year at the South Side Sailing Club in West

End. The venue is next to the Brisbane river. We invite you to take in the view of the river with a glass of wine before the Raclette ovens will be started up.

Date: Saturday, 22 June 2019

Time: Doors open @5.15pm for pre-drinks and to take in the beautiful location. Raclette will be served from 6pm onwards.

Venue: South Brisbane Sailing Club, 68 Hill End Terrace, West End

Cost: Members \$30, Non-members \$38, Member families \$70 (including 2 adults and 2 children under 12), Non-member families \$90 (incl.2 adults and 2 children under 12), additional children over the age of 3 pay \$1 per year of age. Price includes raclette, coffee and dessert. Drinks can be bought at the bar. **Strictly no BYO!!**

RSVP: By Sunday, 16 June 2019 to Anita Meier 0401 957 309, anita@qbrg.com.au or to Diane 0488 136 405, dianelanyon@gmail.com

Let us know if you can bring a raclette oven when making a booking please!!!

■ National Day

The Swiss Society of Queensland Club Committee cordially invites you to our National Day celebration.

The venue is ideal for the day's activities and even overnight stay. There are plenty of Kids activities organised and an extensive program is planned which will see our guests entertained into the early evening.

Delicious food and Swiss goodies are available for purchase. Drinks can be purchased at the bar to very affordable prices. Fondue can be purchased and cooked up in the evening if you want to bring your caquelon along.

Date: Saturday, 3 August 2019

Time: Doors open at 11am and lunch will be served from 12pm onwards.

Venue: Samford Showgrounds, Showgrounds Drive, Highvale

Camping details: Overnight camping is allowed. Camping is available at special rates. There are large amenities with toilets and showers.

Important: Caravan sites must be booked in advance. For more information and camp ground bookings, please contact Terry, the Caretaker of Samford Showground, on 0450 882 842.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr Maximilian Brändle OAM

25.7.1937 – 28.2.2019

I got to know Max Brändle as the charming Swiss elder statesman and walking, talking encyclopedia. Almost every AGM of the Swiss Society of Queensland he would inevitably be voted in as chairperson and struggle to contain his enthusiasm for the work and the communities of Swiss immigrants. So profound was his impact on the Swiss News of Queensland, of which he was the founding editor, that when my husband and I became the editors we were given strict orders by our predecessors to uphold his original format. It was through him I got to know about the CSA, where he was a delegate for 32 years. With his support and encouragement, I am now a member.

He was the Director of the institute of Modern Languages at the University of Queensland. He taught five languages himself,



including a Swiss-German course. After his retirement he flourished as author and historian for everything multicultural.

At his funeral I was asked to say a few words and yodelled with the Swiss yodel choir a beautiful song about friendship.

During the funeral and preparing for this article I read and heard so many more stories about his involvement with the Swiss in Queensland. He was the president of the Swiss-Australian Chamber of Commerce, Queensland Chapter, lobbied for the very popular Swiss Pavilion at the World Expo '88, and was associated with many more multicultural communities and language-related groups. He received the Medal of the Order of Australia for distinguished commitment to the promotion of multiculturalism, one award of many. He also wrote and edited dozens of books and articles. Not long before his death he travelled to Europe with some of his five adult children, revisiting old familiar places and favourite art galleries.

KATJA WALLIMANN GATES COUNCIL OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Diplomatic & Consular Information

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Today's societies face challenges in providing the general public with clear reporting in science and technology. Switzerland and Australia are no exception to it. Science journalists come together biannually to discuss ways to improve.

In fact, more than a decade after the World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ) 2007 in Melbourne, Switzerland takes up the torch and will hold the WCSJ 2019 from 1-5 July 2019, in Lausanne.

The WCSJ 2019 is the result of a collaboration between the Swiss, the Italian and the French science journalist associations, all members of the World Federation of Science Journalists. In addition, the WCSJ 2019 joined forces with prestigious academic and scientific institutions: the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne, and the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN). The conference will take place at the ultramodern Swisstech Convention Center of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL).

The world conference is designed to strengthen the professional, ethical and technical skills of science journalists in the context of fraud in science, open access to publications and data as well as fake science news. With technology, science and innovation playing an ever more important role in daily life, the

mission of the WCSJ fosters good, fair and critical reporting, which enables informed democratic decisions for the benefit of society.

1000 science journalists, communicators and writers from around the world will be gathering in Lausanne. Climate change. Space exploration. Gene-edited babies. Preprints. Ebola. The rise of strongmen and populists. If it is in the news, it will be talked about in Lausanne! Discussion about other issues such as sexual harassment and bullying in the lab are also part of the program.

The Embassy of Switzerland and the Consulate General recently hosted in Sydney a kick-off briefing on these topics for Australia-based science journalists and communicators. The guest speakers of the event were Mr Niall Byrne and Ms Sarah Brooker, both co-directors of Science in Public, Australia's largest science communication agency who themselves led the organisation of the WCSJ in 2007 in Melbourne and shared their passion for the conference and its mission!

À bientôt à Lausanne!

Follow us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/SwissEmbassyCanberra

WCSJ2019: www.wcsj2019.eu

Science in Public: www.scienceinpublic.com.au

Childhood memories of Alexandria



Beat Knoblauch recalls his school years at the Swiss School in Alexandria, Egypt. Today, Beat is a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad and lives and works as an independent business lawyer in Sydney.

For many years, the Swiss School of Alexandria has been at the centre of Swiss social life in Egypt's large commercial city on the Mediterranean. It gave the Swiss an identity in colonial Egypt and gave the pupils a touch of 'Swiss Spirit'.

The school was founded in 1921 and the canton of Vaud took the patronage. This also meant that the school was run in French and the school materials and curriculum of the canton of Vaud were taken over. The German-speaking children had to quickly familiarise themselves with the French language. There were nine classes, with each two or three classes were taught in a room. The school included nearly 100 students and teachers. The teaching staff came, with the exception of the Syrian Arabic teacher Mr. Khouri, mostly from Switzerland.

The Swiss school Alexandria experienced its peak in the time of the Second World War, when one could not travel freely.

At the end of each quarter, the students received a certificate that had to be signed by their parents. I knew to make mine disappear quite often. However, I managed this only for a short time, because my three brothers attended the same school. After returning to Switzerland, most of them made it to school without any problems. But once – many years later – a professor at the University of Bern, with whom I had always spoken in Swiss German, gave me back my written work with the words: "I did not know that you are of French mother tongue."



Every year a school photo was taken in the garden of the kindergarten. In the background are the two school attendants, Farrah and Abdu, who also rang the school bell at the beginning of each lesson. Before my time, the Swiss flag was also raised in the morning. In the sand-dusty schoolyard was also the Scout Hut – the Swiss pastor was



the scout leader. Contrary to the custom then in Alexandria, we students did not wear school uniforms. In the 'Lycée Français', which was next door, however, a uniform had to be worn.

The three-month holiday during the hot African summer allowed many families after the war to travel to Switzerland or to the sea. During this time, our family was often in the Bernese Oberland and so we got to know and appreciate the homeland.



The Swiss school was also connected to the premises of the local Swiss Club. These included a large ballroom with stage, bowling alleys, bar, library and more. The Egyptian King Farouk – he liked the Swiss colony – often came to the bowling night unannounced and

was happy about a 'Babeli' (all pins have fallen over).

As children we experienced a carefree time in this school and were mostly isolated from the political events. But a sudden end came for many foreigners (including numerous Swiss) in the late 1950s in the course of the nationalisation of 'foreign goods'. Many foreigners were forced to emigrate. Unfortunately, in 1970 the school closed its doors forever.

This photo shows me about 8 or 9 years old, standing between Madame Guisan and my father, Hans Georg Knoblauch, in the Swiss Club in Alexandria, during a visit by General Guisan, accompanied by his wife.



From Alexandria to Australia via Berne, Mexico, Korea and Indonesia

After school in Alexandria I went to Bern, where I attended high school and studied law at the university. My first jobs then took me to Mexico, Korea and Indonesia before settling in Australia. Mostly, I travel to Switzerland twice a year to attend meetings of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. I still have contact with some former school comrades in Switzerland.

This article was first published in German in the *educationsuisse* news bulletin in November 2017 <https://educationsuisse.ch/> and subsequently in 'Swiss Wanderlust' <http://swisswanderlust.com>. Today there are 18 Swiss schools spread over three continents, teaching around 8,000 children according to Swiss principles – Ed.