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CSA Oceania

About the CSA Oceania

The CSA Oceania is a team of six elected delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). The CSA is the legislative body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and acts as a representative of the Swiss diaspora, defending the interests of Swiss expatriates before the authorities and public opinion in Switzerland. It is therefore often referred to as the 'Parliament of the Swiss Abroad'. All Council members are volunteers that give their time and expertise free of charge for the benefit of the Swiss expatriate community they represent.

The recognised mouthpiece of the Swiss Abroad

The CSA meets twice a year in Switzerland for a day-long meeting to discuss important matters concerning the Swiss Abroad and to voice an opinion on current affairs on behalf of the expatriate community. The Council members from around the world convene in spring as well as in late summer at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. Between sessions, routine business is handled by the Executive Board and the Administration Team in Bern. The CSA ensures that the voice of the Swiss expatriate community is heard.

Seat Allocation

The CSA is a world-wide network. The 140-strong Council is comprised of delegates from Swiss expatriates' associations and communities abroad, 60 seats from within Europe and 60 from the rest of the world, and 20 delegates resident in Switzerland who have connections to the Swiss Abroad. The number of delegates depends on the size of the registered Swiss community. Australia is entitled to four Council seats and New Zealand has two seats allocated.

For the term 2017–2021 elections, Australia was one of only two countries that took part in an e-voting pilot program. This gave all eligible Swiss in Australia the opportunity to elect the current delegates.

The two New Zealand representatives were chosen from among members of the four regional Swiss Clubs – Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki and Wellington. They were elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Society of New Zealand, held in June 2017.

Delegates residing in Switzerland are elected by the Council on recommendation by the Executive Board. They are personalities from the political, business

and cultural fields who have the necessary expertise and connections to be able to address the concerns of their compatriots abroad and represent them effectively.

The CSA Oceania

The CSA Oceania was established by the New Zealand delegates Peter Ehrler and Peter Canziani and their Australian counterparts Roland Isler (VIC), Beat Knoblauch (NSW), Carmen Trochsler (SA) and Katja Walliman-Gates (QLD). They decided on a closer cooperation and, wherever possible, act regionally – hence the term and branding 'CSA Oceania' was formally launched at the 2016 Oceania Swiss Club President's Conference in Melbourne.

Their mission is to support and defend the interests of Swiss citizens living in Oceania – the region comprised of the English-speaking countries and territories under the diplomatic jurisdiction of the Swiss embassies in Canberra and Wellington. These include Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Nauru, Niue and Tonga.

Working together means that they are stronger and have a greater voice in the Council. They can also include and better represent the Swiss that live on the island states that have no seat on the Council.

Communication

To communicate with Swiss over a very vast area geographically, the CSA Oceania has created its own website, which is specifically tailored to meet the needs of Swiss citizens living in our region: www.csa-oceania.org

It is a one-stop-shop providing important news and information, facilitating networking and creating a point of contact for anyone wishing to join a community group, is interested in the services of an organisation or needing the contact details of an official Swiss representation (Embassy, Consulate). The CSA Oceania is also present on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Hot topics for 2018

Hot topics in 2018 remain the improved and more affordable access to Swiss banks for all and the deduction of the Swiss AHV in New Zealand. Notable progress has been made over the last six months in both matters with increased media presence and support of

at least one chamber in Federal Parliament. Both items will be tabled again in the upcoming parliamentary spring session in March.

The next meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad will be on 10 March in Bern. A meeting between parliamentarians and CSA members is scheduled. It will be a great opportunity to defend our point of view and to create goodwill.

The annual Congress of the Swiss Abroad will take place on 10-12 August in Visp (VS). The Congress is for everyone and is held each year in a different city in Switzerland. Apart from the CSA meeting there are also various excursions, entertainment and meetings with the local and federal authorities and local groups on the agenda.

On 28-30 September the 3rd Oceania Swiss Club President's Conference will take place in Sydney. It is coinciding with the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Swiss Yodlers and Alphorn Group of Sydney with festivities for the public to enjoy.

We are here for you

We invite you to find out more by visiting our website www.csa-oceania.org or by contacting us on info@csa-oceania.org. The CSA Oceania is here for you!

Roland Isler



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