



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
Australian Capital Territory Branch

E-NEWS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH

E-Newsletter February 2022

Branch Patron: H.E. General the Hon. David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of Australia



CELEBRATIONS TO MARK QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Commonwealth-wide plans are under way to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of H.M. Queen Elizabeth who acceded to the throne on 6 February 1952 on the death of her father, King George VI. At the time, she was on an official visit to Kenya.



Two days later, in London, she presided over her first meeting of the Privy Council when she read out her Declaration of Sovereignty. She was 25 years old. About to turn 96 on 21 April, Queen Elizabeth II has the distinction of being the longest-serving monarch in British history.

On becoming Queen, Elizabeth also took on her father's role as Head of the Commonwealth, the oldest political association of sovereign states in the world, the majority of which are former British colonies. Today, most of the 54 members are republics, five have their own monarchs, and 15 have Queen Elizabeth as Head of State.

The main Jubilee celebrations will be held in London around the anniversary of the Coronation on 7 June 1952. In Canberra, the RCS ACT Branch is planning a special Celebration Dinner on Tuesday 15 March at the Commonwealth Club. Our Guests of Honour are the Governor-General, our Patron, H.E. General the Hon. David Hurley and H.E Mrs Linda Hurley. *(See page 4 for details.)*

NEW DATE SET FOR RWANDA CHOGM

The twice-postponed Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, will now take place in the week beginning 20 June 2022.

The decision to hold the meeting in Rwanda was taken at the London CHOGM in 2018. CHOGMs are the highest consultative and policy-making meetings of Commonwealth Heads and are usually held every two years. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, resulted in the meeting planned for June 2020 being postponed and also a subsequent meeting that was to have taken place in 2021.

The June 2022 date was announced in a joint statement from the Commonwealth Secretariat by the Rwandan President, the Hon. Paul Kagame, and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Hon. Patricia Scotland. Major topics to be covered at the meeting include recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, tackling climate change and poverty, boosting trade and promoting sustainable development.

Rwanda became a member of the Commonwealth in 2009. With Mozambique, it is the only other member that has not at some time been administered by Britain.

RCS BRANCH CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS

A few small breaks in the COVID-19 regulations when infection rates in the ACT were low allowed us to organise a few events during the past year. One such remission from lock-down came in early December when members and friends of the RCS Branch in Canberra were able to celebrate at a pre-Christmas party at the home of Dr John Sutton and Mrs Ann Sutton in Kingston.



In the photograph (left) are Youth members of the Branch, Mr Jack Milne, Ms Jade Jinna Raisoqoni and Ms Holly Halford-Smith, while below are Mrs Mandy Squair (left) Mrs Jyoti Jinna, Mrs Ann Sutton and Mrs Lynne Craft.



COUNCIL ELECTIONS AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the ACT Branch of the RCS on 22 February was held online due to COVID precautions. The following were elected to serve on Council:

- President:** Dr Hugh Craft (until August 2022)
Vice-President: Mr Kanti jinna (will take over the Presidency in August)
Treasurer: Dr Sunita Dhindsa
- Councillors:** Dr Martin Hess
Mrs Maureen Hickman
Mr Bradley Innes (Youth Member)
Dr Elmo Jacob
Mr Jack Milne (Youth Member)

Office Bearers are elected each year and Councillors serve a three-year term. The continuing appointments are Councillors Dr Fiona Rothchilds, Mrs Ann Sutton, Mr Gaurav Sharma and Mr Saurabh Singh. The Secretary is appointed at the first meeting of Council. As in 2021, Dr Craft and Mr Jinna, by agreement, will share the Presidency, each serving six months in that position and six months as Vice-President .

ESSAY TOPICS TO EXPLORE COMMONWEALTH VALUES, PRINCIPLES

Entrants in the annual Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition each year are asked to explore the values and principles of the Commonwealth through themes ranging from the Environment to Youth Leadership and Gender Equality.

This year will be no different, except that subjects will reflect on what can be achieved through dedication and selfless commitment to our Commonwealth communities such as that exemplified by Queen Elizabeth as she celebrates her Platinum Jubilee.

The 2022 Competition, to be launched in London during Commonwealth Week in March, is the oldest international writing competition in the world. Past winners who have gone on to become prominent leaders include the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Mei Fong, and renowned author, Elspeth Huxley.

Winners travel to the United Kingdom for a week of educational and cultural activities culminating in a special Awards Ceremony, usually at Buckingham Palace.

Topics for both Junior and Senior sections will be announced at the launch in March. Entries must be received by the end of June.

Although many schools around the world encourage pupils to enter the competition, entries can be independent of schools. Young people themselves are encouraged to follow the links on the RCS London website www.thercs.org to find out more about age guidelines, entry forms and other details.



HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, Vice-Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Society, is seen above with previous winners and runners-up at an Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

RCS MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2022

Your membership fees of the ACT Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society were due on 1 January 2022. Payment would be appreciated by EFT to the Royal Commonwealth Society ACT BSB 032 778 a/c no. 149 355 with **subs/surname** in the subject line.

Your membership fees are the only income that the Branch receives and is dependent on them to continue functioning and be able to host certain social and cultural events during the year such as the talk on Patrick White (with morning tea). *See p.4 for notice.*

We are very aware of our curtailment of activities during the past two years due to the COVID pandemic but are optimistic that we are now getting back to a regular program.

The fees are modest: Individual (\$30), Couple (\$40), Youth (\$5), Institutional (\$55)

The Joining Fee for new members is \$10.

If in doubt about your financial status please contact the RCS Branch Treasurer:
treasurer.rcsact@gmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

COMMONWEALTH DINNER

**Celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of H.M. Queen Elizabeth
Head of the Commonwealth**

Tuesday 15 March 2022

at

The Commonwealth Club, Yarralumla

7.00 for 7.30 pm

**Guests of Honour: Their Excellencies General the Hon. David Hurley AC DSC
(Retd) Governor-General of Australia and Mrs Linda Hurley**

Dress: Black Tie, Evening, National Dress, Decorations

Cost: \$95

Pre-dinner drinks, three course dinner, wines

Please advise any **dietary preferences and names** of those attending by email
to a.jsutton@netspeed.com.au **by Wednesday 9 March**

Payment by EFT: BSB 032 778 a/c no. 149 355

Please put your **name/dinner** in the subject line

A TALK ON AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR PATRICK WHITE

Friday 8 April 2022

10.30 am

by Emeritus Professor Satendra Nandan

Dr John Sutton and Mrs Ann Sutton will host this event at their home at
49/9 Eastlake Parade, Kingston ACT

Acceptances by Tuesday 5 April to a.jsutton@netspeed.co.au

NEW MEMBERS

The President and Council of the RCS ACT Branch welcome new members

Dr Krishna Nadimpali and Mr Jon Richardson

E-NEWS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH is an official publication of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Australian Capital Territory Branch, for Members and Friends of the Commonwealth. It is published regularly throughout the year and replaces the quarterly printed newsletter *Commonwealth News*.

Contact: Maureen Hickman, Editor, at rcsact@bigpond.com

Membership inquiries are welcome.