



**VICTORIA LEAGUE FOR COMMONWEALTH
FRIENDSHIP SA INC**

NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2009

Patron Throughout the Commonwealth
Her Majesty The Queen

Patron Throughout Australia
Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Patron in South Australia
His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce,
AC, CSC, RANR
Governor of South Australia

President - Mrs Nicola Downer, AM

Secretary - Tamara Schlichting



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From The President

Dear Members,

This has been an exciting time for the Victoria League with the celebration of the Centenary of the League in Western Australia in September. A sizable South Australian delegation – Vice President, Mrs Barbara Stewart, Executive members Miss Erica Cox, Mr Douglass Potts, Mr Vincent Burke and myself together with Mrs Joan Garde joined a happy party at the Royal Perth Golf Club on the evening of Saturday 26th September. A host of special guests joined the group and the Governor of Western Australia, Dr Ken Michael, AC congratulated the League on its Centenary and reflected on its achievements. Dr Hal Colebatch is completing a book on the history of the League in Western Australia which we are all looking forward to receiving. The whole event was superbly organised by Western Australian President, Mr Charles Curtis, assisted by his wife Sylvia.

Whilst in Perth the South Australian delegation met with the Queensland representatives to discuss the National Conference which will be held on the 28th to 30th May 2010. We are very pleased that the Chairman of the Victoria League, Mr Lyn Hopkins from London will be with us. The conference aims to address issues such as: - Rebuilding the Victoria League, developing a revitalised membership from the next generation, practical ways of assisting Student House in London, welcoming international students, informing young people of the role of the Commonwealth and providing practical support for projects in Commonwealth countries. Please put this date in your diaries.

Do remember for those of you with access to a computer, we now have a website. Our address is www.vcleague.com.au.

At the Annual General Meeting the Executive welcomed Mrs Barbara Stewart as Vice President to replace the dedicated and hard working Miss Erica Cox. Fortunately Miss Cox remains on the Executive. We were sorry to farewell Mrs Dorothy Hamilton who has served on the Executive for much of the last fifty years. We welcome Dr Orietta Wicks, a retired General Practitioner with a host of experiences and interests. I look forward to working with the new team. I should apologise to those of you who attended the AGM for the length of my speech. I hope you didn't get a parking ticket! The problem is once I start speaking about something that interests me I find it very hard to stop – just ask my husband.

On behalf of the Executive I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a productive and healthy 2010.

NICKY DOWNER – President

Victoria League AGM & Lunch - 15th September 2009

Nicky Downer, AM – My Experience in Cyprus



Executive member, Mr Dennis Sparrow and President, Mrs Nicky Downer

This was a very long speech, which I hope members enjoyed, detailing the fascinating history of this island of the Middle East. From its Byzantine routes in the Roman Empire through occupation by the Lusignans, the Venetians, the Ottomans and finally as part of the British Empire, Cyprus has been bitterly fought over for two millennia. Divided since 1974 efforts are being made to bring the North and the South together to form a united Cyprus.

Victoria League Lunch - 20th October 2009

Our Lieutenant Governor, Mr Hieu Van Le tells a dramatic story of his arrival on Australian shores as one of the Vietnamese Boat people in the 1970's. His family were victims of the Vietnam War and bravely sailed across the sea and ocean to start a new life here. Although a qualified accountant in his own country, Mr Le had to re-qualify to be able to practice in Australia where he works with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. His outstanding contribution Multicultural Affairs lead to him becoming of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission.



Mr Hieu Van Le, Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and Vice President, Mr Mark Bouchier

Annual General Meeting- 15th September 2009

Victoria League Executive Committee for 2009 - 2010

President

Mrs Nicky Downer, AM

Vice Presidents

Mr Mark Bouchier

Mr Dennis Coleman

Mrs Barbara Stewart

Honorary Treasurer

Craig Whiteman

Committee

Mr Vincent Burke

Miss Erica Cox

Lady Downer

Mrs Gay Gardner, AM

Mrs Betty Oakeshott

Mr Douglass Potts

Mr Dennis Sparrow

Dr Orietta Wicks



Life Member's Mrs Barbara Stewart (also new Vice President), Mrs Dorothy Hamilton and Miss Erica Cox with new Executive Member Dr Orietta Wicks who all attended this year's AGM.

I mentioned changes to the Executive in my letter, but I did not pay tribute to the excellent work done by our new Honorary Treasurer, Mr Craig Whiteman who joined us in February this year. In a difficult financial environment, Mr Whiteman has kept the League in a sound financial position. We supported Engineers Without Borders, The East West Overseas Aid Foundation, The Red Cross Victorian Bushfire Appeal and Michael Ierace in London. We have invested \$125,000 of cash funds in shares in Telstra, Westpac, BHP Billiton, Woodside Petroleum and Rio Tinto.



Present and past Honorary Treasurer's, Mr Craig Whiteman and Mr Don Bramwell at the AGM

Vincent's visit to London.....

I recently visited London, and stayed at the Royal Over-seas League Club. To assist with planning the National Conference of the Victoria League in Queensland in May 2010, I visited the offices of the Commonwealth Secretariat to obtain material for use at the conference.

I met Lyn Hopkins, Chairman of the Victoria League, to discuss arrangements for his participation in the conference. He is looking forward to his visit to both New Zealand and Australia.

I also met John Allan, General Secretary of The Victoria League. We discussed our efforts to expand both the membership and impact of the Victoria League in South Australia. He was impressed with our achievements, especially the work we have supported in India.

My main purpose, however, was to visit Student House in Bayswater. Sue Wilson has run it for several years, and she showed me round with great pride, pointing out the improvements and upgrading of the building and its amenities. I was able to visit the South Australian room, which members will be pleased to know was very tidy!

The building comprises four Victorian houses joined together, and contains over 40 rooms/units with a mix of singles and doubles, all of them with excellent facilities for the students. There are shared kitchens, bathrooms/showers and recreation areas, with a delightful private garden at the rear, all of which provide a very convivial environment.

The good news is that Student House is fully booked, which is not surprising, given all it has to offer. However, the cost of maintenance and repair is ever-increasing, and the local council requires the management to improve its energy efficiency, which will cost in excess of £30,000 sterling. They were most grateful for our recent donation of \$5,000 (thanks to Lady Wilson's bequest) and for our continuing support for Student House. This will be one of the topics for discussion at the National Conference.

I left the building, thinking wistfully *Oh to be a student again!* I had met several residents during my visit, and my abiding impression was their contented smiles of welcome. Music seemed to permeate the atmosphere. This is because about half of them are studying music. There are rooms in which they rehearse and stage the occasional recital. I briefly met Michael Ierace, the student we have been sponsoring, and am pleased to report that he is doing very well.

Our support for Student House is clearly worthwhile. Let us hope we can maintain it.

Vincent Burke – Executive Committee (October 2009)

WA Centenary 26th September 2009



Queensland Members

Ellen Morton, OAM
Bill Willcocks
Maryanne Marescka



SA Delegation

Barbara Stewart
Douglass Potts



The Governor of WA

Dr Ken Michael, AC
Julie Michael



SA Delegation

Nicky Downer, AM
Erica Cox
Vincent Burke



Victoria League WA Chairman

Charles Curtis
Sylvia Curtis, OAM

National Conference – Queensland 28th – 30th May 2010

Queensland Chairman, Mr Ellen Morton writes that the venue for the conference will now be Brisbane – probably the United Services Club on Wickham Terrace. League President, Mr Barry Dineen is currently visiting the United Kingdom where he will confirm details with the National Chairman, Mr Lyn Hopkins. Keep you posted! The President, Mrs Ellen Morton can be contacted on 07 5539 6211.

New Zealand

The Victoria League in Auckland celebrates its Centenary in May 2010. The Centenary celebration will take place from the 21st to 23rd of May. The National Chairman, Mr Lyn Hopkins will be attending.

New Life Member



I feel very privileged to have been elected a Life Member of the Victoria League in South Australia.

I have been a member of the League since 1941 and I still respect and admire the principles and ideals it represents. During this period I have served on various committees, including the Executive and being your President.

Times have of course changed enormously since then, but I feel the League is as relevant today as it has been through all these years.

Thank-you
Dorothy Hamilton

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to Mrs Joan Garde, Mrs Marion Allen, Ms Eliza Garnsey, Mrs Marjorie Scriven and Mr Eric Lowden who have recently joined the League.

Office Closure

The office will be closed over the festive season from Tuesday 8th December 2009 and re-open on Tuesday 19th January 2010.

Please note the office hours have changed in 2010 to Tuesday's only, from 9.00am until 5.00pm.

Forthcoming Events

Lunches 2010

Tuesday 16th February, 12 noon

Guest Speaker: Justice Andrew Wilson

"To be confirmed"

Tuesday 20th April, 12 noon

Guest Speaker: To be advised

Venue

The Naval, Military & Air Force Club,
111 Hutt Street, Adelaide

Cost: \$35

Christmas Cocktail Party 2009

Tuesday 1st December 5.30pm

Propose Toast: The Very Rev'd Dr Sarah Macneil

Dean, St Peter's Cathedral

Venue

Wheaton House, Pulteney Grammar School
160 South Terrace, Adelaide

Cost: \$20

Commonwealth Day 2010

Monday 15th March 5.30pm

Arranged By: The Joint Commonwealth Societies Council

Venue

Wyatt Hall, Pulteney Grammar School
160 South Terrace, Adelaide

Cost: \$25

For bookings telephone 8223 2914 or

Email: contact@vcleague.com.au