



RCS members at many RCS gatherings



# THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INCORPORATED

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## May 2026– July 2026 Newsletter



Commonwealth flags displayed in Christ Church, North Adelaide, for Commonwealth Day service

**PATRONS**  
**World wide Patron** His Majesty King Charles III  
**World wide Vice Patron** Her Majesty Queen Camilla  
**South Australian Patron: the Governor of South Australia**  
**Her Excellency the**  
**Honourable Frances Adamson AC**

**DIARY DATES**

Thursday May 21st 7.30pm Commonwealth Talk at the Ballroom of St Mark’s College, 46 Pennington Terrace North Adelaide  
 guest speaker Isobel Redmond  
 Wednesday 27th May Rediscovering Adelaide visit to the Adelaide Arcade. Meet at the Rundle Mall entrance of the Arcade at 10.15am

**The website for the Royal Commonwealth Society in London has changed. [www.royalcwsociety.org](http://www.royalcwsociety.org)**

**Find more information about The Royal Commonwealth Society and the Commonwealth.**

[www.royalcwsociety.org](http://www.royalcwsociety.org) [www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)  
[www.thercssa.com.au](http://www.thercssa.com.au)

**2026 Subscriptions are due**

The subscription to the RCS entitles all members to offer to be a member of the RCS Council, vote at the Annual General Meeting and other Special meetings, quarterly Newsletter and to attend special events at reduced rate.

Single membership \$50  
 Double (same postage address) \$75  
 BSB 105-148  
 Account 554020140

**From Participant to judge: A Journey Shaped by The Queen's Commonwealth Writing Competition**

**The Enduring Impact of The Queen’s Commonwealth Writing Competition**

My journey with The Queen’s Commonwealth Writing Competition began in 2022 while I was a student at Aga Khan High School, Mombasa, Kenya. Encouraged by my English teacher to submit an essay, I entered the competition with enthusiasm and a deep love for writing, though I was still developing the technical precision and structure required for excellence. That year, I was honoured to receive a Bronze Award. In 2023 and again in 2024, I was privileged to be awarded Silver distinctions. Each recognition affirmed not only my growth as a writer but also my belief that young voices, when nurtured, can resonate far beyond their immediate surroundings.

Participation in the competition proved transformative. It sharpened my analytical thinking, strengthened my discipline, and refined my ability to articulate complex ideas with clarity and purpose. More significantly, it cultivated qualities of leadership and global awareness. Engaging with thought-provoking themes encouraged me to approach issues with empathy, intellectual curiosity, and a sense of shared responsibility. The competition was not merely an academic platform; it became a formative space that shaped my worldview and deepened my understanding of the power of words as instruments of influence and change.

Upon completing high school, I felt a strong responsibility to extend the opportunities I had received to other young learners. I began volunteering as a mentor at Nurturing Stars Organisation, a community-based initiative dedicated to supporting students in developing their academic and personal potential. There, I guided learners in strengthening their writing skills and building confidence in self-expression. I later volunteered as a tutor at a community tuition centre, teaching English, Swahili, and Religious Studies. These experiences confirmed my aspiration to pursue education not simply as a profession, but as a lifelong vocation grounded in service.

The influence of The Queen’s Commonwealth Writing Competition extended even further. Inspired by the confidence it instilled in me, I authored and published four books, distributing copies freely within communities to promote accessible literacy

*“Participating in The Queen’s Commonwealth Writing Competition was the defining turning point of my academic and personal journey. It did not simply refine my writing; it built my confidence, shaped my leadership, and awakened in me a lifelong commitment to literacy and education. The competition gave me the courage to believe that my voice mattered and the responsibility to use it for positive impact. From award recipient to literacy advocate and eventually judge, my journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of this platform. I remain profoundly grateful for the opportunities it creates for young people across the Commonwealth, empowering them to write, to lead, and to serve.”*

This is the story and words of **Alwy Ahmed Mohamed, Literacy Ambassador and Library Ambassador, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta**

For further information look up the RCS London website

**COMMONWEALTH DAY IN LONDON 2026**

Their Majesties The King and Queen, accompanied by The Prince and Princess of Wales, The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester attended the annual Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration at Westminster Abbey to celebrate Commonwealth Day on Monday, 9 March 2026.

Delivered by the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), the Commonwealth's oldest dedicated charity, the Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration is the flagship public event honouring the Commonwealth. Held every year, the Service highlights the shared values and collective spirit of this voluntary association of nations, coming together in unity, purpose, and celebration. This year, the theme, *Accelerating Partnership: A Connected Commonwealth*, invited attendees to imagine what is possible when nations, communities and young leaders come together in bold collaboration. This year's service was a living showcase of creativity, cultural dialogues, and youth-led innovation. We were delighted to be joined by over 1,800 guests, including Foreign Ministers, High Commissioners, senior politicians and dignitaries from across the UK and the Commonwealth. Over 500 schoolchildren from all four home nations of the UK attended alongside Commonwealth Games Athletes, and Finnie the mascot of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games .

Joshua Opey, the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Youth Council, from Ghana, carried the Commonwealth flag in the procession of flags, and Dame Laura Kenny, the President of Commonwealth Games England and UK Sports-woman of the Year, carried the Commonwealth Mace.

**Commonwealth Secretary-General, The Hon Shirley Botchwey**

Secretary General, Shirley Botchwey read the Commonwealth Day Affirmation 2026

Appointed by Commonwealth Heads of Government in Apia, Samoa in 2024, Shirley Botchwey assumed office on 1 April 2025, bringing over two decades of leadership in diplomacy, governance and public service. She previously served as Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (2017–2024), leading major foreign policy reforms and chairing the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. A key architect of landmark UN Security Council resolutions on African peace operations and maritime security, Shirley Botchwey also championed Ghana's 'Year of Return' initiatives. She is a former Member of Parliament and an experienced business leader.

Information copied from RCS London website for further information about Commonwealth matters look up the website.

**COMMONWEALTH TALKS****Thursday 21st May****St Mark's College North Adelaide****'A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum'**

This may sound rather out of left field for a Commonwealth Talk, but when the speaker will be **Isobel Redmond**, it is sure to be interesting and entertaining. Most people would be aware that Isobel was the Member for Heysen in the House of Assembly in the SA Parliament from 2002, and retaining the seat through subsequent elections to become the Leader of the Opposition in July 2009.

However Isobel will be speaking about the CPA or Commonwealth Parliamentary Association whose mission states: *"To promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth"* and is an international

inter-parliamentary organisation.



The Commonwealth Talk will be held on Thursday evening, 21st May 2026 at St Mark's College Ballroom, 46 Pennington Terrace, North Adelaide from 7.30-9pm. Tea/coffee on arrival.- Please register by contacting Julie Gameau on [secretary@thercssa.com.au](mailto:secretary@thercssa.com.au) or phone 0407 203 035, or Patsy Beckett 0407 249 850  
Guests also welcome.

Photo from news.com

## President’s report 2025

### The activities of the year 2025

**Commonwealth Week.** Again, this year, there was a lack of leadership from the JCSC and no major events to mark the occasion. Christ Church, North Adelaide invited us to a Commonwealth commemoration service on the Sunday evening before Commonwealth Day. I offered our flags to process, but it was too late to arrange, so next year we will arrange for flags and flag bearers in time, and suggest we hold the service on the Sunday after Commonwealth Day so the Governor can be invited to read the King’s speech.

**General meetings.** At the Planning Meeting we held in 2024, we decided we would identify a small number of large projects and form partnerships, rather than scattering funds to the winds. Our new Constitution stated that once the Council identified a special project that required spending more than \$15,000 in one lump sum, that a Special Meeting would be held to discuss the issues with the full membership.

Two such projects have been identified so far and two Special General meetings were held at which the recommendations by Council were endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the members in both cases.

**Co-Opera Inc.** Our sponsorship of this Association had lapsed, at the request of the new Artistic Director. The company was imploding as we were requested to make a sufficiently large donation to give them a chance to rebuild. It was agreed to grant Co-Opera \$40,000 per annum for three years.

**RCSSA Scholarship.** Growing out of an idea presented by former President Margaret Lord, a sum of \$150,000 has been donated, to be administered by St Marks College, to form an annual scholarship to allow a student to travel to a Commonwealth Country for community assistance as appropriate. An Honour Board with the names of the recipients will ensure that RCSSA’s name lives on if in the future our Association cannot be sustained.

Other smaller ticket items have continued to be supported.

**Glenthorne.** Our involvement with Glenthorne has continued throughout the year. Judy Clarke continues to be an active member of the Friends of Glenthorne and organised the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The large trees being used as the anchor of

## MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

### The following Countries are members of the Commonwealth

United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria, Cyprus, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Malta, Zambia, Singapore, Guyana, Botswana, Barbados, Lesotho, Nauru, Mauritius, Swaziland, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji Islands, Bangladesh, The Bahamas, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Dominica, St Lucia, Kiribati, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Vanuatu, Belize, Antigua & Barbuda, St Christopher & Nevis, Brunei, Namibia, Cameroon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Maldives, The Gambia , Togo and Gabon

These diverse nations representing one quarter of the world’s population over every continent, include Republics, National Monarchies and a number of Nations that recognise King Charles III 11 as their own Head of State

## Council Members 2026

President:	Libby Ellis OAM	0412 820 121
Vice President	Judy Clarke	0419 500 218
Treasurer:	John Shepherd AM	0467 621 030
Secretary:	Julie Gameau OAM	0407 203 035
Councillors:	Chris Ashton	0419 804 725
	Patsy Beckett	0407 249 850
	William Comley	0499 699 899
	Deb Johnson	0407 244 869
	Barbara Mayfield	0422577 844
	Brenda Wallis	0481 481 116

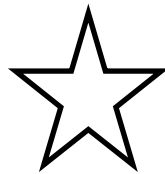
Please contact the above members for any information regarding the activities and news of the Royal Commonwealth Society (South Australian Branch)

### The Ode

We of the Royal Commonwealth Society shall continue to foster goodwill and affection between peoples of the Commonwealth, so that all may live together in peace, sympathy and understanding

**International Conference**  
**Elements and the Commonwealth**  
**Disaster/Emergency Management**  
**September 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

**Royal Commonwealth Society of Edmonton**  
**Edmonton, Alberta, Canada**



#### NEW MEMBERS

The Royal Commonwealth Society, South Australia welcomes two new members Raeleen Matulich and Nicole Thorpe, also rejoining member Christine Mayfield. Christine, Raeleen and Nicole have already enjoyed rediscovering events, the Christmas Party and the painting of the Co-OPera Piano.

We hope that you all continue to enjoy the activities of the that Council organises.

WELCOME

President's report continued

the Commonwealth Grove were planted and are thriving although a number of the smaller ground cover plants did not survive the summer as there was no ready water at the top of the hill. The designs for the Corten panels for the story wall have been approved and we look forward to these being available for installation before too long.

**Southern Ocean Marine Discovery Centre.** This facility, previously known as the Marine Discovery Centre, has now identified a suitable site in the Tennyson dunes area and with our help and extra assistance by John Shepherd, they are now a company limited by guarantee with charity status.

**PESA:** Previously one of our major sponsorships, the State Finals of PESA continues to be in recession this year.

**Rediscovering Adelaide.** These events continue to be well attended, with those not requiring transport usually being better attended. Visits throughout the year included: Treasury Building tunnels, Stangate House in Aldgate, and Haigh's Chocolate .

**Commonwealth talks.** As well as rediscovering Adelaide, we held a series of meetings with a guest speaker. The format for these has not yet been finalised, and included Professor Chris Daniels speaking about the algae bloom during a lunch, The Hon Alexander Downer with his London-centric view of the Commonwealth. Professor Don Markwell spoke with enthusiasm about Sir Zelman Cowan., and his role with the Rhodes Scholarship, Oxford.

#### International interactions.

Big news on the international scene in June. A real changing of the guard. Janet Cooper OBE has been appointed Chair of RCS trustees. Network hasn't been officially notified yet. Her CV is below.

Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey was inaugurated as 7<sup>th</sup> Secretary General of Commonwealth.

Razmi Farook has been appointed Director-General of Commonwealth Foundation.

HE Winnie Anna Kiap CBE appointed Chair of Commonwealth Foundation. Asia Pacific RCS Meeting. This was held in Melbourne, with representatives from Canada, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand, as well as several delegates from ACT and of course SA.

**President's Report continued**

**Barbados and London.** In July I was part of a small delegation to visit Barbados where the RCS is restoring an old plantation homestead to create a Commonwealth House. On my return, via London, I was able to have a brief meeting with Libby and Billy at their new offices in Guild Hall. I was surprised when I arrived to find Matthew Neuhaus was the visitor before me, nobody has mentioned it to either of us. We were not able to meet the new Chair of RCS, but we did get together the next morning for breakfast to discuss our meetings of the day before.

**Government House garden party.** The annual event for gubernatorial patronage groups marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Order of Australia and we were asked to send representatives who were recipients if possible. Our group was John Shepherd (AM), Brian Chatterton (OAM), Julie Gameau (OAM), and Libby Ellis (OAM), Mr Bunten remarked that we were the only group to send four recipients. The irony is that none of us received our rewards through RCS.

**Council membership.** We were sorry to receive Christine Cundell's resignation from Council due to their decision to move to the Riverland. Christine has been a great supporter of the RCS, long before she took over her mother's position on the Council in her own right. She will be missed. We were however delighted to coopt Deb Johnson and welcome Patsy Beckett back onto the Council to fill casual vacancies. Deb and Patsy have made valuable contributions to RCS SA, in the short amount of time they have been formally involved. Welcome to both ladies. Patsy has agreed to coordinate the Commonwealth Talks series of events, so stay tuned. Last year Julie was asked to keep records of attendances at Council meetings. The list is available if anyone wants to study it, it will be added to the Minute Book.

**AGM.** March saw our AGM, and our new Council was appointed. I would like to publicly thank the whole team for their continued good will and hard work to make this Association the wonderful group it is and look forward to many more exciting events in the future.

Special thanks to Julie for her continuing hard work behind the scenes. It was only when I became President that I realized just how much work Julie did on our behalf.



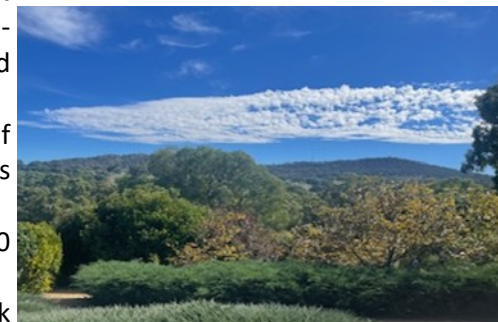
Libby Ellis President 22 March 2026

**REDISCOVERING ADELAIDE**

UKARIA 31 March 2026

The Autumnal weather was absolutely giving its best as a group travelled to Mt Barker to spend time at 'Ukaria' a multipurpose designed building for chamber music. Designed by local Architect Anton Johnson, it is a truly breathtaking structure of timber and rammed earth, with the internal theatre space completely built of local timber to enhance the fullness and clarity of performances.

The theatre has a seating for 220 patrons who, while enjoying a performance inside, can also look out beyond the performers, to the



picturesque hills and gardens framed by the floor to ceiling glass windows.

Our group was then taken on a very interesting tour of the remarkable gardens in all their late flowerings and early colour of Autumn. The tour concluded with morning tea in the relaxing glass-fronted café. The venue also caters for multi-media events, conferences and weddings. There are also two separate cottages for guest artists to stay and rehearse prior to a performance, or to get away and just compose.

Patsy Beckett

Council member

Photo by P Beckett from inside 'Ukaria'

**Objects of the Royal Commonwealth Society**

The objects of the society are to promote the increase and diffusion of knowledge respecting the people and Countries of the Commonwealth, to maintain the best traditions of the Commonwealth and to foster unity of thought and action to matters of common interest

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

The AGM was held on Sunday 22 March in the Ballroom at St Mark's College, North Adelaide.

17 members attended to hear of the activities of the South Australian Society (The President's Report is published in this newsletter), the Treasurer's report and the Election of Officers.

Libby Ellis continues as President and Judy Clarke elected as Vice President John Shepherd AM was elected as Treasurer, Julie Gameau as Secretary and William Comley, Deb Johnson and Patsy Beckett were elected as Councillors

The meeting concluded within a quarter of an hour and was followed with a afternoon tea and much chatter.

### MAY REDISCOVERING ADELAIDE

**Have you ever visited the Adelaide Arcade?**

**Do you know the history of the Arcade?**

May is History month in Adelaide and RCS and friends will be joining a one hour guided tour of the Adelaide Arcade on Wednesday 27 May. The Arcade was opened in 1885, and we will discover the First floor, Second Floor and the original underground Tea Rooms and learn the history of this iconic Adelaide landmark. **We will meet at the Rundle**

**Mall fountain opposite the Arcade at 10:15am and the guided tour will commence at 10:30am.** The cost will be \$11-50 per person, which can be paid in cash on the day to RCS Treasurer, Julie Gameau. RSVP date is 21 May to Brenda Wallis  
0481-481-116 or

[brnd\\_wallis@yahoo.com.au](mailto:brnd_wallis@yahoo.com.au)



## THE KING'S SPEECH

### COMMONWEALTH DAY MARCH 2026

**We join together on this Commonwealth Day at a time of great challenge and great possibility. Across our world, communities and nations face the increasing pressures of conflict, climate change and rapid transformation. Yet it is often in such testing moments that the enduring spirit of the Commonwealth.**

Ours is a remarkable association that spans every ocean and continent. Embracing an extraordinary diversity of culture, language and faith, our Commonwealth family is united by shared values of justice, democracy, opportunity, compassion and mutual respect. In a world that can feel increasingly fragmented, this voluntary union of free association remains rare and precious – a forum for open and honest discussion and debate to help improve the lives of the nearly three billion people who call our member states home.

Our Commonwealth of Nations holds untapped potential for prosperous trade between trusting partners. With nearly two-thirds of our population under the age of thirty, we are a family defined by youth and possibility. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that they inherit not only hope and ambition, but also a world in which they can flourish.

That inheritance depends upon the health of our planet and on the restoration of the natural world on which we depend. Across so many parts of our Commonwealth, climate change is not an abstract or distant threat, but a lived reality. The stewardship of nature, the protection of oceans and forests, and the pursuit of prosperity secured in harmony with the natural world are duties we owe not only to one another, but to generations yet unborn.

As we look ahead to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Antigua and Barbuda later this year, we are reminded that the great gatherings of our nations are strengthened by the daily endeavours of their people. What distinguishes the Commonwealth is not only what our governments resolve together, but what our people do each day in countless acts of service, enterprise and creativity. When leaders meet, they do so on behalf of millions whose quiet determination, resilience and generosity give true meaning to our shared endeavour.

Working together, we can ensure that the Commonwealth continues to stand as a force for good – grounded in community, committed to the kind of restorative sustainability that has a return on investment, enriched by culture, steadfast in its care for our planet, and united in friendship and in the service of its people.

### REDISCOVERING ADELAIDE

In February RCS members caught the tram from Adelaide to Glenelg to participate in the Asia Oasis Street Food Festival by the Sea on the Glenelg Foreshore.



We were greeted by the vibrant colours of the colourful lanterns, the craft and food stalls along the Esplanade.

We tasted the delights of Asian Food— smoky grills, noodles, dumplings, seafood, sugarcane and coconut ice cream at the Festival By the Sea.

A most enjoyable morning with sea views, sunshine, delicious food, great ambience and special company.

### PAINTING THE PIANO



The Co-Opera piano has travelled 550,000 kms around Australia, accompanying boutique performing performances for opera loving communities.

Guests were invited to an evening at St Mark’s College to witness Adelaide artist, Emma Hack give the piano a new lease of visual life. Emma spent about 2 days painting the piano with beautiful colourful designs.

**Co-Opera was founded 35 years ago and has been travelling around Australia and is presently launching a campaign to raise money for their future.**

**A series of Community concerts have been organised and the details of these can be seen on the Co-Opera website [www.co-opera.com.au](http://www.co-opera.com.au)**

### COMMONWEALTH DAY 2026

The Royal Commonwealth South Australia celebrated Commonwealth Day at a wonderful service of choral evensong at Christ Church, North Adelaide. As Reverend Stephen Bloor, Rector of Christ Church said in the service booklet, “Evensong is one of the great treasures of the Anglican tradition. It gathers us at the close of day to listen, to pray, to sing and to remember who we are before God. And tonight we gather not only as parishioners, nor as citizens of Australia but as participants in something larger; a fellowship of nations bound together by history , shared values and a common commitment to human dignity and service”

The Commonwealth flag and flags of all the Commonwealth nations were parade into the church and positioned on either side of the altar. The Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson AC read the King’s message.

At the conclusion of a memorable service parishioners and members of the RCS and associated organisations had supper in the adjacent hall.

