

SERVAS AUSTRALIA

May 2014

Dear Servas Friends,

Over the last few months Exco has been considering the best place to hold the next SI General Assembly. Servas Colombia and Servas New Zealand came forward as possible hosts for the event. At the Thailand 2001 General Assembly criteria were agreed that should be taken into account when deciding the venue for a General Assembly. During the Exco skype meeting on 10th February we used these criteria to carefully consider the feasibility reports submitted by Colombia and New Zealand.

We are now pleased to announce that the next General Assembly will be held in New Zealand in October 2015.

More details to follow after the next Exco face to face meeting to take place in France from March 26th to 31st March 2014. In the meantime if you have any comments or questions please let us know.

*Best wishes, Ann Greenhough, Vice President, Jonny Sagagner, President
Servas International Servas International*



Advance notice of the Servas Australia Inc Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at 5pm on 23 August 2014 at Kinma School, 127 Coolowie Road Terrey Hills.

You will be sent formal notification and the documentation closer to the date.

There is no longer any requirement for a small organization like Servas Australia to have its accounts audited. To remove an auditor the Act requires that the auditor, Consumer Affairs Victoria and all our members need to be given two months' notice of a special resolution that will be put to the AGM. The Board has agreed that the following special resolution will be put to members to vote on at the AGM: "That the auditors LZR Audit and Assurance be thanked for their past service and advised that their services will no longer be required in the future."

There is no need for you to do anything at this time. The motion will be included again on the formal notice and agenda, together with other motions, for the AGM. If you are unable to attend the AGM in person, you will have an opportunity to vote on all resolutions via a proxy form.

Following the AGM there will be a dinner at a nearby hotel. Please put the date in your diary now and if you live in Sydney, or plan to visit, we encourage you to come to the AGM and the dinner after.

Pam Webster, National Secretary

This newsletter is intended to provide a communication forum for SERVAS Australia members. The content, collation and distribution is undertaken by SERVAS members for SERVAS members.

NE X T ISSUE

Submissions Close: 31 July 2014 Distributed: August 2014

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions are welcome from members. Emails (word documents and high resolution photos via attachment) are preferred. Contributions are subject to approval and size restrictions. Sorry, late contributions may have to wait until the following edition.

Newsletters are compiled in February, May, August and November.

D I S T R I B U T I O N

The Newsletter is distributed to all members by post and email.

NEWSLETTER CONTACT DET A I L S

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Your feedback and suggestions are welcome.

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D I S C L A I M E R

Every effort is made to ensure information is correct at the time of printing, however no responsibility will be accepted for misinformation. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of SERVAS Australia or the Newsletter Editor.

Membership Categories and Fees

Hosts:

- Pay a joining fee of \$25 which is placed in the Development Fund and used to assist with the development of Servas in less developed countries.
- Pay an annual membership renewal fee of \$20.
- Receive newsletters in February, May, August and November
- Receive a Host List containing details of hosts.

Travellers:

- All travellers, including hosts, must contact their State Travel Officer to obtain a Letter of Introduction. Australian hosts do not need a LOI when travelling within Australia.
- Hosts pay \$50 per person for a Letter of Introduction.
- Travellers who are not hosts pay \$100 per person for a Letter of Introduction.
- A Letter of Introduction is valid for 12 months.

Servas.org.au

There is a very easy way to keep up to date with new additions to the Servas website.



Click on the following link: servas.org.au/ and scroll down to under "Recent Posts" where there is the following: "Notify me of new posts by email

Your email:" Fill in your email address and you will receive a notification by email whenever there is a change made.

If you haven't visited the website for a while I suggest you have a good look around. See if you can find your location under the tab 'People' then 'Host map'. There are also lots of newsletters from other Servas groups and SI.

Under "People" there are some interesting travellers tales—great for those times when armchair travel is the only option!.....



Servas has a Facebook page to help 'spread the word'. But we urgently need more Servas supporters to help in adding content to the site.

You can post photos, photo galleries, information about events and join in with any current conversations running on the Page or start new ones. You can have a look at our Page at facebook.com/servasaustralia.

So if you would like to contribute to the Servas effort, especially in encouraging younger people to feel that Servas is an option for them, please consider putting your hand up and become a Facebook 'content provider admin' for the Page.

Contact me, Gil Webster, by email membership@servas.org.au so I can register you, or for any additional information.

Regards, Gil

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

I am pleased to report that Consumer Affairs Victoria, with which Servas Australia Inc. is registered as an incorporated association, has approved the postponement of our 2014 Annual General Meeting until August. This will give members time to consider some important changes to our constitution, on which a vote will be taken at a Special General Meeting at the same time as the Annual General Meeting.

The proposed changes are in response to recent changes in the Victorian legislation under which we are currently incorporated, and will bring us into line with Commonwealth legislation under the Corporations Act, with which our current incorporation arrangement does not comply. Changes are also proposed to reflect recent changes to the rules, definitions and structures of Servas International, of which Servas Australia is a member organisation.

If members vote in favour of the changes that are proposed, all questions of legal non-compliance will be addressed, fees for annual corporate reporting will be reduced, and the paperwork involved in annual corporate reporting will be simplified. Our statement of purpose will more closely echo that of Servas International, with stronger emphasis on our peace-building aims, the definition of “member” will change to recognise individuals rather than host households and will broaden to include approved travellers and individuals in general who may wish to support us, whether or not they are hosts or travellers.

Within the next few weeks, all members will receive for consideration and comment a draft of the proposed new constitution. Once the period allowed for comment has elapsed, the draft will be revised and a formal notice of motion circulated inviting members to vote yea or nay at the Special General Meeting in August.

Servas International changes

Earlier this year, all member countries of Servas International voted on a proposal to define “member” as any individual who is a Servas host, a currently approved Servas traveller, or a person interested in supporting the aims and objects of Servas. Any individual “member” so defined should be entitled to nominate for appointment as an officer of Servas International. The resolution was passed by a large majority. The current rules of Servas Australia attach membership to a host household, and restrict membership to one per household. It is proposed that our rules be changed to reflect the Servas International definition. This change has implications for who may nominate for office-bearer positions, voting rights, annual fees, and the structure of the membership data base and mailing distribution lists.

Victorian law changes

Servas Australia Inc. is currently registered as an incorporated association under Victorian legislation with the state department of Consumer Affairs (CAV). Recently, the Victorian law changed prescribing new “model rules”. A deadline was set by which associations incorporated under Victorian law must change their existing rules to comply with the model, while retaining any additional or special purpose rules peculiar to their purpose and operations. Any incorporated association whose rules do not address an item required under the new Act will have the new model rules imposed upon them holus bolus.

The Victorian law generally lines up with the requirements of federal law under the Corporations Act. Among other general procedural matters, it:

- removes the external audit obligation for organisations with small annual financial turnover (such as ours)

- adds provisions for dispute resolution, disciplinary action and appeals against penalties

- prescribes and proscribes circumstances under which proxy voting may or may not be permitted

- sets requirements for annual reporting and payment of reporting fees.

Fees are \$51.40 for the annual report lodgement, plus \$160.50 every time we lodge notice of a change to our constitution (including our once-off adoption of our version of the new model rules). There are no penalties for late lodgement.

Federal Law – dual reporting, dual fees

In reviewing what parts of our existing constitution needed to be changed, the Board discovered that although the new Victorian model rules will comply with federal law, our existing Victorian registration is not compliant for operation outside the state of Victoria. As Servas Australia operates in all states and territories, and not just in Victoria, an additional requirement of the Commonwealth Corporations Act is that we must also register with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) as an Australian Registered Body (ARB)

There will be a one-off fee for registration as an ARB as well as an annual statement review fee of \$44 payable to ASIC. This is in addition to the annual fee payable in Victoria. ASIC also requires that we lodge notice with them every time we change our rules, or the names of our office bearers, etc., but there are no fees for those lodgements, unless we lodge late, in which case penalty fees apply. .

A single reporting, single fee alternative

The alternative which the Board will ask you to consider is to change our form of incorporation and registration at the same time that we change our constitution. Instead of registering, reporting and paying fees in **both** Victoria and federally, we would cancel the Victorian registration, change our form of incorporation to a Company Limited By Guarantee instead of an incorporated association, and register only with ASIC, federally.

As our turnover is less than \$250,000 a year, we would be treated by ASIC as a “small company limited by guarantee”. That means that governance requirements would be essentially the same as under Victorian law, with no need for a formal audit, and the same limitations on the individual obligations and liabilities of members and office bearers.

Like any small company, we would receive an annual statement from ASIC for us to review and update (details of directors, address etc.). As a not-for-profit, for reporting fee purposes we would be treated as a Special Purpose Company (Regulation 2003 b). There would be a one-off fee of \$366 to register and an annual review fee of \$44.

In addition, we would have to lodge notices of changes as they occur, including changes to the constitution. Requirements for this would be the same as for an ARB (as above). No lodgement fees apply. Late fees would apply (also as above for ARB).

The effect would be to reduce annual reporting fees by more than 50% and halve the annual reporting paperwork.

What’s next?

All members will shortly receive a copy of the proposed new constitution, which if accepted would restructure Servas Australia as a company limited by guarantee, registered federally with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission. Please review and consider the proposal carefully.

Letters to the Editor

Servas Australia does not offer direct support for non-Servas issues or non-Servas organisations or non-Servas individuals. Prior to our incorporation, the old rules actually contained a provision prohibiting such support, but the rule was not carried over into our current constitution and rules.



Servas is not constitutionally a charity, but that that should not stop us as individuals or as an organisation from acting charitably.

Should any Servas member wish to encourage other members to support a particular "good cause" that is not directly connected to our constitutional aims and objects, this Newsletter may accept "Letters to the Editor" from individuals urging others to offer support.. The Newsletter Editor has discretion about which letters get published, or any editing that letters should undergo before publication. In the event that the Editor is not able to make a clear decision about such matters, the letter in question will be referred to the Executive (President, Secretary, Treasurer) for a decision.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

All Servas members would be aware that there are large numbers of asylum seekers in Australia, some with visas and some without, who need help. The long-running debate on temporary protection visas only highlights the critical position of thousands of asylum seekers.

Most of us should also be aware that there are 45 million UN-accredited asylum seekers worldwide and Australia debates taking only 12,000 or 20,000 annually of these unfortunate and desperate people.

At present, many asylum seekers lack support for a variety of reasons. The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne attempts to help in this process. Could Servas members also help?

After all, refugees granted permanent protection have been among Australia's most successful economic and social contributors. Denying them the opportunity to be permanent and quickly assessed compounds their loss and our society's as well.

Brian Dixon
Ambassador , Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
"Run for Refugees"

For further information on the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, go to asrc.org.au

SERVAS YOUTH

Dear Servas Friends,

Joint crews of Servas Poland, Servas Russia and Servas Kyrgyzstan are planning another memorable Servas Youth Meeting. This time we want to meet in one of the most amazing and still unexplored places in the world - Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia.

Why come to Kyrgyzstan?

- An opportunity to meet other Servas members from very different locations and cultures: Asian, European and all over the world. A chance to meet members who couldn't reach previous Servas meetings.
- An opportunity to reach what for most of us is not-so-obvious travel destination, get off the beaten track, discover the heart of Asia, its culture and nature.
- An occasion to explore a magnificent mountain area with wild, untouched nature and breathtaking landscapes.
- And last, but not least, an opportunity to meet, talk and to exchange experiences, views and ideas.

We'd like share some basic information with you (more information coming soon):

Where? Asel holiday resort, Cholpan-Ata, the area of Issyk Kul lake, 260 km east of Bishkek, the capital

Meeting place? Bishkek

When? Last week of July

How long? 5 days

Accommodation? Rooms for four people with private bathroom

Food? 3 meals daily provided by the resort

Costs? 150 Euros (people under 35) and 230 Euros (people over 35)

There will be a possibility of funding based on individual application.



Please check the "recent posts" article on the Australian Servas website, servas.org.au for further information about this event.

Dear Servas friends

Following the distant vote the Servas Youth Team appointed at the 2012 GA has been elected as a team. I have pleasure in now being able to announce that the following members from that team are able to continue in post until the next GA. in October 2015:

Heather Mason USA

Gonzalo Forero Colombia

Cristian Ferres Argentina

Janek Dzierzawski Poland

Bina Sengar India



The youth team would like to hear from anyone who would like to help them with the work of the team. If you are interested in finding out more contact the team at youth@servas.org.

The next international youth meeting, open to all, is to be held in Kyrgyzstan in July this year. Further news from the team about this soon.

With best wishes, Ann Greenhough, Vice President, Servas International

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PEACE SECRETARY



The more I explore this subject the more I am convinced that it is important for each person to find peace within themselves first then with that understanding they can look for ways to promote peace further afield.

Liaison with and support of other PEACE Organizations gives added weight to their efforts and events . With this in view I have joined or am on the mailing list of several other groups. In this way I can give information to the newsletter editor and the webmaster about events planned by other organizations as well as SERVAS and vice versa.

I have kept in touch with Servas International and sent them copies of my newsletter articles which I write for each newsletter. They were interested to hear of our Peace Picnic Idea.

Major Event: Our major event is becoming the PEACE PICNICS held to celebrate the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE on the 21st Sept. each year. Each region held a Peace Picnic in 2013 and 2 were held in Queensland.

I have had no response to appeals for a person from each region to work with me to organize local events, such as:

FILM Nights for showing and discussion of Peace Films

BOOK Group for discussion and/or swapping of books and titles on Peace.

DISCUSSION Groups using material from articles or from the Internet such as "Ted Talks " on You Tube. and also

COURSES already in existence such as those held by the Relaxation centre

SERVAS WEB page and NEWSLETTER for articles and events

SPEAKERS at SERVAS Gatherings

These are all avenues which could be explored in the future.

Gwen Gregg,
Peace Secretary
Servas Australia



A Warm Welcome
to our newest Hosts!!

John Collingridge & Miranda Divine,
East Bunbury WA

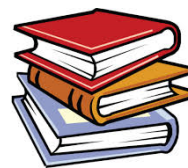
Michele Ritchie, Lindfield NSW

Helen Grant-Taylor, Yeronga Qld

Armin Howald, Hobart Tas

Kirsty & Martin Brown, Kensington Vic

Noel & Eleanor Speed, Loch Sport Vic



Servas Host Lists
and Books:

A collection of Host Lists over the last 25 years from Australia and many other countries travelled, plus several other books about Servas - available - free! One of the books is "Servas - an Experiment in Peace Building" by Pat Knowles. Perhaps these should be held in a Servas Archives collection?

To collect: - 2 ways. Either visit us in sunny Gippsland and stay a day or two (Page 104 in the 2013 Host Book) - OR - we'll find a way to get them to you.

Kevin & Pam Findlay - 0413 034 066



Travel Report from Host Patricia O'Brien

I am back from the trip to Europe and thankfully, now recovered from the Pneumonia which I developed on the trip!! Here is an excerpt from the journey:

Helsinki Finland: I had arranged to stay with a host in Helsinki , but had to cancel as I developed Pneumonia in Rome prior. I thought best to stay in the Emergency assist hotel arranged for me before my flight back to OZ. The host and I had been in touch by emails and she kindly sought me out at the hotel and came to visit me. A delightful woman! She had offered to put me up in her (spare) studio as she was an exhibiting artist, but lived elsewhere. So I made a new friend there even though I did not stay with her.



Cahors France: The host had pulled out of Servas some months before; but was extremely helpful through emails, with local knowledge and tips, prior to my arrival. I was also offered afternoon tea while I was staying in a YHA equivalent.

Barcelona Spain: Had a wonderful day with a day host (a Chilean woman, longtime resident of Barcelona) who loved her city and showed me Roman ruins, backstreets, herbal apothecaries, Govt bldgs, Gaudi sites, Olympic arenas, hilly skyways; all with a knowledge only a local can impart. However she was amazed at the difficulty a tourist can have, seeking out airline offices on foot or by phone!!



Berlin Germany: I had to change my arrival dates repeatedly due to ill health. Quite a few hosts with whom i had been in touch kindly assisted. They suggested possible other hosts to try, as well as rehab spots(non Servas). They made recommendations about local and country geography and the best transport routes for ease of travel. The main host I stayed with for 5 nights. I was only able to be a tourist for one day as I was still weakened by the lingering illness. While I was there I decided my host should get "the Servas host of the Year" award! Her compassion, kindness, and genuine interest in exchanging ideas and knowledge were a great advertisement for Servas principles.

I am glad to be back in the Servas web and look forward to being a host myself again. Even if i never see any of these folk again I will endeavour to pass on that spirit to other travellers. It is about hospitality, sharing and giving comfort, while creating peace.

ALL my hosts have sent follow-up emails to check on my state of health, which is now improving.

Editor's note:

It is wonderful to hear of anyone's travels, but especially those of Servas members. If you are able to provide us with a report of your trip, please remember there are many of us who would love to read it!! Submissions for the next newsletter close on 31 July!

Host List Update July 2014

Now nearly all hosts are receiving their hosts lists as a PDF computer file the strict space restrictions we needed to be aware of when the printed booklet was in use can now be relaxed. This means you now have the opportunity to attract more travellers by making your *Interests* and *Attractions* more descriptive and interesting, giving you the ability to inform travellers more fully of the benefits and advantages of staying with you.

As an example, in the present host list our Tasmanian hosts, Millard Ziegler and Amanda Stark have, as part entry in the host list, this:

Interests: Bushwalking, sailing, boat-building, electric vehicles, anthropology, non-English languages, multicultural dance, music (classical, organ, jazz, blues, folk, rock), independent and foreign-language movies, theatre, English word games, local wines.

Attractions: Bush with native animals, close to city, Mt Wellington and port, scenic tours and walks, wineries, brewery, plus movies, live music, theatre and water activities within a few minutes' drive. We know Tasmania very well and are happy to help with itinerary and bushwalking suggestions in advance of your stay.

Just don't you want to visit!

Most hosts want more travellers, so here is your chance to be inspired and elaborate on why travellers should chose you!

You can send me your revised *Interests* and *Attractions* entries (or any other corrections) at any time via email to membership@servas.org.au. Please quote your ID number.

But you will be reminded by me prior to the update in July.

Gil Webster, Membership

