

SERVA AUSTRALIA

February 2015

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Letters to the Editor (Feel free to contribute)

Editors Thoughts

Greetings, I hope this Newsletter finds you and your families well and happy.

Our National Secretary Pam told me to get this Newsletter out on time for the AGM. I shall try. Thank goodness we have had such a good National Secretary. As I trawled the Servas mail I notice Pam is passing her Secretary hat over after the AGM. Thanks Pam. Have a happy secretary retirement.

As I sit here in my nice little home in Brisbane Australia contemplating Servas. My first task before assembling the Servas Newsletter is to gather all the news that has been emailed to newsletter.servas.org.au. I was just poking around as I do and I found this from the Servas International Executive Committee (aka SI EXCO):

Je suis Charlie

We - the members of the board of Servas International - deplore the violent and lethal attacks as those committed recently in Paris on innocent people and on freedom of expression. But the terrible actions should not make us lose perspective of our fundamental ideals. In the aftermath of such atrocities, there's a further need to encourage and enable the development of increased tolerance and mutual understanding between people around the world. Servas, as an organization, will pursue its peace mission by facilitating the coming together of

hosts and travellers of any race, creed, sexual orientation, class/caste or nationality. We wish to express our solidarity and compassion to the victims and their loved ones, to our Servas friends in France, and to all the people in France.

Music for peace

While contemplating please take the opportunity to listen to this piece of music which is subtitled "A Mass for Peace". The piece is called The Armed Man and is a mass composed by the Welsh composer Karl Jenkins. It was dedicated to victims of the Kosovo crisis. Here you can listen to the mass: <http://bit.ly/1BVNfaV>

SI EXCO

(Servas International Executive Committee)

<http://servas.org/who-we-are-SI-EXCO.php>



After a moment pondering the terrible events in France with sadness, I then clicked on the link of the EXCO signature which took me to the Servas International site. A nice picture of the team but then I clicked on the SI home page <http://servas.org/index.php> and that was more interesting.

I don't know about you but until being given this Editor gig (I call it the last person standing effect), I really hadn't put a huge amount of thought into Servas and what it is all about. Yes I always described its purpose as promoting world peace by enabling people of the world to meet and share their lives and respective cultures. But in simple terms my mind was that Servas is a hosting group. For me I found it easy to see the Peace element as a hopeful side effect of the hosting. I still think generally this is the case. But the SI home page makes me think my description of Servas has been wrong. I should describe it as a Peace group which uses the cultural exchanges of home hosting as its principal method of promoting World Peace. A Peace group first, a hosting group second.

I don't think my ponderings are anything of major significance though I think our perception of this group and what it is about is important. We could say being members of Servas is like hanging a flag in front of our homes in effect saying that we stand behind what Servas represents. Knowing what the flag represents is I think pretty important.

Much Peace to you all. Regards Paul. **Now for the News.**

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.

NEXT ISSUE

Submissions Close: **May 1st** for the May 2015 News Letter

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 or when it gets done.

DISTRIBUTION (Thanks to those that volunteered)

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

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DISCLAIMER

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



If you haven't visited the website for a while I suggest you have a good look around.

There are lots of newsletters from other Servas groups and SI. And there is a location map of all our hosts under the "People" tab

Also under this tab are some interesting travellers tales—great for those times when armchair travel is the only option!

There is a very easy way to keep up to date with new additions to the Servas website. On the right hand side under "Email Notification" is the following: "Notify me of new posts by email".

Just fill in your email address and you will receive a notification by email whenever there is new content on the site.

Pam

Servas has a Facebook page to help 'spread the word'.

www.facebook.com/servasaustralia



You can post photos, photo galleries, information about events and join in with any current conversations running on the Page or start new ones.

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 becoming active on our Facebook page.

Contact me, Gil Webster, by email membership@servas.org.au for any additional information.

Gil

Thanks Volunteer Helpers

Thanks to the folk who volunteered to help with the Newsletter mail out. Your offer is appreciated. We now have a few volunteers so I shall attempt to spread the load per newsletter.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Members will have received recently a survey inviting ideas and opinions about the way ahead for Servas Australia. If you have not already responded to the survey, I urge you to do so soon and make your views known. The Board will be taking members' views very much into account when considering the organisation's future direction.

The notice for the next Annual General Meeting of Servas Australia Inc. is included in this newsletter. It will be held in Hobart together with Board meetings over the weekend of 21 and 22 March 2015. If you are able to attend the AGM, you will be made very welcome. If you receive this newsletter electronically, please read the section about the notice of meeting carefully and click on the links to all the papers for the meeting. For those who have elected to receive their AGM notice via snail mail, you will have information sent in the mail.

I had hoped that the agenda would include motions to amend the Rules in our Constitution in a couple of important areas. However, we are operating in "hasten slowly and get it right" mode, and the draft motions have yet to be signed off by the full Board in a form that is ready for circulation to the general membership. The sign-off is not likely to happen until the Board meeting of 22 March 2015, with a period of membership consultation to follow before a final version of the motions are put to a Special General Meeting for a full membership vote.

You will recall that in the December 2014 Newsletter I reported that the Board had instructed me to draft two motions: one to change the Rules to redefine "member" to reflect changes adopted by Servas International to attach membership to *individuals*, with no distinctions between the status of members, whether travellers, hosts or just people interested in Servas; and the other to provide for an independent review of the annual accounts in order to fill some of the governance gap left by the Consumer Affairs Victoria determination that the requirement for formal audit be removed from our Rules.

The change to the definition of member will mean that membership will attach to individuals. At present we attach "full" membership, with voting rights and the right to nominate for elected positions only to host "households". Travellers with a current letter of introduction are treated as "associate" members on an "individual" basis but have no voting rights and may not nominate for elected positions. The change to the definition removes the distinction between the rights of various classes of members, putting all "individual members" on the same footing. The reasoning behind the Servas International decision to recognise only "individual members" is that we need to get more young people involved in running Servas organisations, and younger people are much more likely to be travellers than hosts. Travellers at present don't get a say.

The other change proposed is to require that the annual accounts be independently reviewed before being circulated to members with the AGM papers. Over the past few years there have been changes to the Victorian and Commonwealth laws which dictate governance requirements for incorporated associates like Servas. Neither the State nor Commonwealth laws now provide for accounts to be formally audited, unless the annual turnover declared is at a level MUCH greater than enjoyed by Servas Australia. The government stance is that for organisations with turnover as low as ours, the cost of a formal audit is out of all proportion to the benefits. In August 2014, Consumer Affairs Victoria determined that the Rules of Servas Australia be changed to delete the audit requirement. However, the current Board of Servas Australia remains of the view that some measure of independent review of our accounts is desirable. The accounts that will be circulated to you with the 2015 AGM papers will have been prepared by the Treasurer and then independently reviewed by a Servas member who is not a Board member. The purpose of the proposed Rule or By-law change in that regard will be to document: how such reviews will be conducted in future; and what the procedures will be in future for selecting and appointing the independent reviewer. It is possible that a Rule change may be rejected by Consumer Affairs

Victoria as being outside the terms of their “Model Rules”. Should that occur, the same provisions could be enshrined as “policies and procedures” in the By-Laws of Servas Australia, which do not require Consumer Affairs Victoria’s sanction.

Please get involved and make your views known. Servas is your organisation.

Geoff Sheldon
President
Servas Australia Inc.

February 2015

Servas Australia Inc 2015 AGM

Notice is hereby given that this year the Servas Australia Inc AGM will be held in Hobart on Saturday 21 March. Details are:

**Servas Australia Inc.
2015 Annual General Meeting
5 pm on 21 March 2015
Goulburn St Primary school
Forest Road
West Hobart**

If you are planning to attend the AGM please let me know by Wednesday 18 March (so we can arrange the seating) – secretary@servas.org.au

Parking for the AGM is available in the school car park in front of the school on Forest Road. Look for the Servas sign.

Following the AGM a dinner will be held at 6.00pm at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Hampden Road, Battery Point Please let Barb Mawson know if you are attending the dinner by Friday 13 March 2015. Her email is tashosts@servas.org.au. All hosts and travellers are invited to attend this dinner to meet Board Members and other Servas members.

Pam Webster
National Secretary
Servas Australia Inc.

Detailed information for the 2015 Servas Australia Inc. AGM

If you have elected to receive your AGM notification via electronic means, please click on the following links to receive the information you require.

The agenda for the meeting	Agenda http://servas.org.au/agm/agenda/
The proxy form to enable you to vote if you are not able to attend the meeting in person	Proxy form http://servas.org.au/agm/proxy-form/
The minutes of the 2014 AGM	Minutes http://servas.org.au/agm/minutes/
The 2014 Annual Report	Annual report http://servas.org.au/agm/annual-report/
The independently reviewed accounts for 2014	Accounts http://servas.org.au/agm/accounts/

If you have elected to receive your AGM notification via snail mail, this information will be sent to you in the post.



Proposed dates for Servas Australia Board meetings for the next 12 months

- Face to Face Board meetings and AGM to be held in Hobart 21-22 March 2015
- Teleconference Tuesday 2 June 2015
- Teleconference Tuesday 1 September 2015



Queensland News

Social Date claimers

Wednesday February 18th Pub Night.

Meet at the Irish Club, 175 Elizabeth Street Brisbane at 6pm. We meet for either a meal or just a coffee/drink and an enjoyable evening.

Sunday March 15th Servas Lunch at the home of John & Brenda Cross

31 James Mac Court Narangba

RSVP johnandbrendacross@gmail.com or phone 33857657 mob 0497082160.

Please arrive by 11am for a 12 o'clock lunch and bring a plate to share and your own drinks.

Sunday May 24th Sunshine Coast get-together at Noosaville.

Meet at the "Big Pelican" Noosa River Foreshore at 12 noon for a picnic in the park. BYO everything or there are several takeaways in the vicinity for fish & chips etc

Welcome to Servas our New Hosts

- George and Dee Casparian at Gympie phone 0401107757
- Jolion Solomon at Tin Can Bay phone 0408113136

Bev Wilkins



Report on February 8th Noosa Big Pelican Get Together

Dear Friends,

Another sunny - perfect day at Gympie Terrace, Noosaville with a gentle cool breeze keeping us cool. We had 16 people including friends of Brenda and John Cross (Barbara White and Hazel). A special welcome to Hosts Ian and Barb Wood from Alexander Headlands - and a new Member Marguerite Hondow from Tewantin....Welcome to Servas Marguerite.

Thanks to those who offered yummy nibbles for pre-lunch...Delightful...especially Julie-Ann Payne's excellent lemon myrtle cake and her figs and Ted's figs also. (Hope I've not forgotten anyone.)

Lots of laughter - stories told - and comfortable friendships made...A very successful day.

Tony and I thank you all for your commitment to the journey here and we look forward to seeing you again.

THIS EVENT WAS A SPECIAL SERVAS DAY..

Love through Servas
Helen and Tony



Travellers Reports

Judy Ebner had a nice French Couple stay with them

These are our young French Servas visitors. Aren't they beautiful?



They were visiting us during the terrible atrocities in France. Much looking at the French news and communication with friends and family in France and particularly in Paris. On Sunday we took them to the NSW Art Gallery and there was a small miracle. We had the best Art guide who took us on a tour of Aboriginal art. Angelo and Virginie loved it(having been to central Australia including Lake Mungo and Uluru)- and we learned a lot too! By chance the guide started her tour by saying that the prehistoric people who drew those amazing wall paintings in Lascaux all died out but the Australian aborigines handed down their beliefs behind their art from generation to generation and this has helped the French understand why their ancient ancestors painted what they did. She even pointed out the way aborigines made use of a natural bump in a hollowed out burial pole to depict a turtle - just as the bumps in the rock walls at Lascaux were utilised. Virginie started to come out of her depression and they then went walking in the National Park before they left Australia. A really moving visit.

Judy Ebner
Servas

Hi everybody,

We are leaving Australia and we would like to thank everyone for everything. We have discovered lot of amazing places, met wonderful people, discuss and exchange point of view. Through you, we witnessed the great kindness of Australians and the value of a network such as SERVAS.

We leave Australia for a new adventure in Thailand. See you soon in France (or maybe in Australia again).

Angelo and Virginie



Servas International News

The Servas International News Letter can be download from the Servas International Website www.servas.org or more specifically <http://www.servas.org/who-we-are-newsletter.php>
 Better still, it is also available on servas.org.au or more specifically:
<http://servas.org.au/si-newsletter-dummy/si-news-nov-dec-2014/>

Our National Secretary asked me to encourage you to make use of the Servas Australia website.



International Meeting in Umbria
 April 26 - May 1 2015
 Hotel Duomo - San Gemini (TR) – Italy

Phone +39 0744 630015

Email: albergo.duomo@gruppobacus.com

Web site: www.albergoduomosangemini.it

The Servas Italy association is organizing an international meeting since April 26 until May 1, 2015 in the city of San Gemini (15 km from Terni) by the Hotel Duomo (an ancient building of 18th century). The meeting will give the opportunity of knowing and tasting the beauty and some of the activities about peace developed by Umbria region. The programme schedules tours and meetings with the representatives of "Tavola della Pace" and the foundation "Aldo Capitini". The meeting is limited to a maximum number of 50 foreign participants and 20 Italian participants.

Ed. If you are interested the full Info sheet is available from the Secretary or me on request.

Servas Australia Inc. Call for nominations for key workers

Appointed Positions

Some key worker positions are appointed by the Board. The Board is still seeking expressions of interest to fill the following appointed key worker positions:

- Peace Secretary
- Membership Officer

Both these positions are pivotal to our organisation. The Peace secretary position has been vacant for some time now. Gil Webster has been the Membership Officer for 11 years and has given notice that he has produced his last host list. The Board urges any member who has the appropriate skills to consider taking on these two important roles.

Position descriptions are available for each of these positions. A copy is available from me (secretary@servas.org.au). If you would like any additional information please give me a call on (02) 9451 9669. Please apply setting out your interest, skills and experience that are relevant to the position.