

President's preamble for 2015 SAAN review

Since its inception in 2008, SAAN has been on a road of growth and success, and I am delighted to think that 2015 has been no exception to this. It was a year of much consolidation and a focus on our core business: a network for academics and their friends sharing a common goal in promoting interactions between colleagues in Australia and Switzerland. This has now been boosted through SAAN's effort in employing Ms Maria Schaller as a part-time Executive Assistant. As a native Austrian, and working for the German Program for SBS Radio in Melbourne, Maria is an expert in promoting agendas and interests of small focus groups like SAAN. Her multi-linguistic talent and her already impressive track record with the printed media, makes her an ideal person for both promoting an organization run entirely on a voluntary basis as well as looking after some of the back office challenges, including our new website (www.saan.com.au).

An important activity of SAAN is the organization of public lectures in Australia's major cities. This year was no exception with an evening devoted to Malaria as one of the major disease challenges that continues to face us and remains a huge health problem for some of Australia's neighbours to the North. Through the longstanding research links between Switzerland and Australia in this area, it is of little surprise that some of Australia's most prominent Malaria researchers are native Swiss, including Melbourne's Profs Ivo Müller and Christian Doerig, who shared with a captive SAAN audience their leading Malaria research.

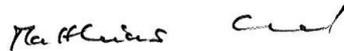
Covering a completely different aspect of Swiss life in Australia, and after a longer pause of organizing an event in "Humanities and Arts", SAAN organized an evening dedicated highlighting the contributions made by the early immigrants from Neuchâtel to the wine industry in Victoria. With the engaging style of Mr-Guillaume de Pury, the packed-out historic lecture hall of the Royal Society of Victoria not only witnessed a fascinating family history, but also appreciated the tremendous Swiss influence on the success of Victoria's Yarra Valley in wine making and artisan food industry. Participants were also treated to wine tasting of some classic Yeringberg wines arranged by Sandra de Pury.

SAAN has been privileged to receive continuous support from the Swiss General Consulate in Sydney, and the Embassy in Canberra, particularly from its Science and Technology attaché Mr Marc Engler. With 2016 marking a year of "changing the heads" at both missions, SAAN hopes for a continuing support from the successors of Consul General Ernst Hofstetter and Ambassador Marcel Stutz in the years to

come. This would ensure a unique way for SAAN to remain represented and involved in the many activities and initiatives spearheaded by the “official Switzerland” in the Australian science, research and education landscape.

The voice of SAAN is as strong and loud as that of its members and it has been great to see large numbers of SAAN members attending our events throughout the year. Many of those events would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and generosity of our guest speakers and the generous support from our corporate sponsors.

On behalf of the Executive, I wish you all the best for 2016 and look forward to your active participation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthias Ernst', followed by a stylized flourish.

Matthias Ernst

What is SAAAN?

- Established in 2008 from Swiss Academic Network Melbourne (SANM) which was founded in 2005
- Non-for profit organization, incorporated as a company limited by guarantee
- Interactive, “grass-root” organisation
- Open to any academics interested in fostering bilateral exchange
- Over 650 members throughout Australia and Switzerland
- Members comprise scientists, physicians, lawyers etc, with leadership roles in academia, industry and commerce
- Presently no membership fees

Who is SAAAN?

- Matthias Ernst (President, Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute)
- Robert Medcalf (Secretary, Monash University)
- Bruno Giger (Treasurer/Webmaster, Part-owner of several companies in the Australian IT market)
- Jean-Guy Schneider (Events, Swinburne University)
- Maria Schaller (Executive Assistant, SBS Radio)
- Board Members (NSW, WA, QLD)

What is SAAAN’s missions/goals?

- Create and promote a highly interactive “**peoples-network**” among academics of different fields
- Identify, develop and improve network opportunities between CH and AUS
- Facilitate and expand exchange between AUS and CH academics
- Raise awareness and profiles of Australia and Switzerland as world-class locations for (post doctoral/post graduate) training
- Act as network and resource hub for (young) academics seeking exchange (undergraduate, postgraduate student, postdoctoral training)
- Increase exposure of SAAAN in media (web, radio, print media)

Who supports SAAAN?

- No official mandate from CH and AU governments/embassies, **independent**
- Major financial support from industry (Novartis, Roche)
- Patronage of the Swiss Ambassador and General Consulates