



Government House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

28 January 2020

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following honorary appointments and awards within the General Division of the Order of Australia:

## ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

### *Member (AM) in the General Division*

**Professor Massimo COLOMBAN**, Italy  
For significant service to the Australian Government as  
Honorary Consul in Veneto, Italy.

**Count Paolo ZEGNA DI MONTE RUBELLO**, Italy  
For significant service to Australia's bilateral relationship  
with Italy and to the Australian wool industry.

### *Medal (OAM) in the General Division*

**Sir Christopher John BENSON DL FRICS**  
United Kingdom  
For service to the bilateral relationship between Australia  
and the United Kingdom.

**Ms Valerie HOOPER**, Belgium  
For service to the Embassy of Australia to Belgium and  
Luxembourg, and Australia's Mission to the European  
Union and NATO.

**By His Excellency's Command**

**Paul Singer MVO**  
Official Secretary to the Governor-General

**APPOINTED AN HONORARY MEMBER (AM)**

**IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA**

**Professor Massimo COLOMBAN**, Italy

For significant service to the Australian Government as Honorary Consul in Veneto, Italy.

Professor Massimo Colomban provided distinguished service to the Australian Government as Honorary Consul in Veneto, Italy between 2007 and 2016.

As one of Italy's most eminent business leaders he has provided Australia with significant business, industry and political connections and made a substantial contribution to developing trade and investment links between Australia and Italy.

In addition, Professor Colomban has consistently provided generous personal support for Australian public diplomacy and economic interests at minimal or no cost to the Australian Government. He has also demonstrated a high level of commitment to consular service, providing support to Australians abroad in need that often went beyond any expectations of this role.

On the basis of his longstanding commitment and support in advancing Australian-Italian relations, Professor Colomban's distinguished service is worthy of Australia's formal appreciation and recognition through and appointment as an Honorary Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

**APPOINTED AN HONORARY MEMBER (AM)**  
**IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA**

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**Count Paolo ZEGNA DI MONTE RUBELLO, Italy**

For significant service to Australia's bilateral relationship with Italy and to the Australian wool industry.

Count Paola Zegna, the Zegna family and its business operations have provided significant support to the Australian wool industry since the 1920s in sourcing the finest Australian Merino wool; sponsoring awards since 1963 to incentivize wool growers; signing the first Woolmark licence in the world; opening Zegna stores and corners in the major cities in Australia and investing directly in wool production through the Achill farm near Armidale, New South Wales.

Count Zegna has actively contributed to the consistent improvement in the quality of Australian wool, creating a virtuous circle par excellence and is a key player in wool being, once again, Australia's largest export to Italy. He is a major international figure in business, fashion and the wool industry and has shown significant support for Australian business, wool and the Australian-Italian relationship.

On the basis of his longstanding commitment and service to advancing Australian-Italian relations, and significant support of Australia's wool industry, his distinguished service is worthy of Australia's formal gratitude and recognition by appointment as an Honorary Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia.

**AWARDED AN HONORARY MEDAL (OAM)**  
**IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA**

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**Sir Christopher John BENSON DL FRICS**, United Kingdom  
For service to the bilateral relationship between Australia and the United Kingdom.

Sir Christopher Benson has provided rich and tangible contributions to reinforcing the ties between Australia and the United Kingdom (UK). In particular, his legacy of service and leadership within the Britain-Australia Society has ensured it continues to advance the bilateral relationship through commerce, public service, education entertainment, culture and sport.

Sir Christopher also revived and led the Britain-Australia Society Education Trust, alongside a bursary appeal, to fund many Australia-UK exchange scholarships and apprenticeships to help future-proof our people-to-people links.

Amongst other achievements, Sir Christopher was the driving force behind our nations' official commemoration to recognise the contributions of Admiral Arthur Phillip (1738-1814), the first Governor of New South Wales, to the foundation of modern Australia. His years of work culminated in the inauguration of memorials in 2014, the bicentenary year of Admiral Phillip's death, which included an armillary sphere in the town of Bath, England, and a plaque of Sydney sandstone within the nave of Westminster Abbey, London.

Sir Christopher has also had a distinguished career in public service and in business, including as Chairman of MEPC which built the Australian Stock Exchange and other major office developments across Australia.

Sir Christopher is worthy of Australia's national recognition through the Order of Australia.