



## Stories

### CHRISTMAS PARTY - DEC 17

We're all looking forward to divine music from members, scintillating wit from our Sergeant, and near-endless Christmas frivolity at our RACV party from 7.30am on Tuesday December 17. Bring your hamper bags filled with goodies for the Steps Outreach and Lentara (formerly Hotham Mission) Asylum Seeker Program recipients.

Let's ensure "a sea of red and green" on Tuesday as part of our celebration of Christmas.

We look forward to all our members, family and friends coming along for this final breakfast for 2013 which promises to be a wonderful morning of entertainment and song. We have seating for 100 so get yourselves organised now for a big event.

Please RSVP to myself by Sunday evening advising if you are attending and whether you are bringing guests. Please also advise the name of the guests so that name badges can be prepared.

Regards

Neville Taylor  
Director, Club Administration

### Duty Roster for Tuesday 17th Dec 2013

Chair	George Mackey
Sgt	Michael Bromby
Greeter	Brian Downie
Reporter	Tony Thomas
Photographer	Allan Driver
Door	Anne King, Greg Cuthbert, Yanpu Zhang
Bulletin Editor	Tony Thomas

### "HOUSE OF DREAMS" FOR SOME LAOS KIDS



Phaimanee with their puppy ManU.



Right: Our party led by Roy Garrett pose with students and staff at House of Dreams

From the age of 13 to 20 Ken Pisapheng, son of a tomato and chilli-growing farm family, was a monk at Sakam Monastery in Laos. He then wanted to become a doctor but found the entry exams were too difficult, so he did a marketing course. Now he runs House of Dreams, a tiny charitable dormitory in Luang Prabang for half a dozen kids from poor Khmmu-tribe rural families. The kids, in their early teens, attend a local school and at the dormitory they study English and computers together in a green-and-blue painted room, sitting on the floor and using low desks.

Our RCCMS Laos party visited his House of Dreams in November. We met Ken, met the kids and met Zach Benson 23, a London lawyer who is spending a month at the premises teaching English as part of the "Travel to Teach" voluntary movement.



## Upcoming Events

### Christmas Party

RACV City Club

Dec 17, 2013 at 07:30 AM – 09:30 AM

### Board Meeting

RACV City Club

Dec 18, 2013 at 06:00 PM – 07:30 PM

### Board Meeting

RACV City Club

Jan 15, 2014 at 06:00 PM – 07:30 PM

## Speakers

Dec 17, 2013

### CHRISTMAS PARTY

Dec 24, 2013

### NO REGULAR MEETING THIS WEEK (Christmas Eve)

Dec 31, 2013

### NO REGULAR MEETING THIS WEEK (New Years Eve)

Jan 07, 2014

### Informal Breakfast in RACV Bistro

Jan 21, 2014

### Bernard McMenamin FCA, FCPA, CTA, TEP Estate Planning

Feb 11, 2014

### Dr Elizabeth Pittman Medical Charlatans and Frauds

[View entire list](#)

## Bulletin Editor

[David JONES](#) (If you have any comments or questions, please contact the editor)

## Sponsors

Ken founded the school in May 2012. "I love kids and ManU," he says, referring to their white puppy named after Manchester United. "The kids do have a school in their Ban Phadeung village but not enough teachers for all the classes, and the teachers have not graduated from college or uni. The kids also live far from that school and have no transport. By living here free of charge, they have hopes for a better job and life from education. And they get their first experience of city life in a safe way. I am sure the kids will make their dreams become true, and they will become adult leaders of their village community."

Nee-Phaimanee, aged 13, says her village school was too far for her to walk there. She also had to get up at 4.30am to steam sticky rice for her family. She wants education so she can become a doctor and help sick people in rural villages.

The puppy ManU also has his poster on the wall, saying that his favourite thing is to ride with Kenny on Ken's scooter.

Lawyer-volunteer Zach says another law graduate in London inspired him to come, saying her time at the school had been the best summer of her life.

Costs for the dormitory are tiny by Western standards but a difficulty for Ken, who chases donations. The current year's rent has been paid by Rod Fraser's Your Own 2 Hands. Our party led by Roy Garrett kicked in \$25 per head which paid the year's power bill. Ken is still trying to raise the funds for food (\$3000), water (\$170), and drinking water (\$60). To donate, contact Ken at [ken\\_pisapheng@hotmail.com](mailto:ken_pisapheng@hotmail.com)

#### THANKS FROM ROD FRASER RE LAOS

A Letter from Rod Fraser, of Your Own 2 Hands Foundation, our collaborator on Laos aid:  
Thank you very much for the two excellently written reports in regards to your recent trip to Laos.

We are in awe of the incredible work Melbourne Sunrise Rotary has committed itself to in Laos over the last few years and also to the individual contributions made by members of the Roy and Annie Garrett trips.

I understand that there is already a commitment to continue being involved in 2014 with the construction of another Primary School.

Thank you for all your efforts. I hope that you have an opportunity to pass on our thanks to your Club and others involved.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Rod Fraser  
**Your Own 2 Hands Foundation**

#### MEETING REPORT DEC 10, 2013



Damien Secen of Macquarie

CHAIR:

REPORTER: Richard Bowen

Visitors included visiting Rotarian Anne Sutcliffe from RC Haworth & Worth Valley, Yorkshire, UK; Mitherran Seleventran, guest of David Jones; Ayhan Serbest and Howard Grace, guests from Australia Post through Greg Cuthbert; Chris Robertson, guest of John Ilott; Mindy Coupe, guest of Neville Taylor; Yung Le, guest of Alan Seale; Jayd Kewming, guest of Doug Robertson; the parents of our guest speaker, Anton and Lorraine Secen, and Koren Harvey's father, Alan Harvey.

#### **Announcements**

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If you wished to pick up more red bags for the Christmas Hampers, we should take some blue bags, as the red had all gone.

Jillian Cavanagh said that the next Vocational Services visit would be to Australia Post on 26 January, with details to be found shortly on our website.

President Doug, accompanied by a rolling montage of Rotary photographs;

- welcomed the returning Rotarians from Laos;
- mentioned that Marjorie Gerlinger had produced a collage of photographs to show at the District Conference next year;
- said that Alan Seale was applying for a City of Melbourne grant to host an intercultural dinner (Iftar) next July;
- said that D9800 was re-visiting the boundaries of some cluster clubs, and this will result in RC CMS being in a cluster only with RCs of Melbourne, North Melbourne and Southbank;
- said that "early bird" bookings for the 2014 District Conference close on 12 December, and also "early bird" bookings for the Sydney-based international Conference in June 2014 will also close soon.

On a lighter note, Sergeant, Michael Bromby explained to the visitors the logic (?) behind the rolling, rollicking verses of the Central Melbourne poem, and invited Dick Mitchell to append his two lines. Dick kept to the current theme of this "bawdy ballad".

Michael then read excerpts from the opening address given by Nelson Mandela in 1964 when first appearing for trial in South Africa, explaining why he (NM) had gone down the route of sabotage to bring the plight of black South Africans before the courts and the world.

#### GUEST SPEAKER

Damian Secen, Executive Director, Macquarie Infrastructure and Real Assets, Macquarie group was introduced by chairman Greg Cuthbert.

Damian has spent three years living in Moscow, and delivered his address titled: ***Russia, a riddle wrapped in mystery, inside an enigma***. This title was drawn from one of Sir Winston Churchill's war-time speeches.

Damian commenced his presentation with a photograph of Time Life Magazine in 2007 showing Russian President, Vladimir Putin being voted Person of the Year by that magazine. This followed from 1999 when Putin displaced Boris Yeltsin as President, and Putin promoted/stood for growth, optimism and hope, and presided over a threefold increase in real wages. This coming-of-age was led by foreign investment and high-tech industry being developed.

Macquarie Bank was invited to establish a \$200 million infrastructure fund to assist in Russia's continued growth.

This work fell to Damian, and his mandate covered fundraising, investment sourcing, investment and asset management.

Macquarie saw the projects of importance as airports, railways, roads, electricity production and natural gas exports.

By 2007 there was the best part of \$1 trillion committed for infrastructure works, and then along came the Global Financial Crises with the spectacular demise of Lehmann Brothers in the USA. Investment plans were in tatters, but the Russian economy proved to be far more resilient than most people expected, helped greatly by the fact that Russia had a record low ratio of debt to GDP.

By August 2009, Macquarie had raised \$500 m for the infrastructure fund, with 20% of the fund being earmarked for Kazakhstan, and the remaining 80% for Russia. During this buildup of investment money, Damian travelled the country extensively, including visits to Kazakhstan and to the Ukraine. Investors in the fund were development banks: other international investors were still wary of sending funds to Russia. Following the earlier investment strategy, the initial funding was committed to Brunswick Rail (\$125m), GSR Energy, power stations (\$83m), Russian Towers, communication towers (\$50) and OGC-5, owner/operator of power companies (\$137m)

Lessons that Damian took away from his three years in Russia include:

- Form your own opinion: do not take the views of others for gospel;
- Watch for the CNN effect; that is the skewed reporting of the media;
- Apply the national interest test when looking for investments;
- Fly in, fly out does not work; you need to live in the country to understand it, and
- There is no easy win.

Damian sees exceptional opportunities in Russia:

Consider the following;

- Around 150 million people;
- 99.7% literacy;
- 260 million mobile phone subscribers;
- Number one in the world crude oil production;
- Number one in the world national gas producer;
- Number two in the world crude oil exporter; BUT
- Number 4 in the world for CO2 emissions.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Damian fielded a number of questions regarding falling population, low birth rate, additional infrastructure funds, the troubles in the Ukraine and do cities like Vladivostok represent mainstream Russia.