

Women in Rotary International Women's Day Breakfast, March 8, 2017

Wednesday, March 8 at 6.30 am, 1,200 people descended into the Crown Palladium in Melbourne to celebrate with Women in Rotary, our International Women's Day. Once again, our Kerry Kornhauser OAM, with a team of volunteers gathered together both professional and non-professional men and women, 90 Year 12 students from local and country private and state schools and well known public figures, who generously provided their time and passion, to explore this year's topic "Women Leaders: What Does It Take?"

At this Breakfast event, Women in Rotary raised app. \$40,000 whilst showcasing our Rotary District 9800 to 80% non-Rotarians whilst introducing and opening a conversation of the need for a gender balanced society.

A market place in the foyer attracted fantastic attention with stalls representing Interplast, Butterfly Foundation, Bridge of Hope, Rotary International and Good Shepherd and many others.

Breakfast food appeared to be a big success with plenty of eggs, bacon and Turkish Golzeme and Croissants and much needed early morning coffee!

Kitty Chiller (former modern pentathlete who represented Australia at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney and our Chef de Mission for Australia at the 2016 Summer Olympics held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) made a riveting key note address. Tom Gleisner provided his entertaining MC enthusiasm and the Panellists, Susan Alberti AC, David Thodey AO, Elida Brereton and Robert Stary appeared to enjoy being moderated by Sara James, Foreign Correspondent and Author as they explored and debated "What Does It Take?"

As Sara James has quoted: "To succeed in the 21st Century, Australia can't afford to waste the leadership talent of half the population." This is one of the driving challenges that Women in Rotary exemplifies in Australia.

In March 2017, Senator Penny Wong wrote in her endorsement letter to Kerry Kornhauser and Women in Rotary: "So today we come together to create a society where our daughters are given the same opportunities as our sons. A society where all of us have equal rights to live safe, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives and equality is a reality to all."

Another endorsement of what Women in Rotary are trying to achieve is embodied in the following excerpt from a letter from The Hon Chief Justice Kiefel AC, Chief Justice of Australia: "On International Women's Day we take pride in what has been achieved. At the same time we recognise that there is more to be done in order that we can truly say that there is equality, particularly of opportunity. We recognise that in other countries the struggle is greater and advances are slower. I know that Women in Rotary are committed to the pursuit of equality and to supporting women, not only those who may achieve great success, but also those to whom life has not yet provided opportunities."

Thank you Women in Rotary and here's to continuing our goal of respecting women from all around the world.

Dorothy Gilmour

Rotary Club of Melbourne and on behalf of Women in Rotary