

Rotary Club of Drouin

2025-26 Annual Report

Presidents

Ian Bennett & Russell Ford



PRESIDENTS' REPORTs 2025-26

This past Rotary year has been unique to the Club for two reasons, first it is the first time in more than 70 years of Club history that a Past President has come back to have another stint as president and secondly there were two of us as you just heard.



Past President Mike Kelleher, Presidents Ian Bennett & Russell Ford, District Governor Peter Behm

Ian Bennett

It was my pleasure to have served as the club's President for six months, just 10 years after my first, most enjoyable year in the role.

Much has changed in that time, but this is very much still a club of enthusiastic volunteers who give back to their community and others beyond ours in so many ways.

In my six months, members:

- Organised, staffed and delivered our monthly Drouin Market, with great IT innovations delivered by Friend-of-Rotary Rob Pocklington;
- Prepared a breakfast of toast and milo for students at Drouin Secondary College twice a week during school term, alternating months with Drouin Lions Club members;
- Delivered food parcels in Longwarry, Drouin and Warragul twice a month on behalf of the Longwarry Lions Food bank;



STEM Expo



Breanna Roberts



lunch preparation

- Provided a BBQ lunch for the leaders and participants on the 2025 'Live4Life' mental health program in the shire's secondary colleges;
- Provided the "reasonably priced" lunch option for students and teachers attending the '2025 STEM Expo' (science, technology, engineering and maths) at Lardner Park;
- BBQ lunch for the volunteers who planted 700+ trees and shrubs at the wetlands adjacent to Manikato Drive in Drouin as part of our shire's tree-planting project;

- BBQed long and hard at Bunnings to raise valuable funds for those we support;
- Marshalled participants at the Hallora Marathon in support of Peter Mac;
- Drove to Phillip Island to collect toys available after a toy run for later distribution locally;
- Helped clean up after the 'Big Blokes BBQ', managed by our enthusiastically resourceful Big Kev, who also continued his individual support efforts with Yooralla in Drouin; and
- After lots of negotiations and preparations, we delivered another highly successful 'Party in the Park' in Drouin on Australia Day.

In my six months we did not directly give financial support widely but we did provide scholarship funds Drouin Secondary College and Neerim District Secondary College, with matching funds from the District Rotary Foundation Grant scheme and, we donated to Olivia's Place to support their great work with mums and bubs in our area.

We sent Breanna Roberts to RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Assembly) for what she, and her mother described as a "...life changing experience."



Max Scott
PHF Sapphire



Gary Surman/John Franklin
25 Years Service



John Tricarico
Thank You



Jane Playdon Keith Pretty Judy Alexander
Dinner Meeting stalwarts

Another thing that has not changed is that we are a club of fellowship and growth through sharing. Meetings at the Hong Kong Inn Restaurant – thank you William, Christine and staff – and on our 5th Tuesday social nights have all been enjoyable. And we have learnt much through the presentations on member stories from David Mitchell and Dianne Wallace and from the presentation of Canterbury Rotarian Doug Hawley about the *FORaMEAL* packaging initiative and, another presentation by their former member and now Drouin's Tony Laycock, on their club's great health project in the Philippines.



Figure 3 Checking for ear problems

I have been the President but the help and involvement of many has been essential to what has been achieved. And I particularly want to recognise and thank Secretary Dianne and Treasurer Melva for all they did and continue to do, on so many fronts.

UNITE FOR GOOD

Russell Ford

In my six months there were a number of highlights, beginning in January with two very successful BBQ's as social events and a big thankyou to Liz and Glynn Fankhauser for hosting the first of these.

Also, we again put on the Australia Day Picnic in the park and thanks to Ian who started the work on this and continued with it up to the event.

March rolled around and Farm World was next on the list.

Probably the biggest demand on Rotarian time commitment and I must admit I was worried that we would not fill that commitment.

Our regular organiser Rotarian Kevin became unavailable, but I need not have worried, Rotarian David Mitchell stepped in and Rotarians increased their availabilities beyond previous years, and it was another success.

In May we had a month-long promotion of *Say No To Family and Domestic Violence*. We coordinated with Quantum Services and Baw Baw Shire to support the Candlelight Vigil, and it was a success in both promoting the issue and introducing Rotary to many people.



Occupying the kiosk for 3 days in the main Street supporting the vigil was very effective, we spoke with at least 200 people, and a significant number of us attended the vigil, this was extremely well received, and the wearing of the purple shirts where ever we went during May, attracted a lot of attention to the promotion and to our Club. The press coverage we received was also valuable.

Our dinner guest speakers in February and May from Gippsland Lifeline and Quantum Family Services really opened our eyes to the complex and serious issues that confront many in our community and hopefully we will continue our developing relationship with both organisations. The speaker from Mercy Ships in May gave us an international perspective of the need for medical care for the less fortunate, and how Mercy Ships not only change lives but save lives as well.

Our colleagues from Leongatha Rotary attended an April meeting to talk about their Recycled Furniture shop, it was a great support to our own investigations of going down a similar path.

I have said before that I was extremely pleased with the Club membership and the very respectful way that they listened to various points of view and asked for further information over 4 dinner meetings.

It is a big project, and I commend all involved for their efforts, particular incoming president Tony and Past President Colin Gardner who did much of the research. This will now go ahead, and we look forward to a very successful long term retail venture.

Another very successful venture was to bring together many of the other community organisation in Drouin to discuss the areas we work in, the issues we face and how we can support each other. 12 organisations attended with 17 representatives. All agreed it was very worthwhile and we have decided to continue these meetings every 3 months.

I congratulate and recognise the ongoing small number of Rotarians who make our monthly community market work. We have all heard them ask for more help and hopefully we have all heard the request and can pitch in.

There is nothing more pleasing for a president or more important than inducting a new member and to bring two new members into the Club in 6 weeks was wonderful.

Our extended reach out to schools and youth has been pleasing. Unfortunately, we were unable to support MUNA, but I am hopeful we will be back next year. Club District Foundation Secondary Education Grants for Drouin and Neerim Secondary Colleges was grateful received and I am delighted that we are supporting a young person to attend RYLA and the Drouin Scouts will be involved with us by becoming involved with RYPEN.

I also note our great sadness in the loss of our much-loved member, Dick van Leeuwin and we are so pleased to see Janny van Leeuwin has joined us tonight. Also, with the age profile we have it is not unusual to have health challenges to many members, but we are pleased to see all have come through their trials.

Finally, a huge thank you for the support of members, and particularly our Board members. I know one should not individualise, but it is important that you all realise the massive amount of time that Treasurer Melva and Secretary Dianne put into their roles, what they do is what supports the day-to-day Club functioning, and it certainly made my job easier.

And so another Rotary Year begins.

DISBURSEMENTS

TREASURER – MELVA BLACKLEY

Rotary Youth Leadership Assembly (RYLA) Sponsorship	3,300
Longwarry Lions Food Relief - Christmas donation	500
St Vincent de Paul - Christmas donation	500
The Crossing Drouin-In Centre - Christmas donation	500
Olivia's Place	500
Drouin Cemetery - Rat Barrow	1,000
Committee for Drouin - Community Garden Project	500
Neerim District Secondary School - scholarship	1,000
Drouin Secondary College - scholarship	1,000
Rotary Foundation	3,800
Polio Plus	1,600
Total Community Grants	<u>14,200</u>

Yours in Rotary,

Ian Bennett & Russell Ford

President 2025-26



Board of Directors 2025-26

Secretary/Club Administration/Bulletin – Dianne Wallace

A big vote of thanks to all who assisted during the year including:

- Peter Konjevic has continued to greet members at club meetings and record attendances, ably supported by Max Scott when required.
- Rotary Insurance tasks have been looked after by Ian Haughton.
- Sergent at Arms, Colin Gardner encouraged a donation or two during the year.
- Property Master William Wong and his staff at the Hong Kong Inn.
- Dinner Programs, to all those than assisted in making the dinner meetings interesting and enjoyable.
- Dianne Wallace for an entertaining and informative bulletin this year.

Rotary Foundation – President Elect Tony Laycock

- This year we have secured two District Foundation Grants – Scholarship \$500 and Drouin West Cemetery Project \$3,400 – which we matched for two projects.
- We have contributed \$A3,720 to Rotary Foundation and \$A1,044 to the 'End Polio' fund this year.
- We have one 'Centurion' donor (\$A100 p.a.) and two 'Sustaining Members' donors (more than \$US100 p.a.) within our membership.
- Two members, Dick van Leeuwen and Don Blackley, received a sapphire pin recognition Paul Harris Fellow recognition for their extensive years of service.
- This club has contributed a total of \$US133,691 since it was chartered.

New Generations – Russell Ford

A vote of thanks to Russell Ford for his work with our Schools during the year with some of the highlights being:

- Chairo Christian School took part in MUNA fielding 2 teams, and Chairo have been offered the opportunity to participate in MUNA again and have accepted.
- The Rotary Secondary School Scholarship was this year given to Neerim District Secondary College where the \$1,000 was used to support the academic activities of students in need.

Community Service – Roger Playdon

Thank you, Roger Playdon, for your overseeing the projects which have been carried out this year and for the individuals who lead individual activities, being:

- The monthly Drouin Rotary Market led by Ian Symons (stallholders) and David Proposch (barbeque) plus many regular contributors across the board.
- Robin Hood reserve community barbeque for volunteers at the Baw Baw Shire Council tree planting activity.
- Erica Palliative Care support project led by Tim Wills with the involvement of the Rotary Club of Moe.
- Civic Park seats refurbishment led by Bill Petschack and supported by many keen handymen.
- 'Drouin West Cemetery Rotunda' led by Bill Petschack and ably supported by retired tradesmen and sundry labourers.
- Monthly delivery of food parcels on behalf of the 'Longwarry Lions Food Relief', managed by Russell Ford.



- The twice weekly 'Breakfast Club' at Drouin Secondary College in alternate months, in conjunction with the Drouin Lions Club, led by Tim Wills.
- Christmas Toy Run which sourced toys from Donations in Kind through the Rotary Club of Emerald and also the Rotary Club of Warragul plus excess through the Phillip Island Toy Run, through the Rotary Club of Phillip Island & San Remo, all of which were distributed by the Longwarry Food Relief.
- Ambulance Vic uniform de-badging and subsequent repurposing for charitable purposes led by Tim Wills and relying on a few hardy 'un-pickers' in the Rotary family, Drouin Lions and CWA and, Warragul Neighbourhood House.
- Maintenance and general help at Yooralla Drouin by Kevin Roberts.
- 'Lardner Park Field Days' support over six days, overseen by Kevin Roberts.
- 'Big Blokes BBQ' and 'Girls Day Out' events clean-up activity at Lardner Park by a group of enthusiastic cleaners under the stern hand of Kevin.
- A number of smaller activities helping out people in need of assistance in our community, including saving a 2 pallet loads of clothing from landfill.
- And quite a bit more.....





DROUIN ROTARY MARKET – Ian Symons, Janette Pocklington, Mike Kelleher

The Market Committee has been active this year and implemented some significant changes directed at strengthening our governance and compliance with the regulatory environment we operate within whilst reducing the admin and time commitment for managing the market. We have also increased the social media exposure, courtesy of Janette, to try and increase the attendance of stalls and customers.

The administration and management of the Market have been greatly improved by the software progressively developed by Rob Pocklington during the past year. The current version is the product of months of actual use with improvements being added as glitches were fixed or new ideas were incorporated. The result has really simplified the site booking and payment processes, the site fee payments and recording, and our communication with the around 200 stallholders in our records. A big thankyou Rob.

We reviewed how we operate on the day as a way to ease the load on members. This took the form of giving worthy community groups to generate income by providing the hot food instead of our own members, particularly during the colder, winter months. The net result is that our market still provides financial support to community groups that take up the opportunity.

Finally, a big thankyou to members who have participated in the various rostered activities that enable the market to be such a productive fundraiser.



Judy & Melva at the 'Breakfast Club



At the Drouin Rotary Market



CLUB PROTECTION – Ian Symons

In accordance with the requirements of the District, we maintain a high level of compliance in relation to Youth Protection. I maintain a datafile of members that records those who hold a valid Working with Children Card and the completion of Rotary's own Youth Protection Form for volunteers. Volunteers that regularly assist the Club have also been recorded and have provided the required information.

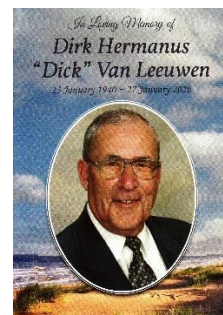
The original documents are securely maintained by me with copies submitted to the District Protection Officer.

I record my appreciation for the willing cooperation by members and volunteers in meeting the requirements.

I have recently audited my records and have requested information from those members that my records indicate require updating.

MEMBERSHIP – Tim Wills

We commenced the year with 42 members – recruited two but lost three: one resigned, one dropped 'active' membership but is still fully involved and one, our leading recruited of members, sadly departed to 'higher service'. Vale DvL.



Our new members



Val & Colin Gardner, Russell Ford, Soraya & Hanif Rahimi (sponsor)



Russell, John Jagiello, Peter Konjevic (sponsor)

John Franklin and Gary Surman were recognised by President Ian Bennett at our Christmas dinner for their **35 years of service** through Rotary.

Recognition

Max Scott received Paul Harris Fello sapphire recognition for his continued commitment to service for and by our club and, John Tricarico was thanked for his ongoing contributions over 15 years, now as a "Friend" of the Rotary Club of Drouin.

FELLOWSHIP & SOCIAL



Christmas Dinner



The Drongos



The Wednesday Walkers



Drouin Secondary College's Food4Thought



Jane, Keith & Judy



The Carvery



January Barbeque in Civic Park



Pie Night